

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
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CENTER FOR DRUG and HEALTH PLAN CHOICE

TO: Medicare Part C and Part D Plans

FROM: Cynthia G. Tudor, Ph.D., Director, Medicare Drug Benefit and C & D Data Group

SUBJECT: Plan Preview Periods for November 2008 Part C and Part D Plan Ratings

DATE: August 21, 2008

On November 13, 2008, the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will release improved Part C and Part D ratings in its web-based information tools for Medicare beneficiaries. In addition to showing more differentiation between plans, CMS's improved ratings will allow comparisons of plans' costs as well as quality, performance, and drug safety. These ratings include enhancements resulting from further consumer-testing.

The changes for Contract Year 2009 include: the development of a separate summary score of a Plan's performance for Part C and Part D ratings; the addition, deletion and reorganization of topics and categories; adjustment of the calculation of Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) program topics; modification of star assignments at the measure and domain level for Part D to show more differentiation between plan options; and revision of labels, language, and website functionality. CMS hopes these changes will help people with Medicare more easily compare plans based on cost, quality, and performance.

Please be aware of several important dates in the next several weeks. Comments or questions should be sent to partdmetrics@cms.hhs.gov.

| Action | Anticipated Date |
|---|---|
| 1 st Plan Preview of Part D Plan Ratings in the Health Plan Management System (HPMS) <i>* Data will not be available for the Out Of Pocket Expenses and CAHPS measures; preliminary data will be available for the High Risk Medication measure</i> | September 3, 2008 <i>Data questions due September 10, 2008</i> |
| 2 nd Plan Preview of Part D Plan Ratings in HPMS These data will reflect what will go live on November 13, 2008. | October 13, 2008 <i>Data questions due October 20, 2008</i> |
| Plan Preview of Part C Plan Ratings in HPMS These data will reflect what will go live on November 13, 2008. | October 31, 2008 <i>Data questions due November 6, 2008</i> |
| Part C and Part D Plan Ratings released to public on Medicare.gov website | November 13, 2008 |

Thank you for your continued support to help people with Medicare review their health plan and prescription drug plan options.