

CENTER FOR DRUG AND HEALTH PLAN CHOICE

Date: December 9, 2008

To: Current Medicare Advantage Organizations Continuing to Operate Medicare Advantage Plans in CY 2009, 1876 Cost Plans and HCPPs

From: Teresa DeCaro, Acting Director, Medicare Drug and Health Plan Contract Administration Group

Subject: Readiness Assessment for Current Medicare Advantage Organizations Continuing to Operate Medicare Advantage Plans in CY 2009 – **DUE BY 5 p.m. EST on DECEMBER 22, 2008**

In order to assess your readiness to continue operating a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan in CY 2009, we have developed the attached Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO) Readiness Assessment Tool specifically for ongoing MAOs. The completed tool must be returned **by 5 p.m. EST on December 22, 2008**.

NOTE: Although we recognize that 1876 Cost Plans and Health Care Prepayment Plans (HCPPs) are not MAOs, for purposes of this readiness assessment, all references to MAOs should be interpreted as including 1876 Cost Plans and HCPPs.

Background

On June 27, 2008, CMS sent a Readiness Checklist for Initial Applicants to organizations that had applied to CMS for a new CY 2009 MA contract and had received conditional approval. The attached MA assessment tool re-emphasizes for currently operating MAOs established requirements critical to ensuring that their plans' enrollees receive effective healthcare coverage in CY 2009. This assessment tool will help ensure that all key MA requirements are in place prior to January 1, 2009.

Who Should Complete the Tool?

- MAOs offering prescription drug coverage should complete this Readiness Assessment. You will be guided through the tool based on your responses, and you will be presented only with questions that do not duplicate those contained in the 2009 Part D Readiness Assessment released through HPMS on November 5, 2008 and due on November 21, 2008.
- MAOs not offering prescription drug coverage should also complete this Readiness Assessment. You will also be guided through the tool based on your responses.
- Organizations that offer both individual and employer-group products should answer in the context of your readiness to provide your individual market product line(s).

NOTE: Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) organizations and contracts that responded to the June 27, 2008 Readiness Checklist for Initial Applicants that had received conditional approval do not need to complete this Readiness Assessment.

How to Access the Tool

You will need to access the electronic version of the Readiness Assessment Tool for MAOs Continuing to Operate MA Plans in CY 2009 to relay the current status of your preparations for CY 2009 using the instructions below. For your convenience, a hard copy of the Readiness Assessment Tool is attached to this memo. However, we will accept electronic submissions only.

Simultaneous with the release of this memo, CMS is sending an e-mail communication to each MA Compliance Officer with the link to the CY 2009 Readiness Assessment Tool for MAOs Continuing to Operate MA Plans in CY 2009. To access the assessment tool, follow these steps:

1. Click on the following link contained in the e-mail notification:
<https://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/11dc4g39458>
2. Enter your organization's Unique ID, which is your CMS contract number (e.g., Hxxxx, Rxxxx). Organizations with more than one ongoing MA contract may complete the tool once for each MA contract number. However, for contract types that are the same AND for which all responses are identical across these contracts, the organization may complete the tool once, then specify the other contract number(s) that meet these criteria and to which the responses also apply. If the contract types are different and/or the responses are NOT identical across the contracts, you must complete the tool for each individual contract. This option is operationalized clearly in the last two questions of the tool.
3. For security reasons, you will then need to enter a password. This is your MA Compliance Officer's e-mail address.

If your organization's MA Compliance Officer did not receive the e-mail due to firewall constraints, or if it is more convenient for you, paste the following link into your web browser to access and complete the tool: <https://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/11dc4g39458>

How to Print your Responses Prior to Submission

CMS strongly recommends that you PRINT your responses PRIOR TO moving to each subsequent page of the tool following the prompts provided. Once you submit your responses on the last page of the tool, you will not be able to return to any questions to correct, update, or print your responses. However, if you re-enter and resubmit your complete set of responses, CMS will use the latest submission received on or before **5 p.m. EST on December 22, 2008** as your official submission.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the tool. CMS is pleased to continue working with the industry to provide effective Medicare coverage to beneficiaries enrolled in MA plans. If you have any questions about the Readiness Assessment Tool for Current MAOs Continuing to Operate MA Plans in CY 2009, please contact Joan Peterson at joan.peterson@cms.hhs.gov.