

Memo

To: All PDPs and MAPDs (excluding employer and PACE plans)
From: Thomas Dudley
Date: February 16, 2006
Re: Change in the frequency of Pricing Data Submissions to DestinationRx

CMS is making changes to the timing of data submissions for the Medicare Drug Plan Finder tool. Beginning Wednesday, March 1 2006 pricing data files for the Medicare Drug Plan Finder are to be submitted on a bi-weekly basis. The data submission window will be every-other Wednesday between 12:01 AM PT and 11:59 PM PT with the upload of the data on www.medicare.gov every other Monday at 12:01 AM ET.

Under the current pricing data submission process, plans reported having insufficient time to resolve and correct identified issues with their data submissions. This timing has hampered CMS' ability to provide Medicare beneficiaries with the most accurate and stable information for the available prescription drug plans. Therefore, the change in the frequency of pricing data submissions will help mitigate this issue.

Only plans identified as having pricing data issues in the biweekly data submission will be granted approval by CMS to submit corrected files on the alternate Wednesday of the bi-weekly cycles. The corrected files will then be included in the regular bi-weekly Monday posting of the pricing data on www.medicare.gov.

With this modification to the data submission and upload timeline, plans will have additional time to perform their own quality analyses of their data prior to submission to CMS, and thereby further decrease the number of issues identified with the pricing data. This change will provide both plans and CMS sufficient time to perform a thorough analysis of the pricing data and resolve any problems prior to the data being published on www.medicare.gov.

As a reminder, pricing data files are to be submitted through the usual FTP process to DestinationRx or certified as having no changes in the Administrative Console based on the following schedule:

- Pricing File (PF) and Pharmacy Cost File (PC) weekly until February 22 then bi-weekly based on the attached data submission calendar.
- Updated Formulary Files (FF) and Reference Pricing Files (RF) can be submitted along with the other pricing data files only after Formulary Changes have been approved by CMS. The RF file is an optional file and should only be submitted by plans that have approved designs allowing reference pricing.
- Beneficiary Cost File (BC) this file is annual and should **not** be submitted along with the other pricing data files and plans do not need to certify that there aren't any changes for the BC file.

Questions regarding this change should be emailed to both Thomas.dudley@cms.hhs.gov and vikki.oates@cms.hhs.gov.