

COVID-19 Pandemic Relief for Healthcare Providers Participating in Quality Reporting Programs

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On March 22, 2020, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced it is granting exceptions and extensions related to upcoming measure reporting and data submission requirements for clinicians, providers and facilities participating in any of the Medicare quality reporting programs; this includes acute and long-term care facilities. The unprecedented relief is in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, "so the healthcare delivery system can direct its time and resources toward caring for patients."

For programs with data submission deadlines in April and May 2020, submission of data will be optional, based on the facility's choice to report, and no data reflecting services provided January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 will be used in CMS's calculations for the Medicare quality reporting or value-based payment and purchasing programs. According to CMS, this is being done to reduce the data collection and reporting burden on providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the quality measure data collection and reporting of services furnished during this time period may not be reflective of the true level of providers' performance measures during this time.

Provider groups welcomed CMS' announcement. "Physicians on the front line of this pandemic are grateful that CMS has eased Medicare reporting requirements, allowing clinicians to focus on patients," Patrice A. Harris, MD, president of the American Medical Association, stated. "In the best of times, physician practices struggle to meet all the bureaucratic demands in the Medicare program. These are not the best of times. CMS' decision to offer relief from the submission demands in the Quality Payment Program will be felt immediately. Doctors don't have much time to breathe a sigh of relief, but if they did, they would take a moment to thank CMS for this wise decision."

If you have any questions about quality reporting programs or CMS guidance, please contact Debra A. Weinrich (weinrichd@whiteandwilliams.com; 215.864.6260), Dana Petrillo (petrillod@whiteandwilliams.com; 215.864.7017) or another member of the Healthcare Group.

As we continue to monitor the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), White and Williams lawyers are working collaboratively to stay current on developments and counsel clients through the various legal and business issues that may arise across a variety of sectors. Read all of the updates [here](#).

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