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DATE: April 6, 2018

TO: All Current and Prospective Medicare Advantage Organizations, Prescription Drug Plan Sponsors, Section 1876 Cost Plans, PACE Organizations, Medicare-Medicaid Plans, and Bid Consultants

FROM: Amy Larrick Chavez-Valdez, Director
Medicare Drug Benefit and C & D Data Group

SUBJECT: Release of the 2019 Plan Benefit Package and Bid Pricing Tool Software and Related Technical Bidding Guidance for Employer/Union-Only Group Waiver Plans

CMS is pleased to announce the release of the Contract Year (CY) 2019 Plan Benefit Package (PBP), Bid Pricing Tool (BPT), and plan creation functionality in the Health Plan Management System (HPMS).

To access the CY 2019 plan creation module, PBP and BPT software, and corresponding technical instructions, plan and bid consultant users should use the following navigation path in HPMS: HPMS Homepage > Plan Bids > Bid Submission > Contract Year 2019.

Technical Bidding Instructions for Organizations Offering Employer/Union-Only Group Waiver Plans in Contract Year 2019

Beginning with CY 2017, employer/union-only group waiver plans (EGWPs) no longer submit the MA or Part D BPTs. This waiver policy applies to all MA, PDP, and Section 1876 cost plan EGWPs (i.e., “800 series” EGWPs) as well as to employers/unions that directly contract with CMS to offer benefits to their retirees (i.e., “Direct Contract” EGWPs).

The following table outlines the HPMS PBP and BPT submission requirements for each type of EGWP for CY 2019:

	Column One	Column Two
PBP Section / BPT	MA and MA-PD “800 series” EGWP and Direct Contract MA and MA-PD EGWP	PDP and Section 1876 Cost “800 series” EGWP and Direct Contract PDP EGWP
PBP Section A	Yes	Yes
PBP Sections B, C, and D	Yes	No
PBP Rx Section	No	No
MA BPT	No	No
PD BPT	No	No

Plans that appear in column one will download and install the CY 2019 PBP software, create and download plan-specific data for their CY 2019 plans, per the usual process. Column one plans will complete sections A, B, C, and D of the CY 2019 PBP software, but the Rx Section of the PBP will be disabled for MA-PD plans.

Plans that appear in column two will download and install the CY 2019 PBP software, create their CY 2019 plans, and download their plan-specific data into the software, per the usual process. While no actual data entry is required in Section A of the PBP for PDP plan types, plans are still required to open Section A, review the plan information, and exit Section A with validation.

All plans outlined in columns one and two are required to upload their plans into HPMS, per the usual process. In addition, these plans are still required to meet all applicable pre-upload submission requirements in order to upload plans into HPMS.

Please note that plans that appear in column two are **still required** to complete the upload process as a mechanism for establishing their official set of plan IDs for the CY 2019 contract year in HPMS.

For questions regarding this memo, please contact Erica Scott at either 410-786-0920 or Erica.Scott@cms.hhs.gov or Andrew Chu at either 410-786-0488 or Andrew.Chu@cms.hhs.gov.

For technical assistance with HPMS, please contact the HPMS Help Desk at either hpms@cms.hhs.gov or 1-800-220-2028.