

ratio requirements for Medicare Advantage organizations, financial penalties and sanctions against MA organizations when minimum medical loss ratios are not achieved by MA organizations, and release of medical loss ratio data to entities outside of CMS.

[81 FR 80557, Nov. 15, 2016]

§ 422.2401 Definitions.

Non-claims costs means those expenses for administrative services that are not—

(1) Incurred claims (as provided in § 422.2420(b)(2) through (4));

(2) Expenditures on quality improving activities (as provided in § 422.2430);

(3) Licensing and regulatory fees (as provided in § 422.2420(c)(2)(i));

(4) State and Federal taxes and assessments (as provided in § 422.2420(c)(2)(ii) and (iii)).

[78 FR 31307, May 23, 2013; 78 FR 43821, July 22, 2013]

§ 422.2410 General requirements.

(a) For contracts beginning in 2014 or later, an MA organization (defined at § 422.2) is required to report the information required under § 422.2460 for each contract under this part for each contract year.

(b) *MLR requirement.* If CMS determines for a contract year that an MA organization has an MLR for a contract that is less than 0.85, the MA organization has not met the MLR requirement and must remit to CMS an amount equal to the product of the following:

(1) The total revenue of the MA contract for the contract year.

(2) The difference between 0.85 and the MLR for the contract year.

(c) If CMS determines that an MA organization has an MLR for a contract that is less than 0.85 for 3 or more consecutive contract years, CMS does not permit the enrollment of new enrollees under the contract for coverage during the second succeeding contract year.

(d) If CMS determines that an MA organization has an MLR for a contract that is less than 0.85 for 5 consecutive contract years, CMS terminates the contract per § 422.510(b)(1) and (d) effective

as of the second succeeding contract year.

[78 FR 31307, May 23, 2013, as amended at 83 FR 16736, Apr. 16, 2018]

§ 422.2420 Calculation of the medical loss ratio.

(a) *Determination of MLR.* (1) The MLR for each contract under this part is the ratio of the numerator (as defined in paragraph (b) of this section) to the denominator (as defined in paragraph (c) of this section). An MLR may be increased by a credibility adjustment according to the rules at § 422.2440, or subject to an adjustment determined by CMS to be warranted based on exceptional circumstances for areas outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

(2) The MLR for an MA contract—

(i) Not offering Medicare prescription drug benefits must only reflect costs and revenues related to the benefits defined at § 422.100(c); and

(ii) That includes MA-PD plans (defined at § 422.2) must also reflect costs and revenues for benefits described at § 423.104(d) through (f) of this chapter.

(b) *Determining the MLR numerator.*

(1) For a contract year, the numerator of the MLR for an MA contract (other than an MSA contract) must equal the sum of paragraphs (b)(1)(i) through (iii) of this section, and the numerator of the MLR for an MSA contract must equal the sum of paragraphs (b)(1)(i), (iii), and (iv) of this section. The numerator must be determined in accordance with paragraphs (b)(5) and (6) of this section.

(i) Incurred claims for all enrollees, as defined in paragraphs (b)(2) through (4) of this section.

(ii) The amount of the reduction, if any, in the Part B premium for all MA plan enrollees under the contract for the contract year.

(iii) The expenditures under the contract for activities that improve health care quality, as defined in § 422.2430.

(iv) The amount of the annual deposit into the medical savings account described at § 422.4(a)(2).

(2) *Incurred claims for clinical services and prescription drug costs.* Incurred claims must include the following:

(i) Amounts that the MA organization pays (including under capitation

contracts) for covered services, described at paragraph (a)(2) of this section, provided to all enrollees under the contract.

(ii) For an MA contract that includes MA–PD plans (described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section), drug costs provided to all enrollees under the contract, as defined at § 423.2420(b)(2)(i) of this chapter.

(iii) Unpaid claims reserves for the current contract year, including claims reported in the process of adjustment.

(iv) Percentage withholds from payments made to contracted providers.

(v) Incurred but not reported claims based on past experience, and modified to reflect current conditions such as changes in exposure, claim frequency or severity.

(vi) Changes in other claims-related reserves.

(vii) Claims that are recoverable for anticipated coordination of benefits.

(viii) Claims payments recoveries received as a result of subrogation.

(ix) [Reserved]

(x) Reserves for contingent benefits and the medical claim portion of lawsuits.

(xi) The amount of incentive and bonus payments made to providers.

(3) Adjustments that must be deducted from incurred claims include the following:

(i) Overpayment recoveries received from providers.

(4) *Exclusions from incurred claims.* The following amounts must not be included in incurred claims:

(i) Non-claims costs, as defined in § 422.2401, which include the following:

(A) Amounts paid to third party vendors for secondary network savings.

(B) Amounts paid to third party vendors for any of the following:

(1) Network development.

(2) Administrative fees.

(3) Claims processing.

(4) Utilization management.

(C) Amounts paid, including amounts paid to a provider, for professional or administrative services that do not represent compensation or reimbursement for covered services provided to an enrollee, such as the following:

(1) Medical record copying costs.

(2) Attorneys' fees.

(3) Subrogation vendor fees.

(4) Bona fide service fees.

(5) Compensation to any of the following:

(i) Paraprofessionals.

(ii) Janitors.

(iii) Quality assurance analysts.

(iv) Administrative supervisors.

(v) Secretaries to medical personnel.

(vi) Medical record clerks.

(ii) Amounts paid to CMS as a remittance under § 422.2410(b).

(5) Incurred claims under this part for policies issued by one MA organization and later assumed by another entity must be reported by the assuming organizations for the entire MLR reporting year during which the policies were assumed and no incurred claims under this part for that contract year must be reported by the ceding MA organization.

(6) Reinsured incurred claims for a block of business that was subject to indemnity reinsurance and administrative agreements effective before March 23, 2010, for which the assuming entity is responsible for 100 percent of the ceding entity's financial risk and takes on all of the administration of the block, must be reported by the assuming issuer and must not be reported by the ceding issuer.

(c) *Determining the MLR denominator.* For a contract year, the denominator of the MLR for an MA contract must equal the total revenue under the contract. Total revenue under the contract is as described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section, net of deductions described in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, taking into account the exclusions described in paragraph (c)(3) of this section, and in accordance with paragraphs (c)(4) and (c)(5) of this section.

(1) CMS' payments to the MA organization for all enrollees under a contract, reported on a direct basis, including the following:

(i) Payments under § 422.304(a)(1) through (3) and (c).

(ii) The amount applied to reduce the Part B premium, as provided under § 422.266(b)(3).

(iii) Payments under § 422.304(b)(1), as reconciled per § 423.329(c)(2)(ii) of this chapter.

(iv) All premiums paid by or on behalf of enrollees to the MA organization as a condition of receiving coverage under an MA plan, including CMS' payments for low income premium subsidies under § 422.304(b)(2).

(v) All unpaid premium amounts that an MA organization could have collected from enrollees in the MA plan(s) under the contract.

(vi) All changes in unearned premium reserves.

(vii) Payments under § 423.315(e) of this chapter.

(2) The following amounts must be deducted from total revenue in calculating the MLR:

(i) *Licensing and regulatory fees.* (A) Statutory assessments to defray the operating expenses of any State or Federal department, such as the "user fee" described in section 1857(e)(2) of the Act.

(B) Examination fees in lieu of premium taxes as specified by State law.

(ii) *Federal taxes and assessments.* All Federal taxes and assessments allocated to health insurance coverage.

(iii) *State taxes and assessments.* State taxes and assessments such as the following:

(A) Any industry-wide (or subset) assessments (other than surcharges on specific claims) paid to the State directly.

(B) Guaranty fund assessments.

(C) Assessments of State industrial boards or other boards for operating expenses or for benefits to sick employed persons in connection with disability benefit laws or similar taxes levied by States.

(D) State income, excise, and business taxes other than premium taxes.

(iv) *Community benefit expenditures.* Community benefit expenditures are payments made by a Federal income tax-exempt MA organization for community benefit expenditures as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iv)(A) of this section, limited to the amount defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iv)(B) of this section, and allocated to a contract as required under paragraph (d)(1) of this section.

(A) Community benefit expenditures means expenditures for activities or programs that seek to achieve the objectives of improving access to health

services, enhancing public health and relief of government burden.

(B) Such payment may be deducted up to the limit of either 3 percent of total revenue under this part or the highest premium tax rate in the State for which the Part D sponsor is licensed, multiplied by the Part D sponsor's earned premium for the contract.

(3) The following amounts must not be included in total revenue:

(i) The amount of unpaid premiums for which the MA organization can demonstrate to CMS that it made a reasonable effort to collect.

(ii) The following EHR payments and adjustments:

(A) EHR incentive payments for meaningful use of certified electronic health records by qualifying MAOs, MA EPs and MA-affiliated eligible hospitals that are administered under 42 CFR part 495 subpart C.

(B) EHR payment adjustments for a failure to meet meaningful use requirements that are administered under 42 CFR part 495 subpart C.

(iii) Coverage Gap Discount Program payments under § 423.2320 of this chapter.

(4) Total revenue (as defined at § 422.2420(c)) for policies issued by one MA organization and later assumed by another entity must be reported by the assuming entity for the entire MLR reporting year during which the policies were assumed and no revenue under this part for that contract year must be reported by the ceding MA organization.

(5) Total revenue (as defined at § 422.2420(c)) that is reinsured for a block of business that was subject to indemnity reinsurance and administrative agreements effective prior to March 23, 2010, for which the assuming entity is responsible for 100 percent of the ceding entity's financial risk and takes on all of the administration of the block, must be reported by the assuming issuer and must not be reported by the ceding issuer.

(d) *Allocation of expense*—(1) *General requirements.* (i) Each expense must be included under only one type of expense, unless a portion of the expense fits under the definition of or criteria for one type of expense and the remainder fits into a different type of expense,

in which case the expense must be prorated between types of expenses.

(ii) Expenditures that benefit multiple contracts, or contracts other than those being reported, including but not limited to those that are for or benefit self-funded plans, must be reported on a pro rata share.

(2) *Description of the methods used to allocate expenses.* (i) Allocation to each category must be based on a generally accepted accounting method that is expected to yield the most accurate results. Specific identification of an expense with an activity that is represented by one of the categories in paragraph (b) or (c) of this section will generally be the most accurate method.

(ii) Shared expenses, including expenses under the terms of a management contract, must be apportioned pro rata to the contracts incurring the expense.

(iii)(A) Any basis adopted to apportion expenses must be that which is expected to yield the most accurate results and may result from special studies of employee activities, salary ratios, premium ratios or similar analyses.

(B) Expenses that relate solely to the operations of a reporting entity, such as personnel costs associated with the adjusting and paying of claims, must be borne solely by the reporting entity and are not to be apportioned to other entities within a group.

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§ 422.2430 Activities that improve health care quality.

(a) *Activity requirements.* (1) Activities conducted by an MA organization to improve quality must either—

(i) Fall into one of the categories in paragraph (a)(2) of this section and meet all of the requirements in paragraph (a)(3) of this section; or

(ii) Be listed in paragraph (a)(4) of this section.

(2) *Categories of quality improving activities.* The activity must be designed to achieve one or more of the following:

(i) To improve health outcomes through the implementation of activi-

ties such as quality reporting, effective case management, care coordination, chronic disease management, and medication and care compliance initiatives, including through the use of the medical homes model as defined for purposes of section 3602 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, for treatment or services under the plan or coverage.

(ii) To prevent hospital readmissions through a comprehensive program for hospital discharge that includes patient-centered education and counseling, comprehensive discharge planning, and post-discharge reinforcement by an appropriate health care professional.

(iii) To improve patient safety and reduce medical errors through the appropriate use of best clinical practices, evidence-based medicine, and health information technology under the plan or coverage.

(iv) To promote health and wellness.

(v) To enhance the use of health care data to improve quality, transparency, and outcomes and support meaningful use of health information technology. Such activities, such as Health Information Technology (HIT) expenses, are required to accomplish the activities that improve health care quality and that are designed for use by health plans, health care providers, or enrollees for the electronic creation, maintenance, access, or exchange of health information, and are consistent with meaningful use requirements, and which may in whole or in part improve quality of care, or provide the technological infrastructure to enhance current quality improving activities or make new quality improvement initiatives possible.

(3) The activity must be designed for all of the following:

(i) To improve health quality.

(ii) To increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes in ways that are capable of being objectively measured and of producing verifiable results and achievements.

(iii) To be directed toward individual enrollees or incurred for the benefit of