

(B) For a new ACO identified as a re-entering ACO, the ACO in which the majority of the new ACO's participants were participating previously entered into a participation agreement for participation in the BASIC track's glide path only one time.

(iii) An ACO that is determined to be inexperienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initiatives but is not eligible to enter the BASIC track's glide path as specified in paragraph (a)(4)(i)(C) of this section may enter either the BASIC track Level E under paragraph (a)(4)(i)(A)(5) of this section for all performance years of the agreement period, or the ENHANCED track under paragraph (a)(3) of this section.

(2) If an ACO is determined to be experienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initiatives, the ACO may enter either the BASIC track Level E under paragraph (a)(4)(i)(A)(5) of this section for all performance years of the agreement period, or the ENHANCED track under paragraph (a)(3) of this section.

(h)(1) For performance years beginning on or after January 1, 2024, CMS monitors ACOs identified as inexperienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initiatives and participating in the BASIC track under a one-sided model during an agreement period pursuant to an election under paragraph (a)(4)(i)(B)(2)(vi), paragraph (a)(4)(i)(B)(2)(vii), or paragraph (a)(4)(i)(C)(3) of this section for changes to their certified list of ACO participants that would cause the ACO to be considered experienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initiatives and ineligible for participation in a one-sided model.

(2) If the ACO meets the definition of experienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initiatives (under § 425.20)—

(i) The ACO is permitted to complete the performance year for which it met the definition of experienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initiatives in a one-sided model of the BASIC track, but is ineligible to continue participation in the one-sided model after the end of that performance year if it continues to meet the definition of experienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initia-

tives. The ACO will be automatically advanced to Level E within the BASIC track under paragraph (a)(4)(i)(A)(5) of this section at the start of the next performance year and will remain in Level E for all subsequent performance years of the agreement period; and

(ii) Prior to entering performance-based risk, the ACO must meet all requirements to participate under performance-based risk, including establishing an adequate repayment mechanism as specified under § 425.204(f) and selecting a MSR/MLR from the options specified under § 425.605(b), in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(i)(B)(2)(v) of this section or paragraph (a)(4)(i)(C)(4) of this section, as applicable. If the ACO fails to meet the requirements to participate under performance-based risk, the agreement is terminated in accordance with paragraph (a)(4)(i)(B)(3) of this section or paragraph (a)(4)(i)(C)(5) of this section, as applicable.

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**§ 425.601 Establishing, adjusting, and updating the benchmark for agreement periods beginning on or after July 1, 2019, and before January 1, 2024.**

(a) *Computing per capita Medicare Part A and Part B benchmark expenditures for an ACO's first agreement period.* For agreement periods beginning on July 1, 2019, and in subsequent years, in computing an ACO's historical benchmark for its first agreement period under the Shared Savings Program, CMS determines the per capita Parts A and B fee-for-service expenditures for beneficiaries that would have been assigned to the ACO in any of the 3 most recent years prior to the start of the agreement period using the ACO participant TINs identified before the start of the agreement period as required under § 425.118(a) and the beneficiary assignment methodology selected by the ACO for the first performance year of the agreement period as required under § 425.226(a)(1). CMS does all of the following:

(1) Calculates the payment amounts included in Parts A and B fee-for-service claims using a 3-month claims run out with a completion factor.

(i) This calculation excludes indirect medical education (IME) and disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments, and the supplemental payment for IHS/Tribal hospitals and Puerto Rico hospitals.

(ii) This calculation includes individually beneficiary identifiable final payments made under a demonstration, pilot or time limited program.

(2) Makes separate expenditure calculations for each of the following populations of beneficiaries: ESRD, disabled, aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(3) Adjusts expenditures for changes in severity and case mix using prospective HCC risk scores.

(4) Truncates an assigned beneficiary's total annual Parts A and B fee-for-service per capita expenditures at the 99th percentile of national Medicare fee-for-service expenditures for assignable beneficiaries identified for the 12-month calendar year corresponding to each benchmark year in order to minimize variation from catastrophically large claims.

(5) Trends forward expenditures for each benchmark year (BY1 and BY2) to the third benchmark year (BY3) dollars using a blend of national and regional growth rates.

(i) To trend forward the benchmark, CMS makes separate calculations for expenditure categories for each of the following populations of beneficiaries:

(A) ESRD.

(B) Disabled.

(C) Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(D) Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(ii) National growth rates are computed using CMS Office of the Actuary national Medicare expenditure data for each of the years making up the historical benchmark for assignable beneficiaries identified for the 12-month calendar year corresponding to each benchmark year.

(iii) Regional growth rates are computed using expenditures for the ACO's

regional service area for each of the years making up the historical benchmark as follows:

(A) Determine the counties included in the ACO's regional service area based on the ACO's assigned beneficiary population for the relevant benchmark year.

(B) Determine the ACO's regional expenditures as specified under paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section.

(iv) The national and regional growth rates are blended together by taking a weighted average of the two. The weight applied to the—

(A) National growth rate is calculated as the share of assignable beneficiaries in the ACO's regional service area for BY3 that are assigned to the ACO in BY3, as calculated in paragraph (a)(5)(v) of this section; and

(B) Regional growth rate is equal to 1 minus the weight applied to the national growth rate.

(v) CMS calculates the share of assignable beneficiaries in the ACO's regional service area that are assigned to the ACO by doing all of the following:

(A) Calculating the county-level share of assignable beneficiaries that are assigned to the ACO for each county in the ACO's regional service area.

(B) Weighting the county-level shares according to the ACO's proportion of assigned beneficiaries in the county, determined by the number of the ACO's assigned beneficiaries residing in the county in relation to the ACO's total number of assigned beneficiaries.

(C) Aggregating the weighted county-level shares for all counties in the ACO's regional service area.

(6) Restates BY1 and BY2 trended and risk adjusted expenditures using BY3 proportions of ESRD, disabled, aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(7) Weights each year of the benchmark for an ACO's initial agreement period using the following percentages:

(i) BY3 at 60 percent.

(ii) BY2 at 30 percent.

(iii) BY1 at 10 percent.

(8) Adjusts the historical benchmark based on the ACO's regional service area expenditures, making separate

calculations for the following populations of beneficiaries: ESRD, disabled, aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. CMS does all of the following:

(i) Calculates an average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area as follows:

(A) Determines the counties included in the ACO's regional service area based on the ACO's BY3 assigned beneficiary population.

(B) Determines the ACO's regional expenditures as specified under paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section for BY3.

(C) Adjusts for differences in severity and case mix between the ACO's assigned beneficiary population and the assignable beneficiary population for the ACO's regional service area identified for the 12-month calendar year that corresponds to BY3.

(ii) Calculates the adjustment as follows:

(A) Determines the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area as specified under paragraph (a)(8)(i) of this section and the average per capita amount of the ACO's historical benchmark determined under paragraphs (a)(1) through (7) of this section, for each of the following populations of beneficiaries:

(1) ESRD.

(2) Disabled.

(3) Aged/dual eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

(4) Aged/non-dual eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

(B) Applies a percentage, as determined in paragraph (f) of this section.

(C) Caps the per capita dollar amount for each Medicare enrollment type (ESRD, Disabled, Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries) calculated under paragraph (a)(8)(ii)(B) of this section at a dollar amount equal to 5 percent of national per capita expenditures for Parts A and B services under the original Medicare fee-for-service program in BY3 for assignable beneficiaries in that enrollment type identified for the 12-month calendar year

corresponding to BY3 using data from the CMS Office of the Actuary.

(1) For positive adjustments, the per capita dollar amount for a Medicare enrollment type is capped at 5 percent of the national per capita expenditure amount for the enrollment type for BY3.

(2) For negative adjustments, the per capita dollar amount for a Medicare enrollment type is capped at negative 5 percent of the national per capita expenditure amount for the enrollment type for BY3.

(9) For the second and each subsequent performance year during the term of the agreement period, the ACO's benchmark is adjusted for the following, as applicable: For the addition and removal of ACO participants or ACO providers/suppliers in accordance with § 425.118(b), for a change to the ACO's beneficiary assignment methodology selection under § 425.226(a)(1), and for a change to the beneficiary assignment methodology specified in subpart E of this part. To adjust the benchmark, CMS does the following:

(i) Takes into account the expenditures of beneficiaries who would have been assigned to the ACO in any of the 3 most recent years prior to the start of the agreement period.

(ii) Redetermines the regional adjustment amount under paragraph (a)(8) of this section, according to the ACO's assigned beneficiaries for BY3.

(10) The historical benchmark is further adjusted at the time of reconciliation for a performance year to account for changes in severity and case mix of the ACO's assigned beneficiary population as described under §§ 425.605(a), 425.609(c), and 425.610(a).

(b) *Updating the benchmark.* For all agreement periods beginning on July 1, 2019, and in subsequent years, CMS updates the historical benchmark annually for each year of the agreement period using a blend of national and regional growth rates.

(1) To update the benchmark, CMS makes separate calculations for expenditure categories for each of the following populations of beneficiaries:

(i) ESRD.

(ii) Disabled.

(iii) Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(iv) Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(2) National growth rates are computed using CMS Office of the Actuary national Medicare expenditure data for BY3 and the performance year for assignable beneficiaries identified for the 12-month calendar year corresponding to each year.

(3) Regional growth rates are computed using expenditures for the ACO's regional service area for BY3 and the performance year, computed as follows:

(i) Determine the counties included in the ACO's regional service area based on the ACO's assigned beneficiary population for the year.

(ii) Determine the ACO's regional expenditures as specified under paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section.

(4) The national and regional growth rates are blended together by taking a weighted average of the two. The weight applied to the—

(i) National growth rate is calculated as the share of assignable beneficiaries in the ACO's regional service area that are assigned to the ACO for the applicable performance year as specified in paragraph (a)(5)(v) of this section; and

(ii) Regional growth rate is equal to 1 minus the weight applied to the national growth rate.

(c) *Calculating county expenditures.* For all agreement periods beginning on July 1, 2019, and in subsequent years, CMS does all of the following to determine risk adjusted county fee-for-service expenditures for use in calculating the ACO's regional fee-for-service expenditures:

(1)(i) Determines average county fee-for-service expenditures based on expenditures for the assignable population of beneficiaries in each county in the ACO's regional service area, where assignable beneficiaries are identified for the 12-month calendar year corresponding to the relevant benchmark or performance year.

(ii) Makes separate expenditure calculations for each of the following populations of beneficiaries:

(A) ESRD.

(B) Disabled.

(C) Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(D) Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(2) Calculates assignable beneficiary expenditures using the payment amounts included in Parts A and B fee-for-service claims with dates of service in the 12-month calendar year for the relevant benchmark or performance year, using a 3-month claims run out with a completion factor. The calculation—

(i) Excludes IME and DSH payments, and the supplemental payment for IHS/Tribal hospitals and Puerto Rico hospitals; and

(ii) Considers individually beneficiary identifiable final payments made under a demonstration, pilot or time limited program.

(3) Truncates a beneficiary's total annual Parts A and B fee-for-service per capita expenditures at the 99th percentile of national Medicare fee-for-service expenditures for assignable beneficiaries identified for the 12-month calendar year that corresponds to the relevant benchmark or performance year, in order to minimize variation from catastrophically large claims.

(4) Adjusts fee-for-service expenditures for severity and case mix of assignable beneficiaries in the county using prospective HCC risk scores. The calculation is made according to the following populations of beneficiaries:

(i) ESRD.

(ii) Disabled.

(iii) Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(iv) Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(d) *Calculating regional expenditures.* For all agreement periods beginning on July 1, 2019, and in subsequent years, CMS calculates an ACO's risk adjusted regional expenditures by:

(1) Weighting the risk-adjusted county-level fee-for-service expenditures determined under paragraph (c) of this section according to the ACO's proportion of assigned beneficiaries in the county, determined by the number of the ACO's assigned beneficiaries in the applicable population (according to Medicare enrollment type) residing in the county in relation to the ACO's total number of assigned beneficiaries in the applicable population (according

to Medicare enrollment type) for the relevant benchmark or performance year for each of the following populations of beneficiaries:

- (i) ESRD.
- (ii) Disabled.
- (iii) Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.
- (iv) Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

(2) Aggregating the values determined under paragraph (d)(1) of this section for each population of beneficiaries (according to Medicare enrollment type) across all counties within the ACO's regional service area.

(e) *Resetting the benchmark.* (1) An ACO's benchmark is reset at the start of each subsequent agreement period.

(2) For second or subsequent agreements periods beginning on July 1, 2019, and in subsequent years, CMS establishes, adjusts, and updates the rebased historical benchmark in accordance with paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section with the following modifications:

(i) Rather than weighting each year of the benchmark using the percentages provided in paragraph (a)(7) of this section, each benchmark year is weighted equally.

(ii) For a renewing ACO or re-entering ACO whose prior agreement period benchmark was calculated according to § 425.603(c), to determine the weight used in the regional adjustment calculation described in paragraph (f) of this section, CMS considers the agreement period the ACO is entering into according to § 425.600(f) in combination with either of the following—

(A) The weight previously applied to calculate the regional adjustment to the ACO's benchmark under § 425.603(c)(9) in its most recent prior agreement period; or

(B) For a new ACO identified as a re-entering ACO, CMS considers the weight previously applied to calculate the regional adjustment to the benchmark under § 425.603(c)(9) in its most recent prior agreement period of the ACO in which the majority of the new ACO's participants were participating previously.

(f) *Phase-in of weights used in regional adjustment calculation.* (1) The first time that an ACO's benchmark is ad-

justed based on the ACO's regional service area expenditures, CMS calculates the regional adjustment as follows:

(i) Using 35 percent of the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's initial or rebased historical benchmark, if the ACO is determined to have lower spending than the ACO's regional service area.

(ii) Using 15 percent of the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's initial or rebased historical benchmark, if the ACO is determined to have higher spending than the ACO's regional service area.

(2) The second time that an ACO's benchmark is adjusted based on the ACO's regional service area expenditures, CMS calculates the regional adjustment as follows:

(i) Using 50 percent of the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's rebased historical benchmark if the ACO is determined to have lower spending than the ACO's regional service area.

(ii) Using 25 percent of the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's rebased historical benchmark if the ACO is determined to have higher spending than the ACO's regional service area.

(3) The third time that an ACO's benchmark is adjusted based on the ACO's regional service area expenditures, CMS calculates the regional adjustment as follows:

(i) Using 50 percent of the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's rebased historical benchmark if the ACO is determined to have lower spending than the ACO's regional service area.

(ii) Using 35 percent of the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's rebased historical

benchmark if the ACO is determined to have higher spending than the ACO's regional service area.

(4) The fourth or subsequent time that an ACO's benchmark is adjusted based on the ACO's regional service area expenditures, CMS calculates the regional adjustment to the historical benchmark using 50 percent of the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's rebased historical benchmark.

(5) To determine if an ACO has lower or higher spending compared to the ACO's regional service area, CMS does the following:

(i) Multiplies the difference between the average per capita amount of expenditures for the ACO's regional service area and the average per capita amount of the ACO's historical benchmark for each population of beneficiaries (ESRD, Disabled, Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries) as calculated under either paragraph (a)(8)(ii)(A) or (e) of this section by the applicable proportion of the ACO's assigned beneficiary population (ESRD, Disabled, Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries) for BY3 of the historical benchmark.

(ii) Sums the amounts determined in paragraph (f)(5)(i) of this section across the populations of beneficiaries (ESRD, Disabled, Aged/dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, Aged/non-dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries).

(iii) If the resulting sum is a net positive value, the ACO is considered to have lower spending compared to the ACO's regional service area. If the resulting sum is a net negative value, the ACO is considered to have higher spending compared to the ACO's regional service area.

(iv) If during the term of the agreement period CMS adjusts the ACO's benchmark, as specified in paragraph (a)(9) of this section, CMS redetermines whether the ACO is considered to have lower spending or higher spending compared to the ACO's regional service

area for purposes of determining the percentage in paragraphs (f)(1) through (3) of this section used in calculating the adjustment under either paragraph (a)(8) or (e) of this section.

(g) *July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 performance year.* In determining performance for the July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 performance year described in § 425.609(c), CMS does all of the following:

(1) When adjusting the benchmark using the methodology set forth in paragraph (a)(10) of this section and § 425.609(c), CMS adjusts for severity and case mix between BY3 and CY 2019.

(2) When updating the benchmark using the methodology set forth in paragraph (b) of this section and § 425.609(c), CMS updates the benchmark based on growth between BY3 and CY 2019.

[83 FR 68071, Dec. 31, 2018, as amended at 85 FR 85042, Dec. 28, 2020; 87 FR 70237, Nov. 18, 2022]

**§ 425.602 Establishing, adjusting, and updating the benchmark for an ACO's first agreement period beginning on or before January 1, 2018.**

(a) *Computing per capita Medicare Part A and Part B benchmark expenditures.* For agreement periods beginning on or before January 1, 2018, in computing an ACO's fixed historical benchmark that is adjusted for historical growth and beneficiary characteristics, including health status, CMS determines the per capita Parts A and B fee-for-service expenditures for beneficiaries that would have been assigned to the ACO in any of the 3 most recent years prior to the agreement period using the ACO participants' TINs identified at the start of the agreement period. CMS does all of the following:

(1) Calculates the payment amounts included in Parts A and B fee-for-service claims using a 3-month claims run out with a completion factor.

(i) This calculation excludes indirect medical education (IME) and disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments.

(ii) This calculation considers individually beneficiary identifiable payments made under a demonstration, pilot or time limited program.

(A) For agreement periods beginning before 2018, this calculation considers