

§ 422.205

42 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–24 Edition)

(i) Initial credentialing that includes written application, verification of licensure or certification from primary sources, disciplinary status, eligibility for payment under Medicare, and site visits as appropriate. The application must be signed and dated and include an attestation by the applicant of the correctness and completeness of the application and other information submitted in support of the application;

(ii) Recredentialing at least every 3 years that updates information obtained during initial credentialing, considers performance indicators such as those collected through quality improvement programs, utilization management systems, handling of grievances and appeals, enrollee satisfaction surveys, and other plan activities, and that includes an attestation of the correctness and completeness of the new information; and

(iii) A process for consulting with contracting health care professionals with respect to criteria for credentialing and recredentialing.

(3) Specifies that basic benefits must be provided through, or payments must be made to, providers and suppliers that meet applicable requirements of title XVIII and part A of title XI of the Act. In the case of providers meeting the definition of “provider of services” in section 1861(u) of the Act, basic benefits may only be provided through these providers if they have a provider agreement with CMS permitting them to provide services under original Medicare.

(4) Ensures compliance with the requirements at § 422.752(a)(8) that prohibit employment or contracts with individuals (or with an entity that employs or contracts with such an individual) excluded from participation under Medicare and with the requirements at § 422.220 regarding physicians and practitioners who opt out of Medicare.

(c) An MA organization must follow a documented process that ensures compliance with the preclusion list provisions in § 422.222.

[65 FR 40324, June 29, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 47413, Sept. 12, 2001; 70 FR 4724, Jan. 28, 2005; 81 FR 80556, Nov. 15, 2016; 83 FR 16731, Apr. 16, 2018]

§ 422.205 Provider antidiscrimination rules.

(a) *General rule.* Consistent with the requirements of this section, the policies and procedures concerning provider selection and credentialing established under § 422.204, and with the requirement under § 422.100(c) that all Medicare-covered services be available to MA plan enrollees, an MA organization may select the practitioners that participate in its plan provider networks. In selecting these practitioners, an MA organization may not discriminate, in terms of participation, reimbursement, or indemnification, against any health care professional who is acting within the scope of his or her license or certification under State law, solely on the basis of the license or certification. If an MA organization declines to include a given provider or group of providers in its network, it must furnish written notice to the affected provider(s) of the reason for the decision.

(b) *Construction.* The prohibition in paragraph (a)(1) of this section does not preclude any of the following by the MA organization:

(1) Refusal to grant participation to health care professionals in excess of the number necessary to meet the needs of the plan’s enrollees (except for MA private-fee-for-service plans, which may not refuse to contract on this basis).

(2) Use of different reimbursement amounts for different specialties or for different practitioners in the same specialty.

(3) Implementation of measures designed to maintain quality and control costs consistent with its responsibilities.

[65 FR 40324, June 29, 2000]

§ 422.206 Interference with health care professionals’ advice to enrollees prohibited.

(a) *General rule.* (1) An MA organization may not prohibit or otherwise restrict a health care professional, acting within the lawful scope of practice, from advising, or advocating on behalf of, an individual who is a patient and enrolled under an MA plan about—

(i) The patient's health status, medical care, or treatment options (including any alternative treatments that may be self-administered), including the provision of sufficient information to the individual to provide an opportunity to decide among all relevant treatment options;

(ii) The risks, benefits, and consequences of treatment or non-treatment; or

(iii) The opportunity for the individual to refuse treatment and to express preferences about future treatment decisions.

(2) Health care professionals must provide information regarding treatment options in a culturally-competent manner, including the option of no treatment. Health care professionals must ensure that individuals with disabilities have effective communications with participants throughout the health system in making decisions regarding treatment options.

(b) *Conscience protection.* The general rule in paragraph (a) of this section does not require the MA plan to cover, furnish, or pay for a particular counseling or referral service if the MA organization that offers the plan—

(1) Objects to the provision of that service on moral or religious grounds; and

(2) Through appropriate written means, makes available information on these policies as follows:

(i) To CMS, with its application for a Medicare contract, within 10 days of submitting its bid proposal or, for policy changes, in accordance with all applicable requirements under subpart V of this part.

(ii) To prospective enrollees, before or during enrollment.

(iii) With respect to current enrollees, the organization is eligible for the exception provided in paragraph (b)(1) of this section if it provides notice of such change within 90 days after adopting the policy at issue; however, under § 422.111(d), notice of such a change must be given in advance.

(c) *Construction.* Nothing in paragraph (b) of this section may be construed to affect disclosure requirements under State law or under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.

(d) *Sanctions.* An MA organization that violates the prohibition of paragraph (a) of this section or the conditions in paragraph (b) of this section is subject to intermediate sanctions under subpart O of this part.

[63 FR 35085, June 26, 1998, as amended at 65 FR 40325, June 29, 2000; 70 FR 52026, Sept. 1, 2005; 83 FR 16731, Apr. 16, 2018]

§ 422.208 Physician incentive plans: requirements and limitations.

(a) *Definitions.* In this subpart, the following definitions apply:

Bonus means a payment made to a physician or physician group beyond any salary, fee-for-service payments, capitation, or returned withhold.

Capitation means a set dollar payment per patient per unit of time (usually per month) paid to a physician or physician group to cover a specified set of services and administrative costs without regard to the actual number of services provided. The services covered may include the physician's own services, referral services, or all medical services.

Combined Stop-Loss Insurance Deductible Table (Table PIP-1) means the table described and developed using the methodology in paragraph (f)(2)(iv) of this section.

Global capitation means a specific type of "capitation" that includes both professional and institutional services. Services covered by global capitation may also include prescription drug benefits and supplemental benefits as well as basic benefits (as those terms are defined in § 422.100(c)). For purposes of Tables PIP-1 and PIP-2 global capitation includes all Parts A and B services except hospice.

Net benefit premium means the total amount of stop-loss claims (90 percent of claims above the deductible) for that panel size divided by the panel size. It is determined for each panel size and shown in Table PIP-1, described in paragraph (f)(2)(iv) of this section. It is then used in Table PIP-2, described in paragraph (f)(2)(vi) of this section, to identify all separate institutional and separate professional deductible combinations that meet the stop-loss requirements for multi-specialty physician groups participating in PIPs.

Non-Risk Patient Equivalents (NPE) means the estimate of annual claims for physician rendered services for non-risk patients served by the physician or physician group divided by what the PMPY capitation for physician rendered services would be if the beneficiary were part of the risk arrangement. Both Medicare and non-Medicare patients are included in this calculation.

Physician group means a partnership, association, corporation, individual practice association, or other group of physicians that distributes income from the practice among members. An individual practice association is defined as a physician group for this section only if it is composed of individual physicians and has no subcontracts with physician groups.

Physician incentive plan means any compensation arrangement to pay a physician or physician group that may directly or indirectly have the effect of reducing or limiting the services provided to any plan enrollee.

Potential payments means the maximum payments possible to physicians or physician groups including payments for services they furnish directly, and additional payments based on use and costs of referral services, such as withholds, bonuses, capitation, or any other compensation to the physician or physician group. Bonuses and other compensation that are not based on use of referrals, such as quality of care furnished, patient satisfaction or committee participation, are not considered payments in the determination of substantial financial risk.

Referral services means any specialty, inpatient, outpatient, or laboratory services that a physician or physician group orders or arranges, but does not furnish directly.

Risk threshold means the maximum risk, if the risk is based on referral services, to which a physician or physician group may be exposed under a physician incentive plan without being at substantial financial risk. This is set at 25 percent risk.

Separate Stop-Loss Insurance Deductible Table (Table PIP-2) means the table described and developed using the methodology in paragraph (f)(2)(vi) of this section.

Substantial financial risk, for purposes of this section, means risk for referral services that exceeds the risk threshold.

Withhold means a percentage of payments or set dollar amounts deducted from a physician's service fee, capitation, or salary payment, and that may or may not be returned to the physician, depending on specific predetermined factors.

(b) *Applicability.* The requirements in this section apply to an MA organization and any of its subcontracting arrangements that utilize a physician incentive plan in their payment arrangements with individual physicians or physician groups. Subcontracting arrangements may include an intermediate entity, which includes but is not limited to, an individual practice association that contracts with one or more physician groups or any other organized group such as those specified in § 422.4.

(c) *Basic requirements.* Any physician incentive plan operated by an MA organization must meet the following requirements:

(1) The MA organization makes no specific payment, directly or indirectly, to a physician or physician group as an inducement to reduce or limit medically necessary services furnished to any particular enrollee. Indirect payments may include offerings of monetary value (such as stock options or waivers of debt) measured in the present or future.

(2) If the physician incentive plan places a physician or physician group at substantial financial risk (as determined under paragraph (d) of this section) for services that the physician or physician group does not furnish itself, the MA organization must assure that all physicians and physician groups at substantial financial risk have either aggregate or per-patient stop-loss protection in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section.

(3) For all physician incentive plans, the MA organization provides to CMS the information specified in § 422.210.

(d) *Determination of substantial financial risk—(1) Basis.* Substantial financial risk occurs when risk is based on the use or costs of referral services,

and that risk exceeds the risk threshold. Payments based on other factors, such as quality of care furnished, are not considered in this determination.

(2) *Risk threshold.* The risk threshold is 25 percent of potential payments.

(3) *Arrangements that cause substantial financial risk.* The following incentive arrangements cause substantial financial risk within the meaning of this section, if the physician's or physician group's patient panel size is not greater than 25,000 patients, as shown in the table at paragraph (f)(2)(iii) of this section:

(i) Withholds greater than 25 percent of potential payments.

(ii) Withholds less than 25 percent of potential payments if the physician or physician group is potentially liable for amounts exceeding 25 percent of potential payments.

(iii) Bonuses that are greater than 33 percent of potential payments minus the bonus.

(iv) Withholds plus bonuses if the withholds plus bonuses equal more than 25 percent of potential payments. The threshold bonus percentage for a particular withhold percentage may be calculated using the formula—Withhold % = $-0.75 (\text{Bonus \%}) + 25\%$.

(v) Capitation arrangements, if—

(A) The difference between the maximum potential payments and the minimum potential payments is more than 25 percent of the maximum potential payments;

(B) The maximum and minimum potential payments are not clearly explained in the contract with the physician or physician group.

(vi) Any other incentive arrangements that have the potential to hold a physician or physician group liable for more than 25 percent of potential payments.

(e) *Prohibition for private MA fee-for-service plans.* An MA fee-for-service plan may not operate a physician incentive plan.

(f) *Stop-loss protection requirements—*
(1) *Basic rule.* The MA organization must assure that all physicians and physician groups at substantial financial risk have either aggregate or per-patient stop-loss protection in accordance with the following requirements:

(2) *Specific requirements.* (i) Aggregate stop-loss protection must cover 90 percent of the costs of referral services that exceed 25 percent of potential payments.

(ii) For per-patient stop-loss protection if the stop-loss protection provided is on a per-patient basis, the stop-loss limit (deductible) per patient must be determined based on the size of the patient panel and may be a combined policy or consist of separate policies for professional services and institutional services. In determining patient panel size, the patients may be pooled in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(iii)(A) Stop-loss protection must cover at least 90 percent of costs of referral services above the deductible or an actuarial equivalent amount of the costs of referral services that exceed the per-patient deductible limit. The single combined deductible for the required stop-loss protection for the various panel sizes for contract years beginning on or after January 1, 2019 is determined using the Combined Stop-Loss Insurance Deductible Table (Table PIP-1). For panel sizes not shown on Table PIP-1 and for values not shown on Table PIP-2, linear interpolation (between the table values) may be used to identify the maximum deductible(s) for the required stop-loss coverage. Tables PIP-1 and PIP-2 apply to only multi-specialty physician groups in global capitation arrangements with per-patient stop-loss insurance. For all other physician incentive plan arrangements, the MA organization must assure that the physician or physician group entering into the physician incentive plan arrangement is covered by actuarially equivalent stop-loss protection that meets the requirements of this regulation.

(B) Using Table PIP-1, the deductible is identified for the panel size that is the number of risk patients plus non-risk patient equivalents. Non-risk patient equivalents may add a maximum of \$100,000 to the deductible. The deductible for the stop-loss insurance required to be provided for the physician or physician group is then based on the lesser of:

(1) The deductible for the risk patient panel size plus \$100,000; and

(2) The deductible for the panel size that is the total of the number of risk patients plus non-risk patient equivalents.

(iv) Table 1 is developed and updated by CMS using the methodology in this paragraph. CMS publishes Table PIP-1 in guidance (such as an attachment to the Rate Announcement issued under section 1853(b) of the Act) in advance of the bid due date for the upcoming year if CMS determines that an update would be prudent for that year.

(A) The stop-loss tables are calculated using claims data for a statistically valid sample of beneficiaries enrolled in Fee-for-Service Medicare Parts A and B from the most available recent year. The sample includes only claims for beneficiaries eligible for both Part A and Part B for whom Medicare is the primary insurer and excludes hospice claims. The estimate of medical group income is derived from payments for all Part A and Part B services (excluding hospice) in the sampled claims data (to emulate a multi-specialty practice). The central limit theorem is used to obtain the distribution of claim means for a multi-specialty group of any given panel size. The distribution of claim means is used to obtain, with 98 percent confidence, the point at which a multi-specialty group of a given panel size would, through referral services, lose no more than 25 percent of potential payments. This point is the deductible in Table PIP-1 for the given panel size.

(B) The 'net benefit premium' (NBP) column in Table PIP-1 is not used for computation of combined insurance but is used to determine the separate deductibles for professional services and institutional services in the *Separate Stop-Loss Insurance Deductible Table* (Table PIP-2).

(C) The NBP is computed by dividing the total amount of stop loss claims (90 percent of claims above the deductible) for that panel size by the panel size.

(v)(A) Insurance using separate deductibles for professional and institutional claims is permissible so long as the separate deductibles for institutional services and professional services are determined using Table 2 as described in paragraph (f)(2)(vi)(B) of this section. Table PIP-2 is developed

and updated by CMS using the methodology in paragraph (f)(2)(vi). CMS publishes Table PIP-2 in guidance (such as an attachment to the Rate Announcement issued under section 1853(b) of the Act) in advance of the bid due date for the upcoming year if CMS determines that an update would be prudent for that year.

(B) The maximum deductibles for each category of services (institutional and professional claims) are identified by using the net benefit premium (NBP) determined in Table PIP-1 as the starting point in Table PIP-2. Any combination of institutional and professional attachment points for which the NBP in Table PIP-2 is greater than the NBP determined in Table PIP-1 is permissible. Interpolation may be used to find the NBP values in Table PIP-2 that are closest to the NBP identified in Table PIP-1.

(vi) Table PIP-2 is developed using a methodology similar to that for Table PIP-1.

(A) Claims data are obtained as described in paragraph (f)(2)(iv)(A).

(B) Professional and institutional claims are defined and categorized based on industry standards and based on payments for Part A and Part B services.

(C) The central limit theorem is used to obtain the distribution of claim means and deductibles are obtained at the 98 percent confidence level.

(3) *Special insurance.* If there is a different type of stop-loss policy obtained by the physician group, it must be actuarially equivalent to the coverage shown in Tables PIP-1 and PIP-2. Actuarially equivalent deductibles are acceptable if the insurance is actuarially certified by an attesting actuary who fulfills all of the following requirements:

(i) Develops the deductibles to be actuarially equivalent to those coverages in the Tables.

(ii) Makes the computations in accordance with generally accepted actuarial principles and practices.

(iii) Meets the qualification standards established by the American Academy of Actuaries and follow the practice standards established by the Actuarial Standards Board.