

Standardized bid amount means, for a prescription drug plan that provides basic prescription drug coverage, the PDP approved bid; for a prescription drug plan that provides supplemental prescription drug coverage, the portion of the PDP approved bid that is attributable to basic prescription drug coverage; for a MA-PD plan, the portion of the accepted bid amount that is attributable to basic prescription drug coverage.

§ 423.265 Submission of bids and related information.

(a) *Eligibility for bidding.* An applicant may submit a bid to become a Part D plan sponsor.

(b) *Bid submission*—(1) *General.* Not later than the first Monday in June, each potential Part D sponsor must submit bids and supplemental information described in this section for each Part D plan it intends to offer in the subsequent calendar year.

(2) *Substantial differences between bids*—(i) *General rule.* Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section, potential Part D sponsors' bid submissions must reflect differences in benefit packages or plan costs that CMS determines to represent substantial differences relative to a sponsor's other bid submissions. In order to be considered "substantially different," each bid must be significantly different from the sponsor's other bids with respect to beneficiary out-of-pocket costs or formulary structures.

(ii) *Exception.* A potential Part D sponsor's enhanced bid submission does not have to reflect the substantial differences as required in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section relative to any of its other enhanced bid submissions.

(3) *Limit on number of plan offerings.* Potential Part D sponsors' bid submissions may include no more than three stand-alone prescription drug plan offerings in a service area and must include only one basic prescription drug plan offering.

(4) *Bid acceptance.* CMS may decline to accept any or every bid submitted by a Part D sponsor or potential Part D sponsor.

(5) *Limitations on changes.* After a Part D sponsor is permitted to begin marketing prospective plan year offer-

ings for the following contract year (consistent with § 423.2263(a)), the Part D sponsor must not change, and must provide the benefits described in its CMS-approved plan benefit package (PBP) (as defined at § 423.182) for the contract year without modification, except where a modification in benefits is required by law.

(c) *Basic rule for bid.* Each potential Part D sponsor must submit a bid and supplemental information in a format to be specified by CMS for each Part D plan it offers. Each bid must reflect a uniform benefit package, including premium (except as provided for the late enrollment penalty described in § 423.286(d)(3)) and all applicable cost sharing, for all individuals enrolled in the plan. Each bid must reflect the applicant's estimate of its average monthly revenue requirements to provide qualified prescription drug coverage (including any supplemental coverage) for a Part D eligible individual with a national average risk profile for the factors described in § 423.329(b)(1).

(1) *Included costs.* The bid includes costs (including administrative costs and return on investment/profit) for which the plan is responsible in providing basic and supplemental benefits.

(2) *Excluded costs.* The bid does not include costs associated with payments by the enrollee for deductible, co-payments, coinsurance, and liability above the plan allowance in the case of out-of-network claims, payments projected to be made by CMS for reinsurance, or any other costs for which the sponsor is not responsible.

(3) *Actuarial valuation.* The bid must be prepared in accordance with CMS actuarial guidelines based on generally accepted actuarial principles. A qualified actuary must certify the plan's actuarial valuation (which may be prepared by others under his or her direction or review), and must be a member of the American Academy of Actuaries to be deemed qualified. Applicants may use qualified outside actuaries to prepare their bids.

(d) *Specific requirements for bids.* The bid and supplemental information submission must include the following information:

(1) *Coverage.* A description of the coverage to be provided under the plan, including any supplemental coverage and the deductible and other cost sharing.

(2) *Actuarial value of bid components.* The applicant must provide the following information on bid components, as well as actuarial certification that the values are calculated according to CMS guidelines on actuarial valuation, including adjustment for the effect that providing alternative prescription drug coverage (rather than defined standard prescription drug coverage) has on drug utilization, if applicable.

(i) The actuarial value of the qualified prescription drug coverage to be offered under each plan for a Part D eligible individual with a national average risk profile for the factors described in § 423.329(b)(1) and the basis for the estimate.

(ii) The portion of the bid attributable to basic prescription drug coverage and the portion (if any) attributable to supplemental benefits.

(iii) The assumptions regarding reinsurance amounts payable under § 423.329(c) used in calculating the bid.

(iv) The assumptions regarding low-income cost-sharing payable under § 423.329(d) used in calculating the bid.

(v) The amount of administrative costs and return on investment or profit included in the bid.

(3) *Service area.* A description of the service area of the plan.

(4) *Level of risk assumed.* For a potential Part D sponsor, the level of risk assumed in the bid specified in paragraph (e) of this section.

(5) *Plan Average Risk Score.* An estimate of the plan's average prescription drug risk score (as established under § 423.329(b)) for all projected enrollees for purposes of risk adjusting any supplemental premium.

(6) *Additional information.* Additional information CMS requests to support bid amounts and facilitate negotiation.

(e) *Special rule for PDP sponsors.* Bids for all plans offered by a potential PDP sponsor in a region, but not those of potential MA organizations offering MA-PD plans, PACE organizations offering PACE plans including qualified prescription drug coverage, and cost-based HMOs or CMPs offering section 1876 cost plans including qualified pre-

scription drug coverage, may include a uniform modification of the amount of risk assumed (based on a process to be specified) as described in one or more of the following paragraphs. Any such modification applies to all plans offered by the PDP sponsor in a PDP region.

(1) *Increase in Federal percentage assumed in initial risk corridor.* An equal percentage point increase in the percents applied for costs between the first and second threshold limits under § 423.336(b)(2)(i) and (b)(2)(ii)(A) and § 423.336 (b)(3)(i) and (b)(3)(ii)(A). This provision does not affect the application of a higher percentage for plans in 2006 or 2007 under § 423.336(b)(2)(iii).

(2) *Increase in Federal percentage assumed in second risk corridor.* An equal percentage point increase in the percents applied for costs above the second threshold upper limit or below the second threshold upper limit under paragraphs § 423.336(b)(2)(ii)(B) and (b)(3)(ii)(B).

(3) *Decrease in size of risk corridors.* A decrease in the size of the risk corridors by means of reductions in the threshold risk percentages specified in § 423.336(a)(2)(ii)(A) and/or (a)(2)(ii)(B).

(f) *Special rule for fallback prescription drug plans.* Fallback prescription drug plan bids are not subject to the rules in this section. They must follow requirements specified in § 423.863.

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§ 423.272 Review and negotiation of bid and approval of plans submitted by potential Part D sponsors.

(a) *Review and negotiation regarding information, terms and conditions.* CMS reviews the information filed under § 423.265(c) in order to conduct negotiations regarding the terms and conditions of the proposed bid and benefit plan. In addition to its general negotiating authority under section 1860D–11(d)(2)(A) of the Act, CMS has authority similar to that of the Director of the Office of Personnel Management for health benefit plans under Chapter 89 of title 5, U.S.C.

(b) *Approval of proposed plans.* CMS approves the Part D plan only if the plan and the Part D sponsor offering the plan comply with all applicable CMS Part D requirements, including those related to the provision of qualified prescription drug coverage and actuarial determinations.

(1) *Application of revenue requirements standard.* CMS approves a bid submitted under § 423.265 only if it determines that the portions of the bid attributable to basic and supplemental prescription drug coverage are supported by the actuarial bases provided and reasonably and equitably reflect the revenue requirements (as used for purposes of section 1302(8)(C) of the Public Health Service Act) for benefits provided under that plan, less the sum (determined on a monthly per capita basis) of the actuarial value of the reinsurance payments under § 423.329(c).

(2) *Plan design.* (i) CMS does not approve a bid if it finds that the design of the plan and its benefits (including any formulary and tiered formulary structure) or its utilization management program are likely to substantially discourage enrollment by certain Part D eligible individuals under the plan.

(ii) If the design of the categories and classes within a formulary is consistent with the model guidelines (if any) established by the United States Pharmacopeia, the formulary categories and classes alone will not be found to discourage enrollment.

(iii) A plan that adopts the categories and classes discussed in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section may nevertheless be found to discourage enrollment because it excludes specific drugs from the formulary.

(3) *Substantial differences between bids—(i) General.* CMS approves a bid only if it finds that the benefit package or plan costs represented by that bid are substantially different as provided under § 423.265(b)(2) of this subpart from the benefit package or plan costs represented by another bid submitted by the same Part D sponsor.

(ii) *Transition period for PDP sponsors with new acquisitions.* After a 2-year transition period, as determined by CMS, CMS approves a bid offered by a PDP sponsor (or by a parent organization to that PDP sponsor) that re-

cently purchased (or otherwise acquired or merged with) another Part D sponsor if it finds that the benefit package or plan costs represented by that bid are substantially different from benefit packages or plan costs represented by another bid submitted by the same Part D sponsor (or parent organization to that Part D sponsor), as provided under § 423.265(b)(2).

(4) CMS may decline to approve a bid if the Part D sponsor proposes significant increases in cost sharing or decreases in benefits offered under the plan.

(c) *Limited risk plans.* (1) Application of limited risk plans. There is no limit on the number of full risk plans that CMS approves under paragraph (b) of this section. CMS approves a limited risk plan in accordance with paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) of this section only if the access requirements under § 423.859 are not otherwise met for a PDP region.

(2) *Maximizing assumption of risk.* CMS gives priority in approval for those limited risk plans bearing the highest level of risk, but may take into account the level of the bids submitted by the plans and is not required to accept the limited risk plan with the highest assumption of risk. In no case does CMS approve a limited risk plan under which the modification of risk level provides for no (or a minimal) level of financial risk.

(3) *Limited exercise of authority.* CMS approves only the minimum number of limited risk plans needed to meet the access requirements.

(d) *Special rules for private fee-for-service (PFFS) plans that offer prescription drug coverage.* PFFS plans (as defined at § 422.4(a)(3)) choosing to offer prescription drug coverage are subject to all MA-PD bid submission and approval requirements applicable to MA-PD plans with the following exceptions:

(1) *Exemption from negotiations.* These plans are exempt from the review and negotiation process in paragraph (a) of this section, and are not held to the revenue requirements standard in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(2) *Requirements regarding negotiated prices.* These plans are not required to provide access to negotiated prices. However, if they do, they must meet