

(ii) The number of ACO participants, ACO providers/suppliers, and ACO professionals that are excluded under § 425.507(b) that voluntarily reported and received a MIPS Promoting Interoperability performance category score for the applicable performance year.

(c) *Approval of public reporting information.* Information reported on an ACO's public reporting Web page in compliance with the requirements of the standardized format specified by CMS is not subject to marketing review and approval under § 425.310.

(d) *Public reporting by CMS.* CMS may publicly report ACO-specific information, including but not limited to the ACO public reporting Web page address and the information required to be publicly reported under paragraph (b) of this section.

[80 FR 32840, June 9, 2015, as amended at 83 FR 68068, Dec. 31, 2018; 87 FR 70232, Nov. 18, 2022; 88 FR 79544, Nov. 16, 2023]

#### § 425.310 Marketing requirements.

(a) *Requirements.* Marketing materials and activities must:

(1) Use template language developed by CMS, if available.

(2) Not be used in a discriminatory manner or for discriminatory purposes.

(3) Comply with § 425.304 regarding beneficiary incentives.

(4) Not be materially inaccurate or misleading.

(b) *Monitoring.* (1) CMS may request the submission of marketing materials and activities at any time. If CMS determines that the marketing materials and activities do not comply with the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section, CMS will issue written notice of disapproval to the ACO.

(2) The ACO shall discontinue, and require its ACO participants, ACO providers/suppliers, and other individuals or entities performing functions or services related to ACO activities to discontinue, use of any marketing materials or activities disapproved by CMS.

(c) *Sanctions.* Failure to comply with this section will subject the ACO to the penalties set forth in § 425.216, termination under § 425.218, or both.

[87 FR 70233, Nov. 18, 2022]

#### § 425.312 Beneficiary notifications.

(a) *Notifications to fee-for-service beneficiaries.* (1) An ACO shall ensure that Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries are notified about all of the following in the manner set forth in paragraph (a)(2) of this section:

(i) That each ACO participant and its ACO providers/suppliers are participating in the Shared Savings Program.

(ii) The beneficiary's opportunity to decline claims data sharing under § 425.708.

(iii) Beginning July 1, 2019, the beneficiary's ability to, and the process by which, he or she may identify or change identification of the individual he or she designated for purposes of voluntary alignment (as described in § 425.402(e)).

(2) Notification of the information specified in paragraph (a)(1) of this section must be carried out through the following methods:

(i) By an ACO participant posting signs in all of its facilities.

(ii) By an ACO participant making standardized written notices available upon request in all settings in which beneficiaries receive primary care services.

(iii) In the case of an ACO that has selected preliminary prospective assignment with retrospective reconciliation, by the ACO or ACO participant providing each fee-for-service beneficiary with a standardized written notice at least once during an agreement period in the form and manner specified by CMS. The standardized written notice must be furnished to all fee-for-service beneficiaries prior to or at the first primary care service visit during the first performance year in which the beneficiary receives a primary care service from an ACO participant.

(iv) In the case of an ACO that has selected prospective assignment, by the ACO or ACO participant providing each prospectively assigned beneficiary with a standardized written notice at least once during an agreement period in the form and manner specified by CMS. The standardized written notice must be furnished during the performance year for which the beneficiary is prospectively assigned to the ACO.

(v) Following the provision of the standardized written notice to a beneficiary, as specified in paragraphs (a)(2)(iii) and (iv) of this section, the ACO or ACO participant must provide a verbal or written follow-up communication to the beneficiary.

(A) The follow-up communication must occur no later than the earlier of the beneficiary's next primary care service visit or 180 days from the date the standardized written notice was provided.

(B) The ACO must retain a record of all beneficiaries receiving the follow-up communication, and the form and manner in which the communication was made available to the beneficiary. The ACO must make these records available to CMS upon request.

(b) *Beneficiary incentive program notifications.* (1) Beginning July 1, 2019, an ACO that operates a beneficiary incentive program under § 425.304(c) shall ensure that the ACO or its ACO participants notify assigned beneficiaries of the availability of the beneficiary incentive program, including a description of the qualifying services for which an assigned beneficiary is eligible to receive an incentive payment (as described in § 425.304(c)).

(2) Notification of the information specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section must be carried out by an ACO or ACO participant during each relevant performance year by providing each assigned beneficiary with a standardized written notice prior to or at the first primary care visit of the performance year in the form and manner specified by CMS.

(c) The beneficiary notifications under this section meet the definition of marketing materials and activities under § 425.20 and therefore must meet all applicable marketing requirements described in § 425.310.

[76 FR 67973, Nov. 2, 2011, as amended at 80 FR 32840, June 9, 2015; 83 FR 68068, Dec. 31, 2018; 86 FR 65684, Nov. 19, 2021; 87 FR 70233, Nov. 18, 2022]

**§ 425.314 Audits and record retention.**

(a) *Right to audit.* The ACO must agree, and must require its ACO participants, ACO providers/suppliers, and other individuals or entities performing functions or services related to

ACO activities to agree, that the CMS, DHHS, the Comptroller General, the Federal Government or their designees have the right to audit, inspect, investigate, and evaluate any books, contracts, records, documents and other evidence of the ACO, ACO participants, and ACO providers/suppliers, and other individuals or entities performing functions or services related to ACO activities that pertain to all of the following:

(1) The ACO's compliance with Shared Savings Program.

(2) The quality of services performed and determination of amount due to or from CMS under the participation agreement.

(3) The ability of the ACO to bear the risk of potential losses and to repay any losses to CMS.

(4) The ACO's operation of a beneficiary incentive program.

(b) *Maintenance of records.* An ACO must agree, and must require its ACO participants, ACO providers/suppliers, and other individuals or entities performing functions or services related to ACO activities to agree to the following:

(1) To maintain and give CMS, DHHS, the Comptroller General, the Federal Government or their designees access to all books, contracts, records, documents, and other evidence (including data related to Medicare utilization and costs, quality performance measures, shared savings distributions, information related to operation of a beneficiary incentive program, and other financial arrangements related to ACO activities) sufficient to enable the audit, evaluation, investigation, and inspection of the ACO's compliance with program requirements, quality of services performed, right to any shared savings payment, or obligation to repay losses, ability to bear the risk of potential losses, and ability to repay any losses to CMS.

(2) To maintain such books, contracts, records, documents, and other evidence for a period of 10 years from the final date of the agreement period or from the date of completion of any audit, evaluation, or inspection, whichever is later, unless—

(i) CMS determines there is a special need to retain a particular record or group of records for a longer period and