



CMS Extends Reporting Exceptions to Providers Impacted by Hurricane Irma

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On September 18, 2017, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a memorandum updating the Medicare quality reporting and value-based purchasing programs exceptions CMS is extending to certain healthcare providers affected by recent hurricanes.¹ These providers will be granted exceptions without having to submit an Extraordinary Circumstances Exceptions (ECE) request if they are located in Florida, Georgia, certain municipios in Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The CMS policy will apply to acute care hospitals, PPS-exempt cancer hospitals, inpatient psychiatric facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, renal dialysis facilities, long-term care hospitals, and ambulatory surgical centers located in areas affected by Hurricane Irma. Last week, we provided a detailed summary of the exceptions offered to providers impacted by Hurricane Harvey.² The updated provisions are nearly identical to the Hurricane Harvey exceptions. However, CMS did clarify that providers or facilities directly impacted “by hurricane or resulting flood damage,” not only providers or facilities impacted by flood damage, may request an exception to the reporting requirements under the Hospital Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) Program, Hospital-Acquired Condition (HAC) Reduction Program, and Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program.

Under the updated memorandum, all 67 counties in Florida and all 159 counties in Georgia are within the “major disaster” areas designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These geographically expanded reporting exceptions are offered in addition to a number of temporary blanket waivers intended to “prevent gaps in access to care for beneficiaries impacted by the emergency.”³ CMS will continue to provide updates to providers on expanding waivers. More information is available from CMS at <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/Hurricanes.html>.

¹ <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/Downloads/Memo-Reporting-Requirements-Facilities-Irma.pdf>

² <http://www.agg.com/cms-grants-post-hurricane-reporting-exceptions-for-providers-impacted-by-storms-09-12-2017/>

³ <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/Hurricanes.html>

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