



2020 Annual Update for the Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Bonus Payments

MLN Matters Number: MM11437 **Revised** Related Change Request (CR) Number: 11437
Related CR Release Date: August 23, 2019 Effective Date: January 1, 2020
Related CR Transmittal Number: R4379CP Implementation Date: January 6, 2020

Note: We revised this article on September 4, 2019, to add: “MACs will continue to accept the AQ modifier on claims for services furnished in a geographic HPSA that is not on the list of ZIP codes for automated payments” (page 2). All other information is unchanged.

PROVIDER TYPES AFFECTED

This MLN Matters article is for physicians and providers billing Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) for services provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

PROVIDER ACTION NEEDED

CR 11437 provides files for the automated payments of Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) bonuses for dates of service January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020. Please make sure your billing staffs are aware of these updates.

BACKGROUND

Section 413(b) of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 mandated an annual update to the automated HPSA bonus payment file. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) creates the automated HPSA ZIP code file using the latest designations as close as possible to November 1 of each year.

CMS makes the HPSA ZIP code file available to the MACs in early December of each year. MACs implement the HPSA ZIP code file and use it for claims with dates of service January 1 to December 31 of the following year. The MACs must make automatic HPSA bonus payments to physicians providing eligible services in a ZIP code contained on the file.

Note that:

- MACs will continue to accept the AQ modifier for partially designated HPSA claims
- MACs will continue to review samples of paid claims submitted with the AQ modifier
- **MACs will continue to accept the AQ modifier on claims for services furnished in a geographic HPSA that is not on the list of ZIP codes for automated payments**

You should review the Physician Bonuses webpage at <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/index.html> each year to determine whether you need to add modifier AQ to your claim in order to receive the bonus payment, or to see if the ZIP code in which you rendered services will automatically receive the HPSA bonus payment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The official instruction, CR 11437, issued to your MAC regarding this change is available at <https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/2019Downloads/R4379CP.pdf>.

If you have questions, your MACs may have more information. Find their website at <http://go.cms.gov/MAC-website-list>.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date of Change	Description
September 4, 2019	We revised this article to add: "MACs will continue to accept the AQ modifier on claims for services furnished in a geographic HPSA that is not on the list of ZIP codes for automated payments" (page 2).
August 23, 2019	Initial article released.

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