
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Memorandum

May 22, 2020

RE: MBQIP Eligibility Policy Update

To: All Flex Coordinators and MBQIP Partners

From: Natalia Vargas, MBQIP Coordinator

For the past few years, the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex) has required participation in the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP) for Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs). We highly appreciate your demonstrated commitment and participation in MBQIP. As our nation addresses the emerging challenges related to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, FORHP has made a decision to *suspend* eligibility requirements¹ for the Flex Grant Year FY 2020 (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021) in order to support all hospitals to prioritize pandemic response activities. This policy exception applies to clinical encounter data from 2018-2019. Through this MBQIP eligibility suspension, FORHP will allow *all* Flex states to participate in Flex-funded activities during this period and will not penalize any CAHs that are unable to meet the minimum MBQIP reporting requirements.

Per FORHP policy, CAHs must meet two criteria to be eligible for FY 2020 Flex-funded activities: (1) A signed MOU to submit and share MBQIP data (2) Reported data on at least one MBQIP Core measure, for at least two quarters, in at least three of the four quality domains, within the FY 2020 reporting period. For this policy exception, Flex grantees will not need to submit an MBQIP waiver for FY 2020.

During this period of exception, FORHP highly encourages CAHs that have the ability to report to continue reporting on as many measures as possible. All data collected and reported for FY 2020 will continue to be tracked by FORHP to assess future eligibility requirements and opportunities to improve quality of care. Please contact your Project Officer and MBQIP Coordinator if you have concerns about this policy update.

Thank you,

Natalia Vargas, MPH

Flex Program Coordinator

¹ Please see a full list of MBQIP Eligibility requirements in page 2.

Criteria for Eligibility in Flex Funds for CAHs, FFY 2020 (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021):

- (1) A CAH must have a signed MBQIP Memorandum of Understanding
- (2) A CAH must have reported data on at least one measure for at least any two quarters within the reporting period listed below in at least three of the four MBQIP Core Quality Domains.

Note: Annual submission meets the requirement of two quarters.