

How does the end of the PHE impact LTC ACO participants?

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health and Human Services declared a national emergency and issued temporary measures to support ACOs and other healthcare providers, including flexibility in care delivery, telehealth services, and changes to Medicare payment policies. Now nearly three-and-a-half years later, the federal public health emergency (PHE) will end on May 11, 2023.

The end of the federal COVID-19 emergency declaration will have implications for the healthcare system, including our ACO.

The policies that affect LTC ACO include:

TELEHEALTH

Medicare will continue paying for telehealth-related flexibilities until December 31, 2024. This includes making care possible wherever the patient is located and covering audio-only services.

COVERING OF SHARED LOSSES

MSSP ACOs' shared losses will be multiplied by 5/12 (the percentage of months the PHE would be in place in 2023), should shared losses be incurred.

REMOVING OF COVID-RELATED CLAIMS

CMS will stop removing a beneficiary's Part A and B expenditures in months triggered by an episode of care (identified by inpatient care for treatment of COVID-19) from MSSP's performance year expenditures. Those expenditures were also removed from benchmarks and trend updates.

QUALITY REPORTING

ACOs that fail to report quality data or report but fail to meet data completeness or case minimum requirements will have their quality score set to the quality performance standard (i.e., achieves the maximum shared savings rate).

You may have read about the skilled nursing facility three-day waiver. Please note this does not impact our organization as LTC ACO does not opt for the three-day hospital stay waiver by design. At the end of the PHE, the original Medicare policy applies requiring a three-day hospital stay prior to coverage for a skilled nursing facility. Part A stay resumes for LTC ACO beneficiaries.

As your partner, we are a resource for any questions you may have on how the end of PHE impacts your practice or facility.

Stay safe and be well,



Jason Feuerman

President

jason.feberman@ltcaco.com



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