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**State of Maryland**

**Department of Health**

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**To:** Hospital Case Mix Liaisons

**From:** Claudine Williams, Associate Director, Clinical Data Administration

**Date:** May 30, 2019

**Re:** Hospital Discharge Data Vendor Update, Items on the Radar, and Quarterly Data Forums

This memorandum serves to inform hospitals of a vendor change for the hospital discharge data processing. In addition, this memo outlines the timing of changes to improve data quality that were discussed during the FY20 Case Mix Annual Meeting on February 15, 2019, including the start of a HSCRC convened quarterly data forum.

**Vendor Updates**

Historically, the Saint Paul Group (SPG) has supported the HSCRC’s monthly and quarterly hospital discharge data processing activities. SPG will continue to be the HSCRC’s Repository Vendor but starting in June 1, 2019, hMetrix will become the HSCRC’s data processing contractor. There will be a period of transition where SPG will continue to process the hospital discharge data through the FY 2020 Q1 final (July 2019, August 2019 & September 2019 (Prelim)). Beginning with the October Preliminary submission in November 2019 (FY2020 Q2), HSCRC will completely transition to hMetrix as the data processing vendor.

The Repository is a centralized home for the HSCRC’s processed case-mix data and hospitals will continue to submit data to SPG using the current process. During the transition, please continue to address data submission and data processing concerns to joan.hebron@thestpaulgroup.com until the FY 2020 Q1 Final due on or around November 29. Beginning with FY 2020 Q2 October prelim data, please address any data processing concerns to HSCRC.Support@hMetrix.com . All other questions regarding the case-mix data, including requests for extensions or data request can continue to go to Oscar.Ibarra@maryland.gov or claudine.williams@maryland.gov.

*Table to Assist Hospitals in Directing Hospital Discharge Questions*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Types of Questions** | **Entity & Email Address** |
| **Until FY 2020 Q1 Final Submission** **(**June to October, 2019**)** | **Beginning with FY2020 Q2 October Preliminary Submission (**November 2019 onwards**)** |
| Data Submission issues (i.e., files are not uploading to repository) | Saint Paul Group (SPG) joan.hebron@thestpaulgroup.com | Saint Paul Group (SPG) joan.hebron@thestpaulgroup.com |
| Error reports and processing questions | Saint Paul Group (SPG) joan.hebron@thestpaulgroup.com | hMetrix (HSCRC.Support@hMetrix.com)  |
| Extensions, resubmissions, submission due dates | HSCRCOscar.Ibarra@maryland.gov or claudine.williams@maryland.gov.  | HSCRC Oscar.Ibarra@maryland.gov or claudine.williams@maryland.gov. |

**Moratorium on Data Requests**

To mitigate risks during the vendor transition, the HSCRC is implementing a moratorium on all data requests and hospital requests to resubmit monthly data. We understand that many stakeholders rely on these processes to provide the most accurate data to the HSCRC but believe it is of the utmost importance to do everything we can to ensure a seamless transition. The moratorium will be in effect from June 1 through October 2019.

**Improving Data Quality: Data Submission Requirements (DSR) Updates and Enhancing Edits**

As part of the HSCRC’s efforts to improve data quality, the HSCRC has met with stakeholders and its vendors to revisit and consolidate the Health Plan Payer fields and do a full review of the DSR. Proposed changes will be discussed at a future quarterly data forum. Given the vendor change, the HSCRC plans to implement changes for the Expected Payer and Health Plan Payer codes in FY 2021 (July 1, 2020). HSCRC anticipates very minor changes to the DSR for FY 2020. By delaying the major changes until FY 2021, we hope to minimize and confusion for the industry and reduce the risk during this vendor change.

In addition to improving the DSR, the HSCRC has worked closely to review the current edits included in the data processing. This initiative includes:

* Removing old and unnecessary edits,
* Creating additional edits around variables with historical quality issues, and
* Improving the description of the edits to help hospitals understand why certain records were flagged as erroneous.

Improvement to edit descriptions as well as downgrading some errors to warning are already in production and are noted in the FY 2020 DSR. For the edits in development, the HSCRC plans to review its proposed changes with a group of hospital stakeholders in an “Edits Subgroup” at the end of summer, following the conclusion of the “Health Plan Payer and DSR Subgroup” that is currently being held. If you or someone from your hospital would like to participate in this sub-group, please email Oscar Ibarra at oscar.ibarra@maryland.gov. Following stakeholder review, revisions to the edits will go live in early 2020.

**Quarterly Data Forums**

Finally, the HSCRC with its data processing vendor hMetrix, is planning to host a quarterly data forum that case-mix liaisons will be invited to join. The purpose of these quarterly data forums are to provide a place for HSCRC staff and Hospital representatives and stakeholders can discuss issues related to Case Mix and Financial Data. Our goal for these forums is to increase our level of communication during this year of transition and help minimize any potential challenges as we work together to continue to enhance the quality of the hospital discharge data over the next few years. Please be on the look-out for an invite from Oscar with our first data forum starting in late summer.

Thank you again for your hard work and partnership with the HSCRC.

If you have any questions regarding the information in the memo or regarding the submission of monthly and quarterly hospital discharge data, please contact Claudine Williams on 410-764-2561, or by email at claudine.williams@maryland.gov.