



2017 MEDICARE EHR INCENTIVE PROGRAM PAYMENT ADJUSTMENT HARDSHIP EXCEPTION APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Providers will find both an individual and a group option allowing multiple providers to apply for a hardship exception on a single application. This new form is the result of the Patient Access and Medicare Protection Act, Pub. L. No. 114-115, enacted December 28, 2015, which was established with respect to the payment adjustment for 2017, in that the Secretary may consider hardship exceptions for categories of eligible professionals and hospitals in a new, more streamlined process.

Multiple providers and provider types may apply as a group using a single submission. The hardship exception categories are the same for both groups and individuals.

If you or your organization did not successfully meet meaningful use for an EHR reporting period in 2015 and would like to apply for a hardship exception, the deadlines are as followed:

- An application including only eligible professionals (EPs) must meet the EP deadline on March 15, 2016.
- An application including EPs and eligible hospitals must meet the EP deadline on March 15, 2016.
- An application including only eligible hospitals must meet the deadline of April 1, 2016.

Application can be found at: https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/PaymentAdj_Hardship.html

Organizations and Providers that do not need to submit this application:

- **New Hospitals** – If you are a new eligible hospital AND obtained or will obtain a new CMS Certification Number (CCN) between 10/01/2014 and 9/30/2016, you do not need to submit this application. You will be granted a hardship exception and are automatically exempt from the 2017 payment adjustment based on the data in Medicare Provider Enrollment, Chain and Ownership System (PECOS).
- **Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)** – If you are a CAH, you should apply on the specific form dedicated for CAHs use: https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/PaymentAdj_Hardship.html
- **Eligible Professionals** – If you are an EP in the following categories you do not need to submit this application:
 - **New EPs** – The “New EP” determination is based on when an EP begins to submit Medicare claims. For example, an EP who begins to submit claims to Medicare in 2015 would receive an exception to the payment adjustment in Calendar Years (CYs) 2016 and 2017, but would need to begin demonstrating meaningful use in CY 2016 to avoid the payment adjustment in CY 2018.



- Specialties - If an EP is classified in the Medicare Provider Enrollment, Chain and Ownership System (PECOS) as having one of the following 5 specialty codes as the primary area of practice, the EP does not need to submit this form. The EP is automatically granted a hardship exception from the 2017 payment adjustment based on the designation in PECOS.
 - Anesthesiology (05)
 - Diagnostic Radiology (30)
 - Interventional Radiology (94)
 - Nuclear Medicine (36)
 - Pathology (22)
- Hospital-Based EPs - If you are a hospital-based EP for CY 2015, you DO NOT need to submit this form to avoid the CY 2017 payment adjustment.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION

- Electronic submission of this application is strongly recommended as submitting hardcopy or faxed applications may result in processing delays. If electronic submission is not possible, please TYPE or PRINT all information using blue or black ink; do not use pencil.
- Please download the application and type in the dynamic form. Attach the completed application to an email and send to ehrhardsip@provider-resources.com.
- If an electronic submission is not feasible, this application can be submitted via fax to **814-456-7132**
- If approved, the hardship exception is applicable for only the 2017 payment adjustment year.
- Determinations made by CMS or their designee regarding hardship exception applications are final and cannot be appealed.
- All hardship exception determinations will be returned via email from ehrhardsip@provider-resources.com to the email address provided on the application.
- Provider identification information must include the individual NPI for each EP included on the application. Failure to provide the individual NPI will result in a determination delay of the hardship exception application.
- CMS will accept provider identification information (NPI and CCN) submitted within the form in the section provided or as a Microsoft Excel (.xls) or Microsoft Excel Open XML spreadsheet (.xlsx), comma delimited (.csv) or text file (.txt) format. These files must be submitted with the application and directly accessible through the email attachment.
- Retain a copy of your completed hardship exception application for your records.