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DATE: January 7, 2025

TO: Current and Future Medicare Advantage Organizations and Prescription Drug Plan Sponsors

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SUBJECT: Release of Contract Year (CY) 2026 Medicare Advantage (MA), Prescription Drug Benefit (Part D) and Related CY 2026 Applications & Deadlines

CMS announces the release of materials for the CY 2026 Medicare Advantage (MA), Prescription Drug Plan (PDP), Employer/Union-Only Group Waiver Plan (EGWP), and Special Needs Plan (SNP) applications. Applications are now posted on the CMS websites listed below and will be available for completion in the Health Plan Management System (HPMS) on January 8, 2025. All applications (excluding PACE applications) must be completed in HPMS by 8:00 p.m. EST on February 12, 2025. All materials and supporting documentation must be submitted through HPMS.

Prior to application submission, organizations should review their past performance in accordance with 42 CFR §§ 422.502(b) and 423.503(b). Organizations should take this information into account when making business decisions about submitting CY 2026 applications, given the risk that CMS may deny the application on past performance grounds, pursuant to §§ 422.502(b)(1) and 423.503(b)(1).

MA and SNP Applications, including Network Adequacy

Trainings on the MA (including EGWP) and SNP applications are available on the CMS YouTube channel as follows:

- MA application training at https://youtu.be/ol_5Bz6uBxY, and
- SNP application training at <https://youtu.be/5r9TeoWJ-FE>.

CMS is conducting a training session for applicants on the CY 2026 MA Plan (including Employer/Union Only Group Waiver and Special Needs Plans) application process, including network adequacy requirements for applicants, during the Part C & D User Group Call scheduled for January 8, 2025, at 3:30 PM EST. Individuals must register in advance to attend the call at the following link: <https://www.msccinc.com/cmsspartcd>.

The CY 2026 consolidated MA application (including EGWP and SNP) and accompanying instructions are posted at <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-drug-plans/medicare-advantage-application>.

Questions regarding MA (including EGWP) and SNP applications, and network adequacy submissions, may be directed to the MA/SNP Application Mailbox at <https://dmao.lmi.org>.

Part D Applications

The Part D application training is available on the CMS YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/pjrb3obNn3Q>. The CY 2026 consolidated Part D application PDF document (including EGWP) and instructions are posted at https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prescription-Drug-Coverage/PrescriptionDrugCovContra/RxContracting_ApplicationGuidance.

For Part D (including EGWP) application questions – submit questions to PartD_applications@cms.hhs.gov.

NOTE: All applicants MUST click “Final Submit” in HPMS prior to the deadline in order for the application to be received. After clicking “Final Submit” please remember to go to the submission confirmation page to view your submission confirmation number. Applicants will also receive an e-mail confirmation with this submission confirmation number. If applicants do not receive a confirmation number, this means CMS has not received the application.