



# CMS Announces Relief for Clinicians Participating in the Quality Payment Program in 2020

On Wednesday, June 24, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced relief for Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) reporting for 2020 due to COVID-19. Clinicians who are significantly impacted by COVID-19 may submit an [Extreme & Uncontrollable Circumstances Application](#) to reweight any or all MIPS performance categories.

- The clinicians have until Dec. 31, 2020 at 8 p.m. ET to complete the application. Approved applications will reweight performance categories to 0 percent.
- You are not required to submit documentation with your application. However, clinicians, groups and virtual groups should retain documentation of their circumstances supporting their application for their own records in the event they are selected by CMS for data validation or audit.
- New for the 2020 performance year: You must have a HCQIS Access Roles and Profile (HARP) account to complete and submit an exception application on behalf of yourself, or another MIPS eligible clinician, group or virtual group. Here are some helpful resources that will guide you through this process. This information can also be accessed at <https://harp.qualitynet.org/login/help>.

If you have questions, you can contact the Quality Payment Program at 1.866.288.8292 or by e-mail at: [QPP@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:QPP@cms.hhs.gov).

## Original CMS Message sent 6/24/2020:

In response to the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is announcing flexibilities for clinicians participating in the Quality Payment Program (QPP) Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) in 2020:

- **Clinicians significantly impacted by the public health emergency may submit an [Extreme & Uncontrollable Circumstances Application](#) to reweight any or all of the MIPS performance categories.** Those requesting relief via the application will need to provide a justification of how their practice has been significantly impacted by the public health emergency.
- **Reminder: In April, CMS added a new *COVID-19 clinical trials improvement activity*.** There are two ways MIPS eligible clinicians or groups can receive credit for this new improvement activity:
  - A clinician may participate in a COVID-19 clinical trial and have those data entered into a data platform for that study; or
  - A clinician participating in the care of COVID-19 patients may submit clinical COVID-19 patient data to a clinical data registry for purposes of future study.

## For More Information

- Visit the [QPP COVID-19 Response webpage](#) or review the [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#) to learn more about changes to the Quality Payment Program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Review the [2020 Exception Applications Fact Sheet](#) and [QPP Exception Applications webpage](#) for more information about submitting an Extreme & Uncontrollable Circumstances Application.
- Read more about the *COVID-19 clinical trials* improvement activity in the [2020 Improvement Activities Inventory](#).

## Questions?

Contact the Quality Payment Program at 1.866.288.8292 or by e-mail at: [QPP@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:QPP@cms.hhs.gov). To receive assistance more quickly, please consider calling during non-peak hours – before 10 a.m. and after 2 p.m. ET.