



Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

PCHQR Program: COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Among Healthcare Personnel (PCH-38) Measure Updates Presentation Transcript

Speakers

Lori Haas, RN, MSN

Health Scientist, Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion,
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Elizabeth Kalayil, MPH

Public Health Analyst, Lantana Consulting Group, Inc.
Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion, CDC

Lisa Vinson, BS, BSN, RN

Program Lead, PCHQR Program
Inpatient VIQR Outreach and Education Support Contractor

April 23, 2024

2:00 p.m. Eastern Time

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Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Lisa Vinson: Welcome to today's presentation titled, *PCHQR Program: COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Among Healthcare Personnel Measure Updates*. My name is Lisa Vinson. I am the Program Lead for the Inpatient Values, Incentives, and Quality Reporting, or VIQR, Support Contractor, and I will be the moderator for today's event. Our focus for today will be on updates to the COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Among Healthcare Personnel measure, or COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure, which apply to the upcoming data submission deadline of May 15. We will discuss the reporting requirements and other pertinent details later during this presentation. As you are aware, this is a process measure, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC. It follows a familiar submission process that you are familiar with for the program's other measures, such as the healthcare-associated infection and Influenza Vaccination Coverage Among Healthcare Personnel measures. Those are submitted via the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network, or NHSN, system. Before I introduce today's speakers, I would like to review a few housekeeping items. First, the slides for this presentation were posted to the [Quality Reporting Center website](#) prior to this event. If you did not receive the slides beforehand, please go to [QualityReportingCenter.com](#) in your web browser, and, on the bottom left of the screen, you will see a list of upcoming events. Click on the link for this event, and there you will find the presentation slides available for download. Of note, this webinar is being recorded, and the transcript, slides, and recording of today's presentation will be posted to [QualityNet](#) at a later date. Finally, we ask that you submit any questions pertinent to the webinar topic via the Chat tool. All questions received via the Chat tool during this webinar that pertain to this webinar topic will be reviewed, and a question-and-answer transcript will be made available at a later date. To maximize the usefulness of the question-and-answer transcript, we will consolidate the questions received during the event and focus on the most important and frequently asked questions. These questions will be addressed in a question-and-answer summary document, again, to be published at a later date.

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Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Any questions received that are not related to the topic of the webinar will not be answered in the Chat tool nor in the question-and-answer summary document for the webinar. To obtain answers to questions that are not specific to today's topic, we recommend that you go to the [QualityNet Question and Answer Tool](#). I will provide instructions on submitting inquiries and performing queries via this tool later during the webinar.

I would like to welcome our guest speakers for today's presentation, Elizabeth Kalayil and Lori Haas from the CDC. Elizabeth is a Public Health Analyst with the Lantana Consulting Group, Inc. She is based in the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion at CDC. She provides training and technical assistance to healthcare facilities on reporting vaccination data. Elizabeth earned a Master of Public Health degree in International Health from Emory University. Lori is a Health Scientist with the CDC. She is also based in the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion. Lori works on a variety of communication and education activities within the branch. Lori has a background in nursing and has over 10 years of experience in acute care and public health settings. Elizabeth and Lori will be the main presenters for today's event.

This presentation will provide updates on the COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Among Healthcare Personnel measure. Specifically, we will review the steps to enter COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure data into the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network, or NHSN, for the upcoming data submission deadline. We will also go over frequently asked questions.

The objectives for today's presentation are that participants will understand the COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure specifications and updates, apply the COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure requirements for the PCHQR Program, enter COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure data into NHSN, and answer common questions regarding the COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure.

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Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Before we go further into the presentation, we wanted to provide you with a list of acronyms and abbreviations you may hear and see today.

These include CDC, for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; HCP, for healthcare personnel; NHSN, for National Healthcare Safety Network; and SAMS, or S-A-M-S, for Secure Access Management Services.

Now, I will turn the presentation over to Elizabeth. Elizabeth, the floor is yours.

Elizabeth Kalayil: Thank you, Lisa. The first step to getting started in NHSN is the enrollment process. So, we'll briefly go over a few points about the process.

Facilities that are currently not participating in NHSN and wish to participate, must enroll their facility. Please visit the first link on the slide for more information regarding the enrollment process. During the process, facilities may choose to participate in any NHSN components. If you're unsure of your facility's status in NHSN, please submit a ticket through the ServiceNow portal, which is linked on the slide. Facilities that are already enrolled in NHSN and wish to participate in the Healthcare Personnel Safety, or HPS, component must activate the component within NHSN. For more information about the HPS component, please visit the third link listed on the slide.

To begin reporting data, facilities will need to log in to the Healthcare Personnel Safety component, as shown on the slide.

From the left-hand navigation bar, please select Vaccination Summary. Next, select COVID-19 Weekly Vaccination Summary.

Next, please click on the week you wish to enter data. Weeks colored in yellow indicate data have not been saved for a particular week. Please note that once data are saved for a week, the week will turn green on the calendar screen.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Facilities will complete the data collection form by entering the number of healthcare personnel eligible to work at the facility.

Facilities also enter the cumulative number of healthcare personnel who are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. For those healthcare personnel who are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, facilities will enter data in question number three, which cover the following: medical contraindications to COVID-19 vaccine, offered but declined COVID-19 vaccines, and unknown or other COVID-19 vaccine status.

This slide reviews a few points on completing the data entry screen. Red asterisks indicate questions that must be completed. Please use the Tab key on the computer keyboard to move across columns. Enter a 0 if no healthcare personnel are reported for a required field.

Please be sure to click on the Save button at the bottom of the screen after entering data.

The Table of Instructions provides detailed information on how to complete the questions on the data collection form. Facilities can access the form using the webpage linked on the slide.

Now, we'll review key updates to the COVID-19 healthcare personnel vaccination measure.

We'll now go into some key updates. Please note that the definition of being "up to date" with COVID-19 vaccination may change over time for NHSN surveillance to incorporate changes made to the clinical guidelines and recommendations. Therefore, facilities should refer to the definition on the first day of the reporting quarter. Facilities should use the definitions outlined in the document linked on the slide for each quarter. Facilities should review the document at least once per quarter to check for updates. Reporting periods for up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination data include Quarters 2, 3, and 4 of 2023 and Quarters 1 to 3 of 2024.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Beginning with the first week of January 2024, questions related to COVID-19 primary series vaccination were removed and replaced with questions about up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination status.

Therefore, healthcare personnel should not be counted as up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines until they receive the 2023-24 updated COVID-19 vaccine. Facilities should be careful not to incorrectly overreport the number of healthcare personnel who are up to date. Healthcare personnel who previously had a complete primary series should not be counted as up to date in Question 2. Questions 3.1 to 3.3 cover reasons why an individual has not received vaccines. So, they now refer to healthcare personnel who are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccination.

Here's a screenshot of the updated data collection form. You will see that Question 2 refers to up-to-date vaccination, which was previously Question 4. Question 3 is the cumulative number of healthcare personnel in Question 1 with other conditions. So, now this relates to healthcare personnel who are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccination.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and CDC provided new recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination for individuals 65 and older. So, for Quarter 2 of 2024, up-to-date vaccination status information is summarized on the slide. Individuals age 65 years and older are up to date when they have received two doses of the updated COVID-19 vaccine or received one dose of the updated vaccine within the past four months. There is no change to the "up-to-date" definition for individuals younger than 65 years of age. Individuals less than 65 years of age are up-to-date when they have received one dose of the updated 2023-24 vaccine.

NHSN has offered a few training webinars about the person-level COVID-19 vaccination form. For those that may have missed the training or need a refresher, let's review a few main points about the forms. The person-level vaccination forms are optional tools that can be used to report data through the COVID-19 vaccination module.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Data on individual healthcare personnel are directly entered line by line into the optional form or can be uploaded via a CSV file. The forms make reporting vaccination data easier and more efficient.

The person-level COVID-19 vaccination form applies definitions of up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination status for you. This is a significant advantage compared to summary-level data reporting.

There are several report resources available to NHSN users. This slide shows the various reports that facilities can use to run data and turn in to NHSN. These reports are called “line listings.” They present data in an organized and detailed fashion.

There are several resources available on the NHSN webpage. Please use the link listed on this slide to review various resources, such as person-level resources, training slides, analysis and reporting guides, as well as CSV files. This includes examples and templates.

If you have any questions about NHSN, please use NHSN ServiceNow to submit questions to our help desk. You can access ServiceNow using the link on the slide in place of NHSN@cdc.gov. If you can't send a message through ServiceNow, you can still email the help desk at NHSN@cdc.gov, and we will respond to you as soon as we can.

Lisa Vinson:

Thank you, Elizabeth. Now, I would like to review PCHQR Program requirements as it relates to this measure.

PCHQR Program participants are required to collect numerators and denominators for the COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure for at least one self-selected week during the month of the reporting quarter and submit via NHSN before or by the quarterly deadline, which we will review shortly. Of note, each quarter, the CDC will calculate a single quarterly COVID-19 HCP Vaccination coverage rate for each PCH by taking the average of the data from three weekly rates.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Also, CMS will only publicly report each quarterly COVID-19 HCP Vaccination coverage rate as calculated by the CDC. Data will be submitted quarterly following reporting deadlines for the PCHQR Program. Although only one week of data is required to report, CMS and the CDC encourage weekly reporting.

Please keep in mind that you are only required to submit your data by the quarterly submission deadline. For instance, for the Quarter 4 2023 reporting period, hospitals will be required to submit all three months of data by May 15, the submission deadline. If the CDC can calculate a quarterly rate, then the submission requirement is met. As a reminder, since this is the same process for the HAI measures, CMS typically allows four and a half months for hospitals to add new data, submit, resubmit, change, and delete existing data up until the submission deadline. We encourage data to be submitted well in advance of the deadline to allow time to review for data accuracy and make corrections. Data can be modified in NHSN at any time; however, if modified after the submission deadline, data are not transmitted to CMS or used in CMS programs.

When checking that data submission is complete, facilities must be sure to report data for at least one week for each month per quarter. A week is designated as belonging to the month of the week-end date. For example, reporting data for the week of November 27, 2023, through December 3, 2023, is considered as submitting data for a week in December and not November. Please note that COVID-19 vaccination data should be submitted by the end of the reporting quarter, as defined by CMS. This is an extremely important step to double check to ensure that your submission is compliant. If the data reported are not a full week in that particular month, then your submission will be considered non-compliant. You will also find reminders about this requirement via the data submission reminder Listserve communication that we, the support contractor, distribute via the PCHQR Program notifications channel. You must be subscribed to this to receive.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Here, displayed on this slide are the reporting periods as well as the submission deadlines for calendar years 2023 through 2024.

The PCHQR Program Measure Submission Deadlines by Due Date table is in the process of being updated. It is currently located on the QualityNet and Quality Reporting Center websites. This table currently includes data submission data through November 2024. This resource includes the COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure along with other program measures. You can access this tool via the hyperlink on this slide, which will take you to the QualityNet PCHQR Program Resources page. COVID-19 HCP data are publicly reported on the data catalog on Data.cms.gov every quarter in January, April, July, and October. For the upcoming April release, this will include Quarter 2 2023 COVID-19 HCP data. As we discussed earlier, the updated version of the COVID-19 HCP measure is effective for Quarter 4 2023 data, which will be publicly displayed in October 2024.

Now, Lori and I will go over frequently asked questions.

First question: For HCP who have a religious exemption for the vaccine, will hospitals be penalized since it is entered as declined?

Lori Haas: Thank you, Lisa. Facilities should report COVID-19 vaccination summary data through NHSN per CDC guidance. For CMS, if the CDC can calculate a quarterly rate and submit it to CMS, then the facilities will meet the reporting requirements and would not be subject to any penalties.

Lisa Vinson: Question 2: Is there guidance for who qualifies as HCP versus non-HCP?

Lori Haas: HCP are included regardless of clinical responsibility or patient contact. Refer to the instructions for completion of the weekly HCP COVID-19 vaccination cumulative summary for further guidance. For your convenience, you can access the instructional document for completing the weekly HCP COVID-19 vaccination cumulative summary via the hyperlink on this slide.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

- Lisa Vinson:** Next question: How long will weekly reporting continue?
- Lori Haas:** For CMS, the requirement to report at least one week per month of the HCP COVID-19 Vaccination measure will continue until further notice. Any substantive changes to the measure or removal of the measure would be proposed in future rulemaking.
- Lisa Vinson:** Next question: Is it a federal requirement to report COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure data via NHSN to pass the reporting of this measure?
- Lori Haas:** Yes. In the FY 2022 IPPS/LTCH PPS final rule, CMS finalized that hospitals would collect a numerator and denominator for the HCP COVID-19 Vaccination measure for at least one self-selected week during each month of the reporting quarter and submit the data to the NHSN HPS component before the CMS quarterly deadline to meet quality reporting program requirements.
- Lisa Vinson:** Next question: What is the submission deadline, and are we required to report one week a month?
- Lori Haas:** The submission of the HCP COVID-19 Vaccination measure follows the same submission timeline as other healthcare-associated infection measures. The deadline for submitting Quarter 4 of 2023 is May 15, 2024.
- Lisa Vinson:** Next question: Will CMS pull data out of NHSN or will hospitals enter denominator and numerator data manually into the *Hospital Quality Reporting*, or *HQR*, *Secure Portal*?
- Lori Haas:** The CDC transmits data to CMS periodically during the submission period and immediately following the CMS quarterly submission deadline. As you may be aware, we, the support contractor, monitor your submission status.
- Lisa Vinson:** Next question: Will COVID-19 vaccination metrics be publicly reported?

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

Lori Haas: With the adoption of this measure, public reporting began with the October 2022 Provider Data Catalog, or as soon as technically feasible, using data collected from Q4 of 2021. We will only report the most recent quarter of data in each refresh. We will not add one additional quarter of data during each advancing refresh. In other words, each refresh will not display four rolling quarters of data.

Lisa Vinson: Next question: Why does the CDC request weekly data if they are only going to use the most recent weeks submitted or reported?

Lori Haas: Facilities are encouraged to report HCP COVID-19 vaccination summary counts on a weekly basis, so data can be used to inform COVID-19 vaccination activities at the facility and to monitor national trends for public health surveillance purposes.

Lisa Vinson: Our final question: Will NHSN have a CMS report that reflects data sent to CMS for the COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure?

Lori Haas: Rate tables for COVID-19 vaccination summary data can be produced in the NHSN Healthcare Personnel Safety component. The tables are available to both facilities and groups in quarterly or monthly reporting periods and can be used to preview the data that will be submitted to CMS as part of a quality reporting program.

Lisa Vinson: This concludes our frequently-asked-question session. We will now move to the program's key reminders and resources, and I will take a brief moment to provide some of this information to you now.

The next upcoming data submission deadline is Wednesday, May 15. PCHQR Program participants are required to submit the following data via the NHSN system: Quarter 4, 2023, HAI measure data; Quarter 4, 2023, COVID-19 HCP Vaccination measure data; and Quarter 4, 2023, through Quarter 1, 2024, Influenza HCP Vaccination measure data.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

As it relates to public reporting, the following data will display on the data catalog on Data.cms.gov: Quarter 3, 2022, through Quarter 2, 2023, HCAHPS Survey data; Quarter 3, 2022, through Quarter 2, 2023, HAI measure data; and Quarter 2, 2023, COVID-19 HCP Vaccination data.

The questions and answers we have addressed today are just a handful of the common topics we have seen thus far. There is a formal Frequently Asked Questions document available as a resource as well. On this slide, you can access this document via the QualityNet PCHQR Program Resources page as denoted by the red box on this slide. You can access this page by clicking the hyperlink provided on this slide.

This same document is also available on the Quality Reporting Center Resources and Tools page, which can also be accessed by selecting the hyperlink on this slide.

Here is where you subscribe to PCHQR Program notifications. This link is located on the QualityNet home page. Once you select Subscribe to Email Updates, as noted by the red box on this slide, you will be taken to the screen on the next slide.

Here is where you need to follow Steps 1 through 3, as outlined on this page as displayed on this slide. You will begin by entering your name and email address as denoted by the red box.

You will then need to select which program list you would like to receive notifications. In this instance, you will need to scroll through the list and look for PCH Notify, PPS-exempt Cancer Hospitals Quality Reporting, PCHQR, Program notifications. Of note, if there are other program notifications you would like to receive, please be sure to mark the appropriate boxes at this time as well. Then, you will need to select the Sign Up button to complete the process. Please be sure to pay attention to the directions provided on the subsequent screens.

Displayed on this slide is how you can access the PCHQR Program question-and-answer tool via the QualityNet home page.

Prospective Payment System-exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) Program

Inpatient Value, Incentives, and Quality Reporting (VIQR) Outreach and Education Support Contractor

You will access this tool by selecting the Help drop-down link, as indicated by the red box. Then, select PPS-exempt Cancer Hospitals to start the process.

Now, you are at the QualityNet Question and Answer Tool landing page. After you select the Ask a Question link, as shown by the red box on this slide, you will be taken to a page where you will need to complete your personal information. Then, you will be asked to enter details regarding the inquiry you are submitting. On this page, you are also able to browse program articles and search to see if your question may have been previously addressed and posted for viewing.

Here is where you will submit your inquiry. Be sure to complete the required field. Once this is complete, you will need to select Submit Question, as denoted by the red box on this slide, to submit your inquiry. We encourage you to utilize this tool to ask any program-related questions you have, and you may also query the system to see if the topic you are inquiring about has already been addressed.

In closing, thank you so much for your time and attention during today's presentation. I would also like to thank our speakers, Elizabeth Khalil and Lori Haas from the CDC, for providing their expertise relating to the COVID-19 HCP measure submission process for the PCHQR Program.

Thank you, again, and enjoy your day.