

How to Manage Program Participation in ACO-MS

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The [ACO Management System \(ACO-MS\)](#) provides an integrated platform for ACO users with administrative privileges to exercise participation options available to them throughout an ACO's agreement period.

The participation options covered in this tip sheet include:

- Participation Options change requests
- Applying for a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) 3-Day Rule Waiver and/or to establish and operate a Beneficiary Incentive Program (BIP)

PARTICIPATION OPTIONS CHANGE REQUESTS

A Participation Options change request allows an ACO user to take the following actions:

- Elect to remain in a one-sided risk model;
- Elect a higher level within the BASIC track's glide path;
- Select the MSR/MLR for the remaining duration of the ACO's agreement period (only for ACOs moving from one-sided to two-sided risk); and
- Change the ACO's selected beneficiary assignment methodology.

Submitting a Participation Options Change Request: Automatically Advancing to Two-Sided Risk

ACOs automatically advancing from one-sided model to a two-sided risk level **submit** a Participation Options change request to advance to Level C and to select their minimum savings rate (MSR)/minimum loss rate (MLR) for the agreement period.

ACO-MS will automatically generate a Participation Options change request, which will be available once the annual application and change request cycle opens.

- 1 Log into ACO-MS; navigate to the Dashboard. Click on the pending task to open the change request.

Note: ACO-MS will automatically generate a Participation Options change request, which will be available once the annual application and change request cycle opens.

- 2 Select the level of the BASIC track to which your ACO would like to advance.

Note: The change requests will default to the next applicable risk-bearing level of the BASIC track. However, you may choose a higher level of risk/reward, if desired.

- 3 Select your ACO's MSR/MLR. This selection will be in effect for the remainder of the agreement period.

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- 4 Select a beneficiary assignment methodology, if desired. ACO-MS will default to the ACO's currently selected beneficiary assignment methodology. Your ACO's beneficiary assignment methodology does not need to be changed to submit a Participation Options change request.
- 5 After reviewing your selection(s), click "Submit" to submit the change request for CMS review. You may view the status of your request by navigating to the Change Request tab and clicking on the Active Pending Disposition subtab.

IMPORTANT

- ACOs required to participate under two-sided risk must establish an adequate repayment mechanism prior to the start of their first performance year in risk.
- ACOs that fail to establish an adequate repayment mechanism will be terminated by CMS.

Submitting a Participation Options Change Request: Making a Voluntary Election

For ACOs voluntarily electing to remain in a one-sided risk model, voluntarily moving to a higher level of the BASIC track and/or to change the ACO's assignment methodology selection:

- 1 Log into ACO-MS; navigate to the My ACOs tab and select your ACO.
- 2 Click on the Agreement Details subtab and then the pencil icon in the "Agreement Information" box.
- 3 Select the level of the BASIC track to which your ACO would like to advance.
 - For eligible ACOs electing to remain in Level A of the BASIC track: Select the check box to confirm your intention to make this election for the remainder of your agreement period.
 - For ACOs moving from a one-sided model to two-sided risk: Select your ACO's MSR/MLR. This selection will be in effect for the remainder of the agreement period.
- 4 Select a beneficiary assignment methodology, if desired. ACO-MS will default to the ACO's currently selected beneficiary assignment methodology. Your ACO's beneficiary assignment methodology does not need to be changed to submit a Participation Options change request.

Note: ACOs may also submit a Participation Options change request to change only their selected beneficiary assignment methodology. To submit a change request to change only your selected beneficiary assignment methodology, follow the above steps to initiate a Participation Options change request. You will not be required to change your ACO's level of the BASIC track to submit the change request.

- 5 After reviewing your selection(s), click "Submit" to submit the change request for CMS review. You may view the status of your request by navigating to the Change Request tab and clicking on the Active Pending Disposition subtab.

Submitting Repayment Mechanism Documentation and Selecting an MSR/MLR

ACOs moving from a one-sided model to a two-sided risk level of the BASIC track, including automatic and voluntary advancement, must demonstrate that they have established an adequate repayment mechanism and select an MSR/MLR.

- 1 After submitting a Participation Options change request to move from a one-sided to two-sided risk model, a repayment mechanism task will automatically generate on the ACO's Dashboard. Navigate to the Dashboard and click on the pending repayment mechanism task.

Note: Withdrawing the Participation Options change request will automatically withdraw the associated repayment mechanism task.

- 2 Select the repayment mechanism type(s) by clicking on the applicable check box. For specific guidance on establishing a repayment mechanism, please refer to the [Repayment Mechanism Arrangements Guidance](#).
- 3 Submit the repayment mechanism task for CMS review.

Withdrawing a Participation Options Change Request

If your ACO no longer wants to make the change(s) included in a Participation Options change request, and CMS has not yet issued a disposition, you can withdraw the request in the Active Pending Disposition subtab of the Change Request tab in ACO-MS.

- 1 Select the Change Request tab on the left side menu of ACO-MS and navigate to the Active Pending Disposition subtab. Select your ACO.
- 2 Select the change request you would like to withdraw. Each change request is assigned a unique change request ID, and you may search for this ID within the subtab.
- 3 Click "Withdraw" on the left side of the change request and confirm your selection. This will immediately withdraw the change request, and the action may not be undone.

Note: To make an update to a Participation Options change request for which CMS has not yet issued a disposition, you must withdraw the pending Participation Options change request before submitting a new Participation Options change request with your updated selections.

An ACO automatically transitioning to two-sided risk can't withdraw their pending Participation Options change request unless it is terminating from the Shared Savings Program.

APPLYING FOR A SNF 3-DAY RULE WAIVER AND/OR TO OPERATE A BIP

ACOs may apply for a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver and/or to establish and operate a BIP during an agreement under the Shared Savings Program. To apply for a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver, ACOs must complete a separate SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver application and add SNF affiliates during Phase 1 of the application cycle. To apply for a BIP, ACOs must complete a separate BIP application during Phase 2.

To initiate an application for a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver and/or to establish and operate a BIP in ACO-MS, follow the steps below:

- 1 Log into ACO-MS; navigate to the My ACOs tab. Select your ACO.
- 2 For ACOs in a one-sided level of the BASIC track: If your ACO is not auto-advancing to a risk-bearing level of the BASIC track at the start of the next performance year, your ACO will not be eligible for a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver and/or to operate a BIP. Your ACO must submit a Participation Options change request to voluntarily move to a two-sided level of risk/reward in the BASIC track before initiating an application for a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver and/or to establish and operate a BIP.
- 3 Click on the Agreement Details subtab and navigate to the SNF/BIP Information box. Click on the “Add SNF/BIP” box.
 - Click “Yes” under the corresponding SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver question to elect to submit a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver application.
 - Click “Yes” under the corresponding BIP question to elect to submit a BIP application.

Note: These elections do not constitute applications, but instead indicate your intent to apply. You must complete subsequent application tasks to adequately apply. You will not be considered for either a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver or to establish and operate a BIP without a completed SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver or BIP application.

- 4 Click “Submit.” This will prompt the system to generate the appropriate application task(s) to collect supporting documentation and attestations as required by the application.
- 5 Navigate to the Dashboard. Click on the pending application task(s) to complete the SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver and/or BIP application(s).

During Phase 1 of the application/change request submission period, ACOs submit the SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver application, proposed SNF affiliates and executed SNF Affiliate Agreements.

During Phase 2, ACOs submit the BIP application.

- For specific guidance on applying for a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver, please refer to the [SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver Guidance](#).
- For specific guidance on applying to establish and operate a BIP, please refer to the [Beneficiary Incentive Program Guidance](#).

Questions?

If you have any questions about ACO-MS or require technical assistance, click the SSP Helpdesk icon (located within the [ACO-MS](#) banner) or email SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov.