

---

# Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

---

## Memorandum

November 23, 2020

**RE:** MBQIP Eligibility Policy Update  
**To:** All Flex Coordinators and MBQIP Partners  
**From:** Natalia Vargas, MBQIP Coordinator

Dear Flex State Coordinators and Partners,

For the past few years, the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex) has required participation in the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP) for Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs). We at FORHP appreciate your demonstrated commitment and participation in MBQIP over the last decade.

As our nation continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, FORHP has made a decision to suspend eligibility requirements for the Flex Grant Year 2021 (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022). For this FY 2021 policy exception, Flex grantees will not need to submit MBQIP waivers to FORHP for any CAHs that are unable to report MBQIP quality measures, as CAHs will not be penalized for not meeting minimum reporting requirements. The data used to calculate eligibility for FY 2021 include data from encounters occurring in 2019 through 2020.

Earlier this year, FORHP suspended eligibility requirements for the Flex Grant Year 2020 (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021) with a similar goal to support states and CAHs during the pandemic. The data used for calculating the FY 2020 eligibility includes encounters from 2018 through 2019. For additional details about the measures included in the full eligibility requirement criteria, please refer to the flex eligibility document. Please note that these exceptions do not automatically exempt CAHs from reporting. While FORHP aims to relieve reporting burden for CAHs during the COVID-19 pandemic, we highly encourage CAHs that have the ability to report to continue reporting on as many measures as possible.

Lastly, FORHP would like to underscore the importance of state and hospital efforts to track improvements in care, and our commitment to support states in addressing challenges related to the achievement of Flex and MBQIP quality goals during the pandemic. Please contact your Project Officer if you have concerns or questions regarding this policy.

Thank you,



---

Natalia Vargas, MPH

