

Administrative Bulletin 19-03

957 CMR 8.00: All Payer Claims Database (APCD) and Case Mix and Charge Data Submission

Effective March 29, 2019

The Release of Health Care Data and Information

The Center for Health Information and Analysis (the “Center” or “CHIA”), pursuant to 957 CMR 8.07(1), is issuing this Administrative Bulletin to inform Payers and Providers that certain health care data and information submitted by Payers and Providers under this regulation will be a public record.

M.G.L c. 12C, §10 provides that except as specifically provided otherwise by the Center, health care data and information collected pursuant to M.G.L c. 12C, §10 will not be a public record. After a comprehensive process, the Center has determined that certain health care data and information provided under this statute and regulation shall be a public record.

The Center envisions a transparent health care system where reliable information provides common ground for improvement and empowers people and organizations to make informed decisions. This vision is consistent with the agency’s enabling statute, which includes several provisions directing CHIA to collect and report comparative quality, cost and price information.

To this end, the Center has initiated two major transparency efforts: the CompareCare consumer information website and a broader initiative to release price data underlying CompareCare. In preparing for these transparency efforts, the Center held more than 60 information and feedback sessions with stakeholders, including other state agencies, payers and providers.

CompareCare

CompareCare (www.MassCompareCare.Gov) includes a procedure pricing tool, basic quality information about different types of providers, and information to help consumers make better decisions about health care procedures. The CompareCare procedure pricing tool draws from a table of data extracted from the 2015 all-payer claims database (APCD) using a methodology that identified the median amount paid by any of 8 insurers to any provider for any of 295 specific services (all of which are outpatient services, other than maternity). The CompareCare interface allows individuals to search and browse the payment data using a number of filters, and lets users select a specific insurer to see payer-specific paid amounts. Based on choices made by the user, CompareCare shows the relevant data, always paired with a link to some type of quality information, one screen at a time.

CompareCare:

- helps consumers understand price and quality variations in the Massachusetts health care system
- presents comparative costs of a wide range of medical procedures
- provides facility-specific quality and safety data
- supports informed discussions between patients and their payers and providers
- is a powerful resource for Massachusetts consumers to research their healthcare options

CompareCare underwent beta testing with multiple stakeholders, and, as a result of this beta testing, the Center received over 200 comments. This feedback has been integrated into the site. The Center intends to update CompareCare on a regular basis, adding more extensive price data, new cost and quality metrics, and better decision support tools.

The Release of Data

After careful consideration and many discussions with interested stakeholders, the Center has concluded that releasing all of the data behind CompareCare's procedure pricing tool as a single, public dataset would further the Center's mandate to promote transparency in the Massachusetts health care system. In June, the Center released its **Strategy for Releasing Procedure Price Data**, including the Center's strategic objectives, an overview of current and future plans for data release and major issues for further consideration. This document, available at: <http://www.chiamass.gov/transparency-initiatives/>, remains available to all interested parties for comment.

The Center will post on its website and on CompareCare a spreadsheet containing all of the multi-payer weighted average prices. This broader transparency initiative will:

- allow interested parties to view, sort, and analyze the data underlying CompareCare
- support new insights into the performance of the Massachusetts health care system by payers, providers, researchers, and policymakers
- lay the foundation of future transparency efforts, which are envisioned to include additional procedures, sites of services, payers and providers

Definitions

Capitalized terms have the same meaning as in 957 CMR 8.00.