

# CROWN Memorandum



MEMO NUMBER: 16-0924-GN

TO: ESRD Executive Directors, ESRD Data Managers, Regional Contracting Officer Representatives

FROM: James Poyer  
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Quality Improvement Group  
Center for Clinical Standards and Quality  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

DATE: February 11, 2016

SUBJECT: Implementing the Extraordinary Circumstances Exception in the ESRD QIP

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is informing the End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network Organizations (Networks) of the process facilities must follow to request an Extraordinary Circumstances Exception (ECE) for PY 2017, and future years.

CMS finalized in 2014 last year (79 FR 66189) that, for PY 2017 and beyond, it would exempt a facility from all ESRD QIP requirements during the time that the facility was forced to close temporarily due to a natural disaster or other extraordinary circumstances beyond the facility's control.

For the facility to receive consideration for such an exception, the facility would need to submit a CMS Disaster Extension/Exception Request Form through [www.qualitynet.org](http://www.qualitynet.org) within 90 calendar days of the date of the disaster or extraordinary circumstance.

As of January, 2016, the ECE request form is still under review for compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act and until further notice it is not available for use by ESRD Facilities. Until the form is available on [www.qualitynet.org](http://www.qualitynet.org), we are implementing the following process.

To request an ECE for a natural disaster or other extraordinary circumstance that occurred between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015 facilities must submit their request by email to the ESRD QIP Mailbox at [ESRDQIP@cms.hhs.org](mailto:ESRDQIP@cms.hhs.org), no later than April 15, 2016. And, for PY 2018, ESRD facilities must request an ECE for a natural disaster or other extraordinary circumstance within 90 days from the end of the ECE event. Their email request must contain all of the following information:

- Facility CCN;
- Facility name;

- CEO name and contact information;
- Additional contact name and contact information;
- Reason for requesting an exception;
- Dates affected;
- Date facility will start (or started) submitting data again, with justification for this date; and
- Evidence of the impact of the extraordinary circumstances (including, but not limited to, photographs, newspaper, and other media articles).

Incomplete requests will be returned to the facility without further review of their content. CMS will evaluate each request and provide the facility with a response. If CMS determines that the facility was, in fact, closed due to extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, then it will exclude the facility from the ESRD QIP requirements for the entirety of the impacted months. Furthermore, if a facility is excluded for one or more months due to an extraordinary circumstance, then the facility will not receive a score for the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Blood Stream Infection clinical measure, because the measure requires 12 months of accurate reporting.

#### **Actions Required by the Networks**

Please inform facilities about the process they must follow to request an ECE for PY 2017 (covering any natural disasters or other extraordinary circumstances beyond the facility's control) that occur between **January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2015**. These ECE requests must be sent to the ESRD QIP Mailbox at [ESRDQIP@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ESRDQIP@cms.hhs.gov) and received by CMS no later than **April 15, 2016**.

If you have any questions about the information in this memorandum, please contact Tamyra Garcia at [Tamyra.Garcia@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Tamyra.Garcia@cms.hhs.gov), (410) 786-0856.