

Hold Harmless: MIPS Cost Category



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On May 20, 2021, the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced](#) that the hotly debated cost category will be reweighted to 0% for 2020, effectively eliminating it from scoring as part of the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS). Advocates for physicians – including the American Medical Association – had advocated for the reweighting based on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This announcement only applies to those physicians who participated in the program. Many physicians did not report to the program in 2020, which will not impose the expected penalties in 2022 for non-participation based on the pandemic.

The [2021 exception applications are now open](#), should you wish to take steps to eliminate your participation (and any penalty) this year. Because the pandemic is considered an “extreme and uncontrollable circumstance,” any physician can apply for the exception. Should you change your mind, the program will set aside the exception application, so it makes for a great back-up plan. The penalty is a substantial 9% (applied to all Medicare payments) for non-participants in perpetuity, so it should be on your calendar to participate each year – or submit that application.

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