

The 2023 Merit-based Incentive Payment System Automatic Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Policy

[UPDATED: 11/9/2023](#)

The Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) automatic extreme and uncontrollable circumstances (EUC) policy was established to support clinicians affected by natural disasters and public health emergencies. Clinicians affected by certain circumstances may have their performance categories reweighted and receive a neutral payment adjustment. This resource addresses the automatic EUC policy as it applies to **individual MIPS eligible clinicians** for the 2023 performance year.

The MIPS automatic EUC policy (and this fact sheet) only applies to MIPS eligible clinicians participating as individuals.

The MIPS automatic EUC policy doesn't apply to group, subgroup, virtual group, or Alternative Payment Model (APM) Entity participation.

The [2023 MIPS EUC Exception application](#) is now available for individuals, groups, virtual groups, and APM Entities. Subgroups can contact the Quality Payment Program (QPP) Service Center to request reweighting.

Who Does the MIPS Automatic EUC Policy Apply to?

The MIPS automatic EUC policy applies to MIPS eligible clinicians identified as located in a [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)-designated region](#) affected by extreme and uncontrollable circumstances (such as a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-designated major disaster or Secretary of Health and Human Services determined public health emergency) during the 2023 performance year. For these clinicians, we aim to reduce their reporting burden by eliminating the need to submit an application to request reweighting of one or more MIPS performance categories. We'll update this resource if additional [qualifying circumstances](#) are identified that trigger this policy.

The MIPS automatic EUC policy doesn't apply to group, subgroup, virtual group, or APM Entity participation.

- Groups that submit data will be scored according to existing MIPS scoring policies. The MIPS eligible clinicians in the group will receive the group's final score and associated



payment adjustment unless they have a higher score from individual or APM Entity participation.

- Clinicians that register to report a MIPS Value Pathway (MVP) as a subgroup and submit data will be scored according to existing MIPS scoring policies. The MIPS eligible clinicians in the subgroup will receive the subgroup's final score and associated payment adjustment unless they have a higher score from individual, group, or APM Entity participation.
- Virtual groups (regardless of data submission) will be scored according to existing MIPS scoring policies. The MIPS eligible clinicians in the virtual group will receive the virtual group's final score and associated payment adjustment.
- APM Entities that submit MIPS data will be scored according to existing MIPS scoring policies. MIPS eligible clinicians in the APM Entity will receive the APM Entity's final score and associated payment adjustment unless they have a higher score from individual or group participation.

How Does the MIPS Automatic EUC Policy Work?

We identify MIPS eligible clinicians in CMS-designated areas that have been affected by an extreme and uncontrollable circumstance based on the address associated with the clinician in the Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System (PECOS), which is the practice address, displayed on the [QPP Participation Status Tool](#).

MIPS eligible clinicians who are automatically identified and subject to MIPS will have all 4 performance categories weighted at 0% of their final score.

We make every effort to accurately identify all clinicians who are eligible for this policy. **Clinicians should ensure that the practice address listed in PECOS is current and check their performance feedback on the [QPP website](#) to ensure the policy was applied correctly, if applicable.**

Individual clinicians will automatically have all 4 MIPS performance categories reweighted to 0% and receive a score equal to the performance threshold, which will result in a neutral payment adjustment for the 2025 MIPS payment year **unless**:

- The clinician submits data, or can be scored, as an individual for 2 or more MIPS performance categories (quality, improvement activities, and/or Promoting Interoperability):
 - Data submission by individual clinicians voids the 0% performance category weight on a category-by-category basis;
 - Clinicians who participate in an APM are eligible to receive automatic credit in the improvement activities performance category; for these MIPS eligible clinicians, submitting data for the quality and/or Promoting Interoperability performance categories

will initiate a score in the improvement activities performance category (they'll automatically receive 20 out of 40 possible points);

- Clinicians will receive a final score based on the data submitted and available for scoring;
- The clinician is part of a group, subgroup, or APM Entity that submits data on behalf of its clinicians; OR
- The clinician is part of a virtual group.

Under the MIPS automatic EUC policy, **the cost performance category will always be weighted at 0%**, even if you submit data as an individual for the other performance categories.

As a reminder, the MIPS automatic EUC policy doesn't apply to group, subgroup, virtual group, or APM Entity participation.

For a more detailed explanation of how your performance categories will be reweighted under the automatic policy based on data submission, please refer to the [Appendix A](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if I'm in an area designated by CMS as being affected by an extreme and uncontrollable circumstance?

We communicate information about events and circumstances that trigger the MIPS automatic EUC policy through the QPP listserv. You can subscribe to the QPP listserv on the [QPP website](#) by scrolling to the bottom of the webpage. In addition, we'll update this fact sheet to identify any new events or changes to previously identified events.

We're applying this policy to clinicians in the following designated area listed on the FEMA website:

- Certain counties in Mississippi for the Mississippi severe storms, straight-line winds, and tornadoes
 - [Mississippi: DR-4697-MS](#)
- The U.S. territory of Guam for the Guam Typhoon Mawar
 - [Guam: DR-4715-GU](#)
- Certain counties in Hawaii for the Hawaii wildfires
 - [Hawaii: DR-4724-HI](#)

- Certain counties in Florida for Hurricane Idalia
 - [Florida: DR-4734-FL](#)
- Certain counties in Georgia for Hurricane Idalia
 - [Georgia: DR-4738-GA](#)

If, and when we identify qualifying events, you can find information about designated disaster areas in this fact sheet and on the [FEMA-designated disaster areas webpage](#). Clinicians can monitor these pages for updates on designated disaster areas. [Appendix B](#) lists the counties identified as located in CMS-designated areas that have been affected by an extreme and uncontrollable circumstance.

What if I'm part of a group, subgroup, virtual group, or APM Entity where some, but not all, clinicians are located in areas designated by CMS as affected by an extreme and uncontrollable circumstance?

The automatic EUC policy will only apply to individual MIPS eligible clinicians located in the designated area. CMS will assign a weight of 0% to all performance categories, resulting in a neutral payment adjustment for the 2025 MIPS payment year to MIPS eligible clinicians located in the designated area(s), **unless** your group, subgroup or APM Entity submits data on your behalf during the 2023 submission period (January 2, 2024 – April 1, 2024) or you're part of a CMS-approved virtual group.

A group, subgroup, or APM Entity (with clinicians who qualify for the automatic EUC policy) that chooses to submit data at the group, subgroup, or APM Entity level for the 2023 performance year will be scored as a group, subgroup, or APM Entity according to the existing and applicable 2023 MIPS scoring policies.

All CMS-approved virtual groups will be scored as a virtual group according to existing MIPS scoring policies, regardless of if they submit data or not.

Groups and virtual groups can complete an EUC Exception application if the extreme and uncontrollable circumstance affects their ability to collect data, at the group or virtual group level, for a specific MIPS performance category or categories. (Subgroups will inherit any reweighting approved for their affiliated group; if the subgroup encounters an extreme and uncontrollable circumstance that doesn't affect the entire group, the subgroup can contact the QPP Service Center to request reweighting.) APM Entities also may submit an application but must request reweighting for all performance categories.

What should I do if I'm eligible for the MIPS automatic EUC policy, but my performance feedback doesn't reflect the correct reweighting?

If you believe that you qualified for the automatic EUC policy, but don't see it reflected in your performance feedback, you should submit a targeted review. Targeted reviews can be requested for 60 days after the release of the 2025 payment adjustment in your 2023 performance feedback.

What happens if I'm a MIPS eligible clinician covered by the MIPS automatic EUC policy but I still submit data?

It depends on how many performance categories for which you submit data **as an individual**.

- If you submit data for 1 performance category (or no data at all), you'll receive a final score equal to the performance threshold and receive a neutral payment adjustment.
 - **Note:** If you participate in an APM, you're eligible to receive automatic credit in the improvement activities performance category. Submitting data for the quality or Promoting Interoperability performance categories will initiate a score in the improvement activities performance category (20 out of 40 possible points), and you'll receive a final score based on the data submitted and available for scoring.
- If you submit data for 2 or 3 performance categories (quality, improvement activities, and/or Promoting Interoperability), you'll be scored on the performance categories for which you submitted data. Your final score will determine your payment adjustment.
 - **Note:** If you participate in an APM, you're eligible to receive automatic credit in the improvement activities performance category. Submitting data for the quality and Promoting Interoperability performance categories will initiate a score in the improvement activities performance category (20 out of 40 possible points), and you'll receive a final score based on the data submitted and available for scoring.
- You **won't** be scored in any performance category for which data isn't submitted (see exception noted above for APM participants).
- You **won't** be scored on the cost performance category under the automatic EUC policy even if data are submitted in other performance categories. (**Reminder:** The automatic EUC policy **doesn't** apply to group, subgroup, virtual group, or APM Entity participation.)

What happens if I've submitted Medicare Part B claims before an event that triggers the MIPS automatic EUC policy?

If a MIPS eligible clinician in a small practice reports quality measures through Medicare Part B claims collection **and** we receive data for the clinician before a triggering event for the automatic EUC policy, their Medicare Part B claims data would only contribute to their individual final score if they also submit data as individuals for either the Promoting Interoperability or improvement activities performance categories.

Please note that **we'll no longer automatically calculate a score for the quality performance category at the group level** when clinicians in a small practice report quality measures through Medicare Part B claims. We'll calculate a group score only if the group also submits data for another performance category at the group level.

Where Can I Learn More?

- [QPP Exception Applications webpage](#)
- [FEMA-Designated Disaster Areas webpage](#)
- [CMS's Emergency Preparedness & Response webpage](#)
- [HHS's Declarations of a Public Health Emergency webpage](#)

To receive QPP information and updates, you can subscribe to the [QPP listserv](#) by scrolling to the bottom of the webpage. You can also contact the QPP Service Center by email at QPP@cms.hhs.gov, create a [QPP Service Center ticket](#), or by phone at 1-866-288-8292 (Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET). People who are deaf or hard of hearing can dial 711 to be connected to a TRS Communications Assistant.

Version History Table

If we need to update this document, changes will be identified here.

Date	Change Description
11/09/2023	Updated to reflect that the automatic EUC policy applies to certain counties in Florida and Georgia following Hurricane Idalia.
09/14/2023	Updated to reflect that the automatic EUC policy applies to certain counties in Hawaii following the Hawaii wildfires.
06/16/2023	Updated to reflect that the automatic EUC policy applies to the U.S. territory of Guam following Typhoon Mawar.
05/01/2023	Original Posting.

Appendix A

Table 1 depicts the 2023 MIPS performance category reweighting policies that CMS will apply under the MIPS automatic EUC policy to clinicians who submit MIPS data as individuals. (Clinicians in a small practice should refer to [Table 2](#).)

Table 1: Reweighting for Clinicians Not in a Small Practice

Data Submitted	Quality Category Weight	Promoting Interoperability Category Weight	Improvement Activities Category Weight	Cost Category Weight	Payment Adjustment
No data	0%	0%	0%	0%	Neutral
Submit Data for 1 Performance Category					
Quality Only ¹	100%	0%	0%	0%	Neutral
Promoting Interoperability Only ¹	0%	100%	0%	0%	Neutral
Improvement Activities Only	0%	0%	100%	0%	Neutral
Submit Data for 2 Performance Categories					
Quality and Promoting Interoperability ¹	70%	30%	0%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral
Quality and Improvement Activities	85%	0%	15%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral
Improvement Activities and Promoting Interoperability	0%	85%	15%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral

¹ APM participants are eligible to receive automatic credit in the improvement activities performance category; for these MIPS eligible clinicians, submitting data for the quality and/or Promoting Interoperability performance categories will initiate a score in the improvement activities performance category (20 out of 40 possible points), and they'll receive a final score based on the data submitted and available for scoring.

Data Submitted	Quality Category Weight	Promoting Interoperability Category Weight	Improvement Activities Category Weight	Cost Category Weight	Payment Adjustment
Submit Data for 3 Performance Categories					
Quality and Improvement Activities and Promoting Interoperability	55%	30%	15%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral

Table 2 depicts the 2023 MIPS performance category reweighting policies that CMS will apply under the MIPS automatic EUC policy to clinicians in small practices who submit MIPS data as individuals.

Table 2: Reweighting for Clinicians in a Small Practice

Data Submitted	Quality Category Weight	Promoting Interoperability Category Weight	Improvement Activities Category Weight	Cost Category Weight	Payment Adjustment
No data	0%	0%	0%	0%	Neutral
Submit Data for 1 Performance Category					
Quality Only ²	100%	0%	0%	0%	Neutral
Promoting Interoperability Only ²	0%	100%	0%	0%	Neutral
Improvement Activities Only	0%	0%	100%	0%	Neutral
Submit Data for 2 Performance Categories					
Quality and Promoting Interoperability ²	70%	30%	0%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral

² APM participants are eligible to receive automatic credit in the improvement activities performance category; for these MIPS eligible clinicians, submitting data for the quality and/or Promoting Interoperability performance categories will initiate a score in the improvement activities performance category (20 out of 40 possible points), and they'll receive a final score based on the data submitted and available for scoring.

Data Submitted	Quality Category Weight	Promoting Interoperability Category Weight	Improvement Activities Category Weight	Cost Category Weight	Payment Adjustment
Quality and Improvement Activities	50%	0%	50%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral
Improvement Activities and Promoting Interoperability	0%	85%	15%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral
Submit Data for 3 Performance Categories					
Quality and Improvement Activities and Promoting Interoperability	55%	30%	15%	0%	Positive, Negative, or Neutral

Appendix B

The table below lists the affected counties/areas located in a CMS-designated region affected by an extreme and uncontrollable circumstance during the 2023 MIPS performance year. (This information is current as of the most recent date in the version history table and may not reflect changes that have already been identified on the FEMA pages linked above.)

Mississippi Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, and Tornadoes – Mississippi Counties – DR-4697-MS		
Note: The automatic EUC policy applies to the following counties in Mississippi:		
PA-A Carroll Humphreys Monroe	Montgomery Panola Sharkey	Washington
PA-B Carroll Humphreys Monroe	Montgomery Panola Sharkey	Washington

Guam Typhon Mawar – [U.S. Territory of Guam – DR-4715-GU](#)

Note: The automatic EUC policy applies to the following county in Guam:

PA-A

- Guam (County-equivalent)

PA-B

- Guam (County-equivalent)

Hawaii Wildfires – [Hawaii Counties – DR-4724-HI](#)

Note: The automatic EUC policy applies to the following counties in Hawaii:

PA-A

- Maui (County)

PA-B

- Hawaii (County)
- Maui (County)

Florida Hurricane Idalia – [Florida Counties – DR-4734-FL](#)

Note: The automatic EUC policy applies to the following counties in Florida:

PA-A

Baker
Charlotte
Citrus
Columbia
Dixie
Duval
Franklin
Gadsden

Gilchrist
Hamilton
Hernando
Jefferson
Lafayette
Leon
Levy
Madison

Manatee
Nassau
Pasco
Pinellas
Sarasota
Suwannee
Taylor
Wakulla

PA-B

Alachua
Baker
Bay
Bradford
Brevard
Calhoun

Gilchrist
Gulf
Hamilton
Hardee
Hernando
Hillsborough

Orange
Osceola
Pasco
Pinellas
Polk
Putnam

Florida Hurricane Idalia – [Florida Counties – DR-4734-FL](#)

Note: The automatic EUC policy applies to the following counties in Florida:

Charlotte	Jefferson	Sarasota
Citrus	Lafayette	Seminole
Clay	Lake	St. Johns
Collier	Lee	Sumter
Columbia	Leon	Suwannee
DeSoto	Levy	Taylor
Dixie	Liberty	Union
Duval	Madison	Volusia
Flagler	Manatee	Wakulla
Franklin	Marion	
Gadsden	Nassau	

Georgia Hurricane Idalia – [Georgia Counties – DR-4738-GA](#)

Note: The automatic EUC policy applies to the following counties in Georgia:

PA-A		
Appling	Clinch	Montgomery
Atkinson	Coffee	Pierce
Bacon	Colquitt	Screven
Berrien	Cook	Tattnall
Brantley	Echols	Thomas
Brooks	Emanuel	Tift
Bulloch	Glynn	Toombs
Burke	Jeff Davis	Treutlen
Camden	Jenkins	Ware
Candler	Lanier	Wayne
Charlton	Lowndes	
PA-B		
Appling	Clinch	Montgomery
Atkinson	Coffee	Pierce
Bacon	Colquitt	Screven
Berrien	Cook	Tattnall
Brantley	Echols	Thomas
Brooks	Emanuel	Tift
Bulloch	Glynn	Toombs
Burke	Jeff Davis	Treutlen
Camden	Jenkins	Ware
Candler	Lanier	Wayne

Georgia Hurricane Idalia – [Georgia Counties – DR-4738-GA](#)

Note: The automatic EUC policy applies to the following counties in Georgia:

Charlton	Lowndes	
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