

Dear PMC Members:

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) held a special teleconference to address the online issues being experienced by suppliers who are trying to access the Competitive Bidding Submission System (CBSS) in an effort to submit bids for the initial round of Medicare competitive bidding. In response to supplier complaints over the CBSS, CMS extended the deadline for bid submission to 9pm (EST) on July 20<sup>th</sup>.

CMS made sure to emphasize two security features that are giving suppliers problems. First, the system will automatically “time you out” after two hours on the system resulting in lost data if the information is not saved. CMS noted that they have expanded the “time out” window from 2 to 12 hours and that fix should be effectuated today.

CMS also warned suppliers that the system will timeout if no action is taken (i.e., keystrokes) after 30 minutes. There must be some type of activity on the screen in a thirty minute period or else you are at risk of losing your data.

In no instance should suppliers try to change their password, even if prompted by a pop-up screen. If a prompt appears that asks to change information on your “User Profile Screen,” suppliers should close the browser and start over. DO NOT change your e-mail account or other aspects of your user profile. If your user profile does not match the supplier’s registration data, the supplier will be “locked out” of the system.

In response to questions, CMS reiterated that suppliers must furnish all items in the product category and if the supplier currently does not carry all items, they must subcontract or explain expansion plans in the bid submission, to be considered. If, however, there is no activity under a particular HCPC code, that code will ultimately be eliminated. For codes that are subject to a state-by-state fee schedule, CMS has provided the cost of the item for each Competitive Bidding Area (CBA) in the bid submission materials.

Regarding capacity, suppliers must provide their total annual capacity then provide an estimate of their product capacity for the contracted period. Moreover, suppliers with no physical location in the CBA, but has the capacity to serve the CBA, can bid for that CBA.