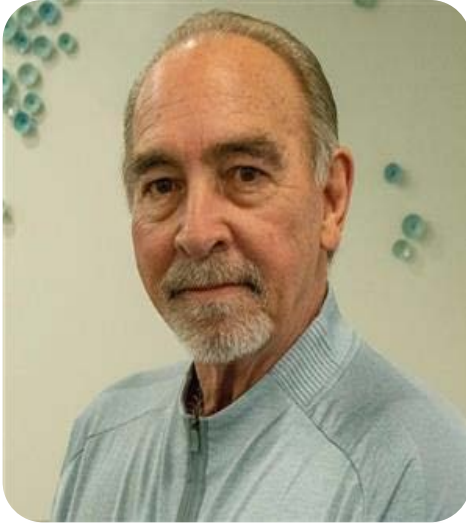# Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System: Cost Data Elements

Today's Presenters:

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Introduction

Fire and EMS agencies play a critical role in providing much needed emergency medical and fire safety services to their communities. PCG is committed to developing practical solutions to help fire and EMS providers improve operational and financial performance, achieve and maintain compliance, and deliver high quality services.

Our experience providing revenue optimization, cost reporting, consulting, and assessment services to more than 400 fire and EMS providers across the country sets us apart from other firms. We understand the unique needs and challenges faced by fire and EMS providers and have built an unparalleled level of program knowledge, financial acumen, operational expertise, and technical capability.

Today's Objectives

| Brief Overview

| Components of the Collection Instrument

| Facilities Costs

| Vehicle Costs

| Equipment Costs

| Other Costs (Operating)

| Staffing and Labor Costs

| Don't wait to prepare

" Q&A

Ambulance Services: Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System (New since May 11 Release)

CMS is modifying the data collection period and data reporting period, as defined at 42 CFR § 414.626(a), for ground ambulance organizations (as defined at 42 CFR § 414.605) that were selected by CMS under 42 CFR § 414.626(c) to collect data beginning between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020 (year 1) for purposes of complying with the data reporting requirements described at 42 CFR § 414.626.

Under this modification, these ground ambulance organizations can select a new continuous 12-month data collection period that begins between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, collect data necessary to complete the Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Instrument during their selected data collection period, and submit a completed Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Instrument during the data reporting period that corresponds to their selected data collection period.

CMS is modifying this data collection and reporting period to increase flexibilities for ground ambulance organizations that would otherwise be required to collect data in 2020 - 2021 so that they can focus on their operations and patient care. As a result of this modification, ground ambulance organizations selected for year 1 data collection and reporting will collect and report data during the same period of time that will apply to ground ambulance organizations selected by CMS under 42 CFR § 414.626(c) to collect data beginning between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021 (year 2) for purposes of complying with the data reporting requirements described at 42 CFR § 414.626.

Pg. 29 of CMS Report -
https://www.cms.gov/files/document/summary-covid-19-emergency-declaration-waivers.pdf

Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Recap

All providers of ground ambulance services will eventually participate in the Medicare Ground Ambulance Collection System.

- Between 2020 and 2024, CMS will select a sample group of providers to participate each year (~2600 per year).
  - **Number of participants for Year 2 has doubled**
- Collect data during a continuous **12-month period**.
  - **Year 1 Providers can choose a new continuous 12-month reporting period that starts in 2021**
- Providers have **five months** after the end of their data collection period to report information.
  - **First reporting deadline (based on a calendar year) is May 2022**
- Providers will collect all the required data and submit the information via a **secure web-based data** collection system (online Ground Ambulance Data Collection System).
  - **Originally going to be released in December of 2020 but TBD at this time**
- Failure to report the required information will result in a penalty of **10% reduction in Medicare payments** under Medicare Part B fee schedule for the following year.
- Data will be used to evaluate the adequacy of Medicare payment rates for ground ambulance services, to inform future Medicare rate changes, and possible payment system reforms.

How Will Providers Submit Data?

- CMS anticipates that registration for the Web-Based Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Instrument will **open on December 2020.**
  - **TBD at this time**
- CMS will also provide training on how to use the web-based system.
  - **TBD at this time**
- Providers will be required to enter data directly into the web-based tool.

Additional CMS Resources

- Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System Main Page (includes list of selected providers)
- Quick Reference Guide
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Sign up for Medicare Learning Network (MLN) Calls and Webcasts
- CMS Waiver issued 5.15.2020

Data Elements in Survey Instrument

Summary of Data Collection Elements

Component (Data Collection Instrument Section)	Description
Ground ambulance organization characteristics (2-4)	Information regarding the identity of the organization and respondent(s), service area, ownership, response time, and other characteristics; broad questions about offered services to serve as screening questions
Utilization: Ground ambulance service volume and service mix (5 and 6)	Number of responses and transports, level of services reported by HCPS code
Costs (7-12)	Information on all costs partially or entirely related to ground ambulance services
• Staffing and Labor Costs (7)	Number and costs associated with EMTs administrative staff, and facilities staff; separate reporting of volunteer staff and associated costs
• Facilities Costs (8)	Number of facilities; rent and mortgage payments, insurance, maintenance, and utility costs
• Vehicle Costs (9)	Number of ground ambulances; number of other vehicles used in ground ambulance responses; annual depreciation; total fuel, maintenance, and insurance costs
• Equipment & Supply Costs (10)	Capital medical and non-medical equipment; medical and non-medical supplies and other equipment
• Other Costs (11)	All other costs not reported elsewhere
• Total Costs (12)	Total costs for the ground ambulance organization included as a way to cross-check costs reported in the instrument
Revenue (13)	Revenue from health insurers (including Medicare); revenue from all other sources including communities served

Data Collection Instrument Breakdown

1. General Survey Instructions
2. Organizational Characteristics
3. Service Area
4. Emergency Response Time
5. Ground Ambulance Service Volume
6. Service Mix

7. Labor Costs
8. Facilities Costs
9. Vehicle Costs
10. Equipment, Consumable and Supply Costs
11. Other Costs
12. Total Costs
13. Revenue

Section 8: Facilities Costs

This section requests information about the facilities costs for your ground ambulance organization.
Used for dispatch/call centers, vehicle storage, administrative and EMT staff, or other activities to support ground ambulance services.

DATA TO BE REPORTED FOR FACILITIES

Facility Information
- Total number of facilities (separate buildings)
- Name or function for the facilities
- Total Square Footage
- If SHARED facility, report best estimate of % of square footage related to ground ambulance services
- Ownership status for each facility (rent, mortgage, owns, donated)

Facility Costs for Each Facility*
- Cost of ownership:
  - Lease/rental cost, mortgage/bond interests/other costs of ownership, or annual depreciation cost
- Insurance, maintenance, utilities, taxes
  if shared, report % associated with your ground ambulance operations

SHARED FACILITIES:

Do not include areas used for fire response

DO include share of office and common spaces related to ground ambulance organization activities. Use CAD data to determine %.

MULTIPLE NPIs:
Ownership & Maintenance Costs– report allocated portion of other facilities costs incurred at the level of your parent organization to this NPI based on your org's approach to allocating costs.

All data reported corresponds to the organization's selected reporting year (calendar or fiscal).

Section 9: Vehicle Costs

This section requests information about the vehicle costs used by your ground ambulance organization.

Ground Ambulance Vehicle Costs

General Info:
- # of Ambulances owned
- # of Ambulances leased
- Total number of miles billed and unbilled traveled by land ambulance for any reason
- Total statute miles traveled by water ambulance for any reason

Per Ground Ambulance:
- If ambulance used to transport patients
- If vehicle was donated
- Annual depreciation expense and/or lease costs
- If ambulance was remounted & cost

Other Vehicle Costs (Non-Ambulance)

Vehicles used to respond to ground ambulance calls or support ground ambulance operations that are not ambulances
- Report depreciation expense and/or lease costs
- Report total number of miles traveled by non-ambulance vehicle for any reason
  - If shared, indicate amount of miles related to Ground Ambulance

Other reportable costs include: Registration, License Costs, Insurance, Maintenance, Fuel
- *Indicate the percentage of Maintenance and Fuel costs related to each vehicle type (i.e. Ground Ambulance, Fire Trucks, etc.)*

Section 10: Equipment, Consumables, and Supplies Costs

In this section, you will use your organization's guidelines to categorize goods as capital expenses versus operation expenses.

For purchased capital expenditures	• Provide the annual depreciated value of the item or refer to the supplemental depreciation worksheet for assistance in calculating this cost • Maintenance, certification, or service costs
For leased capital goods	• The annual cost is simply the annual lease expenditures for the piece of equipment • Maintenance, certification, or service costs
For all the cost categories in this section	• Percentage of equipment cost attributable to Ground Ambulance operations • Do not include costs for donated items

Section 10: Medical Equipment/Supplies vs. Non-Medical Equipment/Supplies

Medical Equipment/Supplies	Non-Medical Equipment/Supplies
Capital Equipment	**Capital Equipment**
• Defibrillators, ventilators, monitors, and power lifts	• Computers, dispatch equipment, and furniture
Medications	**Uniforms**
• Annual cost of medications purchased for ground ambulance services	• Annual cost of uniforms purchased by your organizations for ground ambulance services
Other Medical Equipment, Supplies, and Consumables	**Other Non-Medical Equipment and Supplies**
• Bandages, gauze, gloves, basins, oxygen, sterile water, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, IV supplies, etc.	• Paper, office supplies, postage • Allocated portion of non-medical equipment and supply expenses based on your organization's approach for allocating costs

Section 11: Other Costs

In this section, you will report any additional costs incurred during the fiscal year which are directly related to supporting your organization's ambulance services. These costs should only include those that were not reported in previous sections.

- Report costs your organization incurred for **outside contracted services** for which you paid a fee (including labor, supplies, etc.). **Do not include any costs already reported elsewhere in this instrument**

  - This includes billing service, accounting service, vehicle maintenance/repair service, dispatch/call center service, facilities maintenance service, and IT support service

Indicate Additional Expenses For:

Medical or Ambulance-Related Expenses
- Biohazard waste
- Medication removal
- Physician fees
- Laundry

Fees, Fines, and Taxes
- 911 service and ambulance fees
- Regulatory compliance and accreditation fees
- Business registration and fees
- Fines and taxes
- Insurance
- Worker's compensation
- Physicals and recruiting

Administrative and General Expenses
- Travel and training
- Dues and subscriptions
- Overhead allocation
- IT software and licensing fees

Section 7: Staffing & Labor Costs Identifying Staff Categories

DO NOT INCLUDE Individuals Who Have No Ground Ambulance Responsibilities

Categorizing your organization's staff by:

- ❑ Paid staff vs. volunteer staff
- ❑ Fire/police/public safety vs. non-fire/police/public safety
- ❑ Job function

Staff Category	Paid Staff without Fire/Police/ Public Safety roles	Volunteer Staff without Fire/Police/ Public Safety roles	Paid Staff with Fire/Police/ Public Safety roles	Volunteer Staff with Fire/Police/ Public Safety roles
EMT/Response Staff	❑	❑	❑	❑
EMT – Basic	❑	❑	❑	❑
EMT – Intermediate	❑	❑	❑	❑
EMT – Paramedic	❑	❑	❑	❑
Nurse, doctor, respiratory ther				
Emergency Medical Responde				
Ambulance Driver (non-EMT/E				
Medical Director				
Administration/Facilities Staff				
Administrative (clerical, human etc.)				
Management (executive, publi				
Dispatch / Call Center				
Vehicle Maintenance				
Facilities Maintenance (janitorial staff, laundry, repairs, etc.)				
Other not reported above (please specify)	❑	❑	❑	❑

These rows indicate the staff categories for Ground Ambulance related personnel

*These two columns indicate Ground Ambulance related personnel that **DO NOT HAVE** Fire/Police/Public Safety roles*

*These two columns indicate Ground Ambulance related personnel that **HAVE** Fire/Police/Public Safety roles*

Labor Cost Reporting Requirements

EMT/Response Staff

- Annual Compensation
- Total Hours
- Hours *Unrelated to Ground Ambulance or Fire/Police/Public Safety Duties**

Administration/Facilities/Medical Director

- Annual Compensation
- Total Hours
- Hours *Unrelated to Ground Ambulance or Fire/Police/Public Safety Duties**
- Indirect Cost Rate or Cost Allocation Plan

Volunteer Staff

- Number of Volunteers by Job Duties
- Total Volunteer Hours by Job Duties
- Stipends, Honoraria, Benefits and/or Other Compensation

*Responsibilities Unrelated to Group Ambulance or Fire / Police / Public Safety Include:
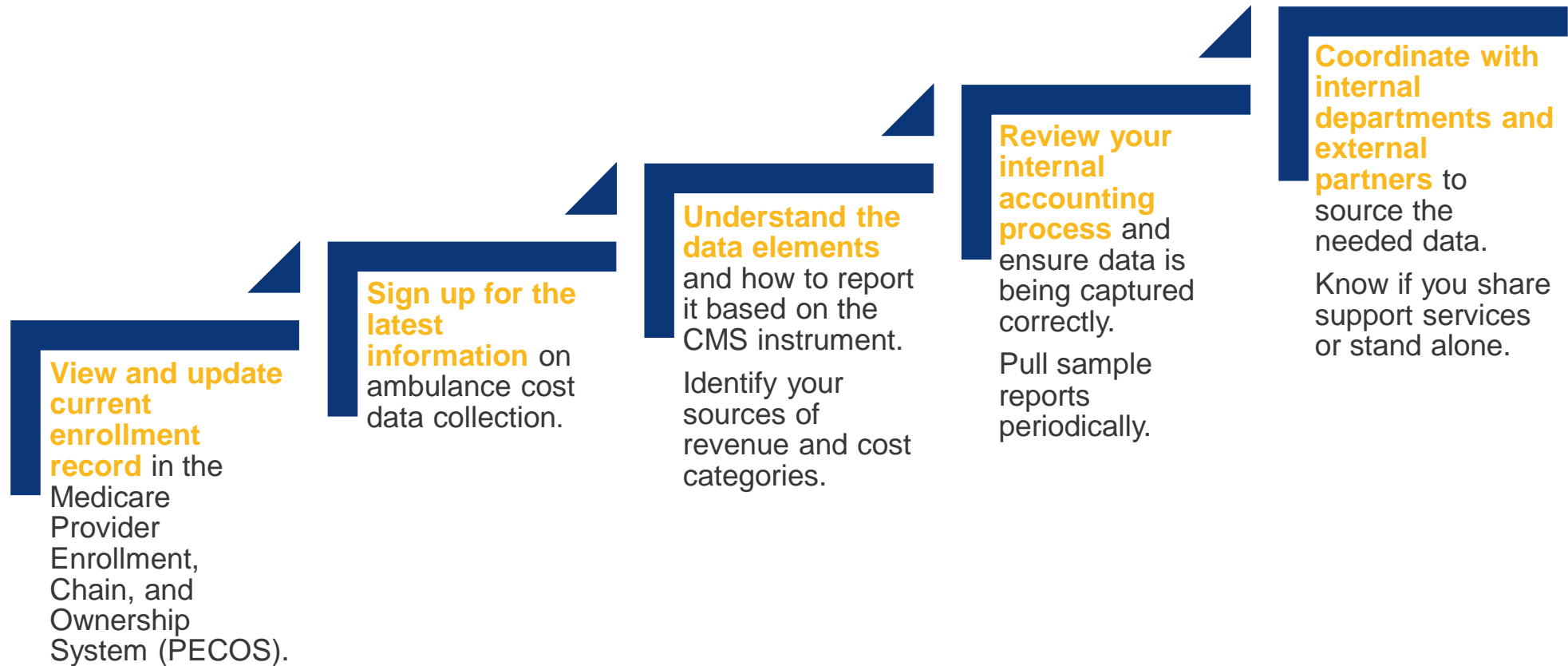
- Air ambulance operations
- Healthcare delivery unrelated to ground ambulance responses and services, such as work in a clinic.
- Public health responsibilities
- Community education and outreach
- Community paramedicine

What questions do you have?

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Solutions that Matter

Don't wait to prepare.....

It's never too early to start preparing!

View and update current enrollment record in the Medicare Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System (PECOS).

Sign up for the latest information on ambulance cost data collection.

Understand the data elements and how to report it based on the CMS instrument.

Identify your sources of revenue and cost categories.

Review your internal accounting process and ensure data is being captured correctly.

Pull sample reports periodically.

Coordinate with internal departments and external partners to source the needed data.

Know if you share support services or stand alone.

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Solutions that Matter

PCG Can Help Navigate the Data Collection Process

- Our firm has developed a comprehensive understanding of the operations of EMS providers and the regulations that govern the facilities processes and reporting requirements.

- We understand the operations and cost structures of such entities, which allows us to ensure Medicare cost reports are completed accurately and properly apportion costs to the Medicare and Medicaid programs for revenue maximization as well as cost avoidance.

- Our experience and expertise in the preparation of cost reports ensures reports that accurately reflect the cost structure of the facilities and abide by Medicare cost accounting principles, in addition to providing expert recommendations and guidance.

Medicare Cost Survey Support Services

Standard	Professional	Premium
Training and Help Desk Support	Training, Help Desk Support, and Detailed Desk Review	Comprehensive Medicare Cost Survey Preparation and Audit Support

Standard

- ✓ **Medicare Cost Survey training** via secure web-based portal with access to individual training modules for each survey component
- ✓ **Data compilation guidance and automated tools** to facilitate data collection and cost survey preparation
- ✓ **Dedicated help desk support**, up to five scheduled hours

Professional

- ✓ **Detailed desk review** of the Medicare Cost Survey and supporting documentation with summary of findings
- ✓ **Analysis of costs** in comparison to "like-sized" departments
- ✓ **Written report of findings** with recommendations, areas of concern, and considerations
- ✓ **Scheduled conference call** to walk through desk review results, cost analysis, and recommendations
- ✓ All STANDARD services:
  - Medicare Cost Survey training via secure web-portal with access to individual modules
  - Data compilation guidance and tools
  - Dedicated help desk support

Premium

- ✓ **Dedicated team of experts** to complete the Medicare Cost Survey on behalf of your department
- ✓ **Ongoing communication:** initial data collection and close-out survey review meetings, timely updates and feedback
- ✓ **Detailed data analysis:** expenditures assessment, unallowable costs adjustments, and utilization statistics verification
- ✓ **Preparation and audit** of Medicare Cost Survey and supporting documentation
- ✓ **CMS submission** of final report and supporting documentation
- ✓ **Federal audit support**
- ✓ **Full access to web-based portal** and training resources

Would you like to learn more?

SDICICCO@PCGUS.COM

publicconsultinggroup.com/medicarecostsurvey

iCHIEFS Podcast – Featuring Chief Ken Riddle
  Date/Time: TBD

Who has the first question?

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Solutions that Matter

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