

CMS Patient Safety Structural Measure

EXPLAINER

On August 1, 2024, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released a new Patient Safety Structural Measure for acute care hospitals. This measure is included in the [Medicare/Medicaid/CHIP Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems for Acute Care Hospitals and the Long-Term Care Hospital Prospective Payment System and Policy Changes for Fiscal Year 2025](#) final rule.

Why did CMS include a Patient Safety Structural Measure in its 2025 final rule?

Recognizing that, despite past progress, patient harm still occurs at significant rates, CMS is looking to assess how well hospitals have implemented strategies and practices to build safety culture and strengthen safety systems. Through reporting and public transparency incentives, CMS seeks to motivate hospital leaders to increase their investment in safety culture and systems.

Which hospitals are covered by the final rule?

All acute care hospitals participating in the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) and PPS Exempt Cancer Hospital Quality Reporting (PCHQR) programs face a reduction in their Annual Percentage Update if they fail to report on the measure. The rule does not apply to certain acute hospitals outside of the IQR and PCHQR programs, such as psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, children's hospitals, and critical access hospitals.

On what patient safety domains will hospitals be measured?

The rule calls for each covered hospital to attest to how its structures and cultures prioritize patient safety across five domains that are known to support safety improvement:

1. Leadership commitment to eliminating preventable harm
2. Strategic planning and organizational policy
3. Culture of safety and learning health systems
4. Accountability and transparency
5. Patient and family engagement

How will the Patient Safety Structural Measure be carried out?

Each year, hospitals will be asked to attest to a series of statements related to each of the five domains. The statements are designed to assess the degree to which each hospital has implemented the most salient strategies and practices for strengthening safety culture and systems within each domain.

When will hospital reporting on the Patient Safety Structural Measure begin?

Annual hospital reporting on the measure will start in CMS's reporting period for Calendar Year 2025. The pay-for-reporting incentive for that first year will be reflected in IQR hospitals' FY 2027 payment determinations. Hospitals that do not report will face a reduction in their annual Medicare payment.

Will the information be public?

Yes. Beginning in the fall of 2026, CMS will publish each hospital's Patient Safety Structural Measure score on [Care Compare on Medicare.gov](#). Hospitals will report a score of 0-5, with one point for each domain in which the hospital has attested in the affirmative to every statement.