

# CMMI Previews Upcoming Models, Calls For Job Applicants Despite RIF, Federal Hiring Freeze

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The CMS Innovation Center is looking at increasing transparency in the Medicare Star rating system and creating models focused on prevention and patient safety, and shortly after CMMI staff previewed those plans, at least five leaders posted on social media CMMI is hiring at all levels -- a confusing development given the Trump administration recently extended the federal hiring freeze and an unknown number of CMMI employees were laid off earlier this year as part of HHS' plan to cut 20,000 staff.

CMMI staff vaguely previewed during the CMS Quality Conference on July 2 what pay models the administration is working on this year along with teasing changes to the Medicare star ratings.

Stakeholders should look out for rules posted in the *Federal Register* aimed at fostering "radical transparency" in the Medicare star program so providers understand how they're performing while patients and caregivers understand physician performance, a staffer said.

Letting patients access their Medicare data would really empower families and change the conversation about treatment in an exciting way, the staffer added.

On prevention models, there are several questions CMMI is trying to answer, staff said. Specifically, the administration is looking into what goes into a Medicare beneficiary's annual wellness visit, how the program can pay for care navigators or community services, and options to reimburse for technology that patients can use to help with prevention.

CMMI staff didn't expressly mention wearables during this discussion about future pay models, but HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has supported use of such devices --

though his idea to create an ad campaign promoting wearable health devices was dropped after “Make America Healthy Again” supporters raised privacy concerns.

**The Trump administration is also embracing a “zero harm” focus when it comes to patient care.** CMS Administrator Mehmet Oz told conference attendees the most expensive health care is often bad care, and CMMI staff followed up on that idea during a panel, saying the agency plans to review its payments around patient safety.

CMMI also told conference attendees they can expect more nontraditional models like the Wasteful and Inappropriate Service Reduction (WISeR) model, which is meant to target waste under Medicare Part B but is worrying one provider organization that the administration is already backtracking on its prior authorization progress by expanding use of the controversial practice in traditional Medicare.

**Meanwhile, at least five leaders recently posted on social media CMMI is hiring at all levels, but there were no CMS job postings listed on the federal hiring website as of Monday (July 28).**

The hiring news is surprising given the early months of the Trump administration resulted in thousands of federal employees losing their jobs due to the administration’s reduction in force initiative, sparking backlash from Democrats and stakeholders. While the initial staffing cuts only involved employees with probationary status, that designation includes staff who were recently promoted. Initial estimates of cuts found 300 staff were fired within CMS.

Since then, the Supreme Court ruled the administration’s reduction in force plan can move forward despite the on-going legal battle, and President Donald Trump has issued an executive order creating a new “Schedule G” classification for non-career federal employees hired to advance his policy agenda, and who he can fire at will. Trump also recently extended the federal hiring freeze through Oct. 15.

**CMS didn’t answer *Inside Health Policy’s* questions about how many or what type of positions CMMI is looking to fill --** *Politico* reported that the agency is looking to fill 100 slots -- but CMS said in an email to *IHP* it “continues to assess workforce needs across components, including the Innovation Center, to support innovation, reduce costs, and improve outcomes.”

**The agency also clarified that workers let go under the RIF are eligible for rehire -- but a job is not guaranteed.**

“Recent reports, suggesting that CMS employees impacted by the agency’s reduction-in-force (RIF) are ineligible for rehire, are not entirely accurate,” a CMS spokesperson said Tuesday (July 25). “Employees affected by a RIF remain eligible for reemployment in federal positions under priority placement and reemployment rights outlined in federal regulations.”

Employees who were subject to the reduction in force still generally have certain rights, CMS added, which includes eligibility for priority placement within government programs and reinstatement through designated hiring pathways that would give the former employee priority consideration, though not a guaranteed placement.

Still, it's unclear what is happening with staff hiring at CMMI.

Despite the president's memo extending the hiring freeze on federal workers through Oct. 15, at least five leaders at CMMI posted on LinkedIn they are hiring within their sections under seamless care, patient care, state and population, and learning and diffusion group models.

**But there are no jobs listed under CMS**, which would include positions at CMMI, on the federal government’s careers website, [usajobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov). The only job opening listed under HHS in the Washington, D.C. area is for an information technology specialist within the Indian Health Service.

“The CMS Innovation Center is hiring! My team (and many others across the Center) are looking for passionate, curious, and driven individuals to support our rapidly expanding portfolio of models,” Mary Greer Simonton, division director of CMMI’s Learning and Diffusion Model Group, posted on LinkedIn two weeks ago. “If you love health policy and want to be on the forefront of payment and care delivery transformation in Medicare and Medicaid, please reach out! Send me your resume and let's chat.”

She followed up one week later on her post telling commenters they are actively reviewing the resumes people sent.

Sarah Fogler, division director of CMMI's Patient Care Model Group, also followed up with commenters on her job posting, "We have some hiring limitations, as is always the case with federal hiring, but I'll be back in touch if your respective resume is a good match for our available opportunities. Humbled to see the energy around value-based care and the strategic direction of the Center!"

**Other CMMI division directors told LinkedIn users CMMI has "quite a few positions open"** and said they are looking for "individuals with experience in health care payment policy, data analysis, claims processing, billing and coding, and technology systems." -- *Dorothy Mills-Gregg* ([dmillsgregg@iwpnews.com](mailto:dmillsgregg@iwpnews.com))