

CMS Postpones Exchange Certification Deadlines

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CMS notified health plans and states that the agency will not be enforcing deadlines for exchange plan certification requirements that would have otherwise been due by Wednesday (Sept. 17), including submissions for machine-readable data, marketing URLs, final state plan confirmation and the signing of qualified health plan certification agreements. CMS also says that organizations can opt to withdraw from the marketplace through Sept. 25.

“The updated deadlines for initiating and/or completing these activities are forthcoming; in the coming days,” the agency said in an email obtained by *Inside Health Policy*. “CMS will provide more information about these activities and about further changes to the QHP certification timeline.”

CMS did not explain why it is postponing the deadlines. But sources note there are several factors at play, including the U.S. District Court of Maryland’s decision to block HHS from enforcing a policy in its 2026 Program Integrity rule that granted issuers more flexibility to meet their required actuarial value thresholds. HHS asked the court to put a hold on that ruling, arguing that 80% of exchange carriers had used the broader policy, and must refile plan designs and rates if a favorable decision is not issued by Sept. 19.

The administration also recently announced that anyone who loses access to tax credits due to the forthcoming expiration of the enhanced subsidies can enroll in a catastrophic plan. CMS says that while it doesn’t anticipate the change would require “rerating,” it was making a window available for general data corrections, including “potential rate correction if deemed necessary by the state or issuer.”

CMS’ memo concludes by telling plans that it is allowing parent organizations to withdraw from consideration from Sept. 16 through Sept. 25. “CMS requests issuers

work closely with their state to ensure alignment on any changes to intended plan offerings.”