State Health Reform Assistance Network

Charting the Road to Coverage

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Qualified Health Plan (QHP) Issuer Certification Checklist

Prepared by: Georgetown University Health Policy Institute – Mila Kofman, Katie Dunton and Sally McCarty

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires insurance companies seeking to sell products on an Exchange to be certified as Qualified Health Plan (QHP) issuers. The *QHP Issuer Certification Checklist* is a document that insurance regulators (and/or Exchanges) can use or modify for use in reviewing applications filed by issuers for approval as QHP issuers. This checklist provides an outline for insurance regulators to ensure that issuers who seek to become QHP issuers are in compliance with ACA requirements. Regulators may choose to make this checklist available to issuers to help the regulated community meet all of the requirements for certification.

Some QHP issuer certification elements in the checklist require a decision by the state. The decision is about what regulators will accept from issuers as evidence to prove or verify compliance with ACA provisions. In some cases, a regulator may want to verify directly through evidence that a requirement is met. In other cases, a regulator may accept attestation that a requirement is already met or that the company is working to meet the requirement, e.g. submitting metal level (e.g., bronze, silver) plans for approval in the future. There are also decisions related to timing for meeting the requirements to receive certification as a QHP issuer.

In addition to this PDF, the *QHP Issuer Certification Checklist* is also available in a fillable Microsoft Word version for easy use and amendment by state regulators.

ABOUT STATE NETWORK

State Health Reform Assistance Network, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, provides in-depth technical support to states to maximize coverage gains as they implement key provisions of the Affordable Care Act. The program is managed by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. For more information, visit

ABOUT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE

The Health Policy Institute is a multidisciplinary group of faculty and staff dedicated to conducting research on key issues in health policy and health services research. A team of research professors at the institute (supported by the RWJF State Network) are working with states, providing technical assistance focused on implementation of the private market reforms and exchanges under the Affordable Care Act. For more information on the Health Policy Institute visit http://ihcrp.georgetown.edu/.

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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measureable and timely change. For 40 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org. Follow the Foundation on Twitter www.rwjf.org/twitter or Facebook www.rwjf.org/facebook.

For further information, please contact Katie Dunton at ktd23@georgetown.edu or 202.744.5173.



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□SHOP	□CO-OP	□Multi-State plan (under contract with	OPM) Dental only
	SHOP		SHOP □CO-OP □Multi-State plan (under contract with

	Requirements				
	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported function*	SERFF could be used for data collection**	Notes
I	Licensed and in good standing	45 CFR §156.200(b)(4)		X	Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
1.1	□ Is licensed or authorized in {State} as: □ Domestic □ Foreign □ Stock □ Reciprocal □ Mutual □ Fraternal Benefit Society □ HMO □ Non Profit Health Care Plan □ {additional licenses available in State}			X	
1.2	□ Authorized by {State} DOI to offer health insurance □ Authorized by {State} DOI to offer dental insurance			х	
1.3	□ Is in good standing			х	No federal guidance. Is there state guidance on "in good standing" that should be included here?
П	Benefit Standards and Product Offerings				Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
2.1	 □ Covers the Essential Health Benefit Package. □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director). 	42 USC §18022	×		
2.2	□ Complies with Annual Limitation on Cost-Sharing. □ Cost-sharing shall not exceed the dollar amounts in effect under section 223(c)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for self-only and family coverage.	42 USC §18022			
	□ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director). FOR SHOP ONLY: □ Complies with Annual Limitations on Deductibles for Employer-Sponsored Plans. □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director).		X		

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported function*	SERFF could be used for data collection**	Notes
2.3	 □ Offers through the Exchange: □ One silver level plan (AV 70%), AND □ One gold level plan (AV 80%). 	45 CFR §156.200 (c)(1)			
	□ REVIEWER: □ Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director), AND □ Check with actuary for AV status if not part of form review.		×		
2.4	☐ If offers a Catastrophic Plan, it is only offered to eligible individuals eligible to enroll in a Catastrophic Plan.	42 USC §18022(e)			
	Eligible individuals: Individuals that have not attained the age of 30 before the beginning of the plan year; or Individual has a certification in effect for any plan year exempt from the Shared Responsibility Payment by reason of lack of affordable coverage or hardship.			x	
	☐ If offered, Catastrophic Plans are offered only in the individual exchange and <u>not</u> in the SHOP.				
	☐ If offered, Catastrophic Plan complies with specific requirements for benefits.				
	□ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director).				
2.5	□ Offers a child-only plan at the same level of coverage—bronze, silver, gold, or platinum—as any other plan offered through the Exchange to individuals who, as of the beginning of the plan year, have not attained age 21. □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for	45 CFR §156.200(c)	х		
0.0	compliance (Life and Health Director).	45.050			
2.6	Does not have benefit designs that have the effect of discouraging the enrollment of individuals with significant health needs.	45 CFR §156.225(b)	X		
	□ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director).				
2.7	☐ Submits a description of covered benefits and cost-sharing provisions to the exchange at least annually.	45 CFR §156.210(b)		Х	
III	Rate Filings and other Rate Disclosure Requirements				Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
3.1	☐ Files rates for prior approval. ☐ REVIEWER: Check with actuary.	{State law cite}	Х		NOTE: Does prior approval apply to dental only policies?
3.2	Submits rate information to the Exchange at least annually.	45 CFR §155.1020 45 CFR §156.210(b)	Х		

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF-	SERFF could	Notes
			supported function*	be used for data collection**	
3.3	☐ Submits to the Exchange a justification for a rate increase prior to the implementation of the increase.	45 CFR §155.1020; 45 CFR §156.210(c)	х		
3.4	☐ Prominently posts the rate increase justification on issuer website prior to the implementation of the increase.	45 CFR §155.1020; 45 CFR §156.210(c)		х	
IV	Rating Standards—General				
4.1	☐ Sets rates for an entire benefit year, or for the SHOP, plan year.	45 CFR §156.210(a)	Х		
4.2	□ REVIEWER: Check with actuary. □ Rates must be the same for products inside and outside Exchange.	45 CFR §156.255(b)			
	□ REVIEWER: Check with actuary.	3100.200(5)	Х		
v	Allowable Rating Variations	42 U.S.C. 300gg			Regulator verifies directly through
		§2701; 45 CFR §156.255			evidence that requirement is met. 2. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. 3. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
5.1	□ Varies rates only based on: □ Geographic area □ Age (3 to 1) □ Tobacco use (1.5 to 1) □ Family composition: □ Individual; □ Two-adult families; □ One-adult family with child(ren); □ All other families.	42 U.S.C. 300gg §2701; 45 CFR §156.255	Х		Note: State restrictions?
<u> </u>	•			<u>I</u>	
VI	Marketing				Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
6.1	☐ Complies with all {State} marketing laws & regulations.	45 CFR §156.225(a)	Х		
6.2	 Marketing practices do not discourage the enrollment of individuals with significant health needs. 	45 CFR §156.225(b)	Х		
VII	Network Adequacy Requirements	45 CFR §155.1050; 45 CFR §156.230			Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
7.1	☐ Complies with {State} network adequacy laws & regs in addition to the specific requirements listed below.			Х	

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported function*	SERFF could be used for data collection**	Notes
7.2	 ☐ Has a network for each plan with sufficient number and types of providers to ensure that all services are accessible without unreasonable delay. ☐ Network must include providers that specialize in mental health and substance abuse services. 	45 CFR §156.230(a)(2)		х	
7.3	☐ Has a network with sufficient geographic distribution of providers for each plan.	45 CFR §156.230(a)(2)		Х	
7.4	☐ Has sufficient number and geographic distribution of essential community providers, where available, to ensure reasonable and timely access to a broad range of such providers for low-income, medically underserved individuals in the service area.	45 CFR §156.230(a)(1) 45 CFR §156.235		х	
7.5	 □ Makes its provider directory available: □ To the Exchange for publication online in accordance with guidance from the Exchange; and □ To potential enrollees in hard copy upon request. 	45 CFR §156.230(b)		х	
	Provider directory identifies providers that are not accepting new patients.				
VIII	Applications and Notices				Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
8.1	□ Provides to applicants and enrollees all applications and other material: □ In plain language; and □ In a manner that is accessible and timely to: □ Individuals living with disabilities, and □ To individuals with limited English proficiency through the provision of language services at no cost to the individual.	45 CFR §155.230(b)		X	
8.2	□ Complies with {State} minimum language simplification standards.	{State law cite}		х	

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IX	Transparency Requirements	45 CFR §155.1040; 45 CFR §156.220			1. Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. 2. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. 3. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
9.1	□ Makes available to the public in an accurate and timely manner, and in plain language: □ Claims payment policies and practices; □ Periodic financial disclosures; □ Data on enrollment; □ Data on disenrollment; □ Data on the number of claims that are denied; □ Data on rating practices; □ Information on cost-sharing and payments for out-of-network coverage; □ Information on enrollee rights under Title I of the Affordable Care Act (includes insurance market reforms and Patient's Bill of Rights). □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance with Patient's Bill of Rights (Life and Health Director).	45 CFR §156.220		X	
9.2	□ Makes available to the Exchange in an accurate and timely manner, and in plain language: □ Claims payment policies and practices; □ Periodic financial disclosures; □ Data on enrollment; □ Data on disenrollment; □ Data on the number of claims that are denied; □ Data on rating practices; □ Information on cost-sharing and payments for out-of-network coverage; □ Information on enrollee rights under Title I of the Affordable Care Act (includes insurance market reforms and Patient's Bill of Rights). □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance with Patient's Bill of Rights (Life and Health Director).	45 CFR §156.220		X	

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9.3	 □ Makes available to {Commissioner/ Superintendent} of Insurance in an accurate and timely manner, and in plain language: □ Claims payment policies and practices; □ Periodic financial disclosures; □ Data on enrollment; □ Data on disenrollment; □ Data on the number of claims that are denied; □ Data on rating practices; □ Information on cost-sharing and payments for out-of-network coverage; □ Information on enrollee rights under Title I of the Affordable Care Act (includes insurance market reforms and Patient's Bill of Rights). □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance with Patient's Bill of Rights (Life and Health Director). 	45 CFR §156.220		X	
9.4	 □ Makes available to the U.S. DHHS in an accurate and timely manner, and in plain language: □ Claims payment policies and practices; □ Periodic financial disclosures; □ Data on enrollment; □ Data on disenrollment; □ Data on the number of claims that are denied; □ Data on rating practices; □ Information on cost-sharing and payments for out-of-network coverage; □ Information on enrollee rights under Title I of the Affordable Care Act (includes insurance market reforms and Patient's Bill of Rights). □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance with Patient's Bill of Rights (Life and Health Director). 	45 CFR §156.220		X	
9.5	□ Makes available the amount of enrollee cost-sharing for a specific item or service by a participating provider in a timely manner upon the request of the individual. □ Makes available such information through: □ Internet website; and □ Other means for individuals without access to the Internet.	45 CFR §156.220(d)		×	
9.6	 □ Provides required notices on internal and external appeals in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. □ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director). 	45 CFR §147.136(e)		x	

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported function*	SERFF could be used for data collection**	Notes
X	Enrollment Periods				Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
10.1	□ Provides an initial open enrollment period October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.	45 CFR §155.410(b)		х	
10.2	□ Provides an <u>annual open enrollment</u> period October 15 to December 7.	45 CFR §155.410(e)		Х	
10.3	Provides notice prior to the annual open enrollment period.	45 CFR §155.410(d)		х	Note: Exchange required to provide notice under reg. Is the Exchange going to require QHPs provide notice?
10.4	 □ Provides special enrollment periods for qualified enrollees. □ Provides notice to individuals eligible to enroll during a special enrollment period. □ REVIEWER: □ Check with form review for compliance for special enrollment period (Life and Health Director), AND □ Check with form review for compliance with notice (Life and Health Director). 	45 CFR §155.420		X	Note: Any additional state-based triggering events? E.g. domestic partnership.
XI	Enrollment Process for Qualified Individuals				Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
11.1	☐ Enrolls a qualified individual when Exchange notifies the issuer that the individual is a qualified individual and transmits information to the issuer.	45 CFR §156.265 (b)(1)		x	
11.2	☐ If an applicant initiates enrollment directly with the issuer for enrollment through the Exchange, the issuer either: ☐ Directs the individual to file an application with the Exchange; or ☐ Ensures that the individual received an eligibility determination for coverage through the exchange through the exchange Internet website.	45 CFR §156.265 (b)(2)		х	
11.3	□ Accepts enrollment information consistent with the privacy and security requirements established by the Exchange.	45 CFR §156.265 (c)		х	
11.4	☐ Uses the premium payment process established by the Exchange.	45 CFR §156.265 (d)		Х	
11.5	☐ Provides new enrollees an enrollment information package that is compliant with accessibility and readability standards.	45 CFR §156.265 (e)		Х	

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported	SERFF could be used for data	Notes
			function*	collection**	
11.6	 Reconciles enrollment files with HHS and the Exchange no less than once a month. 	45 CFR §156.265 (f); 45 CFR §156.400 (d)		X	
11.7	☐ Acknowledges receipt of enrollment information transmitted from the exchange in accordance with Exchange standards.	45 CFR §156.265 (g)		х	
XII	Termination of Coverage of Qualified Individuals	45 CFR §155.430; 45 CFR §156.270			Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
12.1	□ Terminates coverage only if: □ Enrollee is no longer eligible for coverage through the Exchange; □ Enrollee's coverage is rescinded; □ QHP terminates or is decertified; □ Enrollee switches coverage: □ During an annual open enrollment period; □ Special enrollment period; or □ Obtains other minimum essential coverage. □ For non-payment of premium only if: □ Applies termination policy for non-payment of premium uniformly to enrollees in similar circumstances; □ Enrollee is delinquent on premium payment; □ Provides the enrollee with notice of such payment delinquency; and □ Provides a grace period of at least 3 consecutive months if an enrollee is receiving advance payments of the premium tax credit and has previously paid at least one month's premium. □ REVIEWER: □ Check with form review for termination compliance (Life and Health Director), AND □ Check with form review for compliance with notice (Life and Health Director).	45 CFR §155.430(b); 45 CFR §156.270		X	
12.2	Provides reasonable notice of termination of coverage to the exchange and enrollee (this includes effective date of termination). REVIEWER: Check with form review for notice and effective date compliance (Life and Health Director).	45 CFR §155.430 (d); 45 CFR §156.270 (b)		×	
12.3	Maintains records of terminations of coverage for auditing.	45 CFR §155.430(c); 45 CFR §156.270(h)		х	

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported function*	SERFF could be used for data collection**	Notes
XIII	Accreditation Standards	45 CFR §1045; 45 CFR §156.275			Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
13.1	□ Accredited on the basis of local performance in the following categories by an accrediting entity recognized by HHS: □ Clinical quality measures, such as the HEDIS; □ Patient experience ratings on a standardized CAHPS survey; □ Consumer access; □ Utilization management; □ Quality assurance; □ Provider credentialing; □ Complaints and appeals; □ Network adequacy and access; and □ Patient information programs.	45 CFR §156.275(a)(1)	X (Standardized CAHPS data will not be captured in SERFF for plan year 1)	X (States could require CAHPS data be submitted via SERFF for plan year 1)	
13.2	□ Authorizes the accrediting entity to release to the exchange and HHS a copy of its most recent accreditation survey and survey-related information.	45 CFR §156.275(a)(2)	Х		
13.3	□ Accredited within the timeframe established by the Exchange.	45 CFR §156.275(b)	Х		
<u> </u>	☐ Maintains accreditation.				
XIV	Quality Assurance Program				
14.1	Implements and reports on a quality improvement strategy or strategies used to reward quality through the use of market based incentives. Improvement strategy is any strategy that includes increased reimbursement or other financial incentive for: Improving health outcomes through the implementation of activities that include quality reporting, effective case management, care coordination, chronic disease management, medication and care compliance initiatives, including use of the medical home model, for treatment or services under the plan or coverage; Implementation of activities to prevent hospital readmissions through a comprehensive program that includes patient-centered education and counseling, comprehensive discharge planning, and post discharge reinforcement by an appropriate health care professional; Implementation of activities to improve patient safety and reduce medical errors through the appropriate use of best clinical practices, evidence based medicine, and health information technology; and Implementation of wellness and health promotion activities.	45 CFR §156.200 (b)(5) 42 U.S.C. §13031		X	

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported function*	SERFF could be used for data collection**	Notes
XV	Segregation of Funds				
15.1	☐ Does not use federal funds for abortion.	45 CFR §156.280		Х	
XVI	Other Substantive Requirements				
16.1	Complies with all Exchange processes, procedures and requirements.	45 CFR §156.200(b)(2)		Х	
16.2	□ Paid the Exchange user fee.	45 CFR §156.200(b)(6)		Х	
16.3	□ Complies with risk adjustment program.	45 CFR §156.200(b)(7)		Х	
16.4	Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.	45 CFR §156.200(e)		х	
16.5	□ Is in the interest of qualified individuals.	45 CFR §155.1000(c) (2)		Х	
16.6	☐ Complies with internal claims and appeals and external review processes.	45 CFR §147.136		×	
	□ REVIEWER: Check with form review for compliance (Life and Health Director).				
16.7	□ If provides coverage through a direct primary care medical home: □ Medical home meets criteria established by HHS; □ Issuer meets all requirements otherwise required; and □ Issuer coordinates the services covered by the direct primary care medical home.	45 CFR §156.245		X	
XVII	Other Reporting Requirements				Regulator verifies directly through evidence that requirement is met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that requirement has been met. Regulator will accept verification by company officer that company is taking steps to meet the requirements prior to [DATE].
17.1	 □ Collects and transmits data to and from, exchanges, HHS, Treasury, and reinsurance entities. □ Provides a description of system infrastructure's capacity to securely interface with these entities for data transfers, including enrollment, reconciliation, claims encounter data, and reports. 		X (for Plan Management data transfers between SERFF and an Exchange)		

	Requirements	Federal Source	SERFF- supported function*	SERFF could be used for data collection**	Notes
17.2	□ Reports to U.S. DHHS on prescription drug distribution and costs the following information (paid by PBM or issuer): □ Percentage of all prescriptions that were provided through retail pharmacies compared to mail order pharmacies, and □ Percentage of prescriptions for which a generic drug was available and dispensed compared to all drugs dispensed, broken down by pharmacy type: □ Independent pharmacy, □ Supermarket pharmacy, and □ Mass merchandiser pharmacy. □ Aggregate amount and type of rebates, discounts or price concessions that the issuer or its contracted PBM negotiates that are: □ Attributable to patient utilization, and □ Passed through to the issuer. □ Total number of prescriptions that were dispensed. □ Aggregate amount of the difference between the amount the issuer pays its contracted PBM and the amounts that the PBM pays retail pharmacies, and mail order pharmacies.	45 CFR §156.295			

^{*}SERFF is expected to collect data for analysis of the requirements in this column.
**SERFF may be used to collect state-specific, document-based information to support review of requirements in this column.