



Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

To: Chief Executive Officers

From: Joseph Martin, Executive Director
PA Health Care Cost Containment Council

Date: September 14, 2010

Subject: Update on PHC4 Laboratory Data Collection

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Martin', written over the 'From:' field of the email header.

As previously communicated, PHC4 intends to restart the collection of the required laboratory data directly from hospitals starting with the Quarter 1, 2011 collection period, which includes discharge data from January 1, 2011 through March 31, 2011. While PHC4 will begin accepting this data starting on April 1, 2011, under law it is not due to PHC4 until June 30, 2011.

This letter is to inform you that on September 9, 2010 the PA Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4) voted to re-publish the Request for Information (RFI) regarding submission of laboratory data to PHC4. The intent of the RFI is to assist hospitals in identifying potential vendors for the purposes of submitting laboratory data to PHC4. The reason for the republication is that we now have a Laboratory Data Reporting Manual that includes a full and robust set of specifications and it is our intention to keep this process open so as to encourage as much participation as possible going forward, with vendors being added and removed from time to time as circumstances dictate.

While PA hospitals may choose to develop their own internal mechanisms to submit the required laboratory data to PHC4, it is expected that at least some hospitals will engage the services of a third-party vendor for this purpose. A specific provision of Act 3 states that “the council shall maintain a vendor list of at least two vendors that may be chosen by any data source for submission of any specific data elements.” The Council is re-releasing this RFI to satisfy this provision, with the intent of identifying additional vendors for hospitals to choose for the submission of the laboratory data to PHC4.

Hospitals and vendors will be required to comply with data and file specifications so that PHC4 receives the laboratory data in a standardized format. These specifications are described in the Laboratory Data Reporting Manual, which was made available to all hospitals on September 1, 2010 and is also available on the PHC4 website at www.phc4.org. Hospitals currently working with a vendor for data submission are not limited to only those vendors included in the list maintained by the Council. However, all vendors must meet the standardized data and file specifications.

PHC4 staff is working to develop its internal system to collect and process the laboratory data, including a system to allow hospitals to upload laboratory data files, parse data files, perform data validations, link laboratory data with administrative data and produce error summaries. Once the laboratory data collection system is complete, PHC4 will begin collecting laboratory data and will assist hospitals with the technical aspects of providing the appropriate file format and layout, as well as transmitting the data to PHC4 and correcting the data once submitted.

Again, both the RFI and the Laboratory Data Reporting Manual are available at www.phc4.org

Thank you for your cooperation during this transition.

cc: PHC4 Executive Committee
Carolyn Scanlan, President & CEO, Hospital and Healthsystem Association of PA
PHC4 Data Contacts