



## Transcript for the New and Improved Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Report (PEPPER) Format

Thank you for accessing this recorded session on the new PEPPER format. My name is Kimberly Hrehor, and I work for RELI Group, which is contracted with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS, to develop, produce, and distribute PEPPERS to hospitals and other health care providers. During this session, I'm going to review the new and improved PEPPER format for the Q4FY and Q4CY19 PEPPERS that were released in July and August of 2020.

Starting with the annual releases of the PEPPER in 2020, which again includes the Q4FY19 and the Q4CY19 releases, the PEPPER has a new and improved format. While all of the data and the information that you're used to seeing in your PEPPER will still be available, the new format includes several new features, which include greater accessibility, a cleaner presentation, and improved readability. Some of the notable changes that you may see in your PEPPER include the removal of text boxes. We're replacing with text where needed. We've increased the text size, the font size throughout the PEPPER. We've removed the alternate row shading, labeled all of the tables. And we've also revised some of the report titles.

So why have these changes been implemented? They were implemented to make the PEPPERS more accessible to everyone using Section 508 accessibility standards. The PEPPER files are now designed to provide greater access to people with disabilities. To learn more about Section 508, review the information provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services at the link on this slide.

Another change is that is that the PEPPERS are now created in Excel 2016 as .XLSX files. So if you have an earlier version of Excel and you're not able to upgrade to a newer version of Excel, you might be able to find some options to open these files by conducting an internet search and look for some free software that can help you. Perhaps you might search on how to open .XLSX files.

Now, during this brief session, I'm going to review the main worksheet tabs or reports in the PEPPER. I'll be highlighting the changes that you may notice in each. And I'll also have a slide that shows the images comparing the old version of the PEPPER with the new version.

Now, before I get started with that, I want to point out that the examples that I'm using in this presentation are from a PEPPER for a Critical Access Hospital. The information that I'm sharing today is also applicable to the PEPPERS for other provider types that are included on this slide. So basically, all of the PEPPERS that we produce on an annual basis will now have this new format.

All right, so let's go ahead and get started with the "Purpose" page. On the "Purpose" page, you'll notice that we have added the CMS logo there on the new version, which is on the right side of the screen. The layout has been revised slightly. You can definitely see that we have increased the font size. And we've also removed the link to the PEPPER "Training & Resources" page on the website. So on the left side of the slide here is the old version of the PEPPER "Purpose" page. And on the right side is the new version of the "Purpose" page.

Moving onto the "Definitions" page, we've removed the shading. We've also removed the hyperlink to the Target Area Worksheets. We've increased the font size again. And we've spelled out "Numerator" and "Denominator" in all instances. So here on the left side of the screen, you see the old version of the "Definitions" tab. And on the right side is the new version of the "Definitions" tab.

Moving onto the Compare Target Report, this report has had a few minor changes. We have removed the "Description" column, which on the old version you can see on the left side there is the second

column labeled “Description.” That has been removed. We've also removed the link at the top of the page to the PEPPER website. The new version on the right side of the screen is much more condensed. It's shorter and easier to look at. If you like to print out the “Purpose” page, it should print out on fewer pages. So other than that, all of the columns are still included there in the Compare Targets Report.

Moving on to the Target Area Report, you'll notice a number of changes here. Again, everything is still there. It's just been reorganized to some extent. We have moved the data table from the top of the page to below the data table. So on the right side of the screen, you see the new version of the PEPPER with the graph on the bottom. On the left side is the older version of PEPPER with the graph on the top.

In the Data Table section, you'll also notice that we added an “Outlier Status” row. It's that first row right below Your Hospital. And so the outlier status will identify whether or not you are a high outlier, a low outlier, not an outlier, or if you had no data. The “Need to audit?” box there that was formerly to the left of the graph in the old version has been removed. And we've also removed the link to the PEPPER website at the top of the page, as well as the hyperlink to the “Definitions” Worksheet. So this page has had some amount of reorganization. For the most part, though, all of the data and the information that you're used to seeing is still here. It's just in a different format.

Moving on to the “Top” reports, and again in this example, this is a Critical Access Hospital Top DRG Report. You can see that we have widened the column for the DRG description. We are no longer displaying the blank rows. In the old version on the left, you can see that there are a number of blank rows. Now, if there are fewer categories that have sufficient data to display, we are not showing those blank rows in the new version of the “Top” reports, again, where that is applicable. And you can see we've also removed the link to the PEPPER Resources website.

Now, I want to just make a comment here about these “Top” reports or the supplemental reports for other types of PEPPER, you will notice similar reformatting in your “Top” reports if you are not a Critical Access Hospital. All of the data columns are still going to be there. They may be wider to some extent. The fonts will be increased. And, again, if there were blank rows previously, then there will no longer be blank rows that are displayed.

Some of the other changes that you might notice that our team has taken on related to 508 compliance include the resources that are found on the “Data” page of the website. And many of these resources will have a new format, a new look and feel. So if you go to the “Data” page, you will notice that the national and the state aggregate reports are now presented as PDF file. Also, the peer group bar chart format has also been updated. So you will notice that there are some new format, some other changes. Again, these are all related to ensuring that all customers can access and utilize the information that we make available on our website.

Now you may notice if you go onto the website that some of the recorded sessions still include images of the PEPPER in the old format. And our team is going to be working on updating all of those recorded training sessions on the website and replacing them over time. So please keep that in mind as you're looking at or taking advantage of those resources. The demonstration or the sample PEPPER that is on the “Training & Resources” page is now going to have the new format. So if you want to take a closer look at the PEPPER that has this new format, go to the “Training & Resources” page and access that sample PEPPER.

As always, if you have questions or if you need assistance, please contact us through our Help Desk on the PEPPER website. Links to both are on this slide. And, of course, we're interested in your feedback on the new PEPPER format. If you'd like to share that, you can complete the feedback form, and we will take all feedback into account and share that information with CMS.

Thank you so much for accessing this session. And I hope you enjoy the new PEPPER.