



Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Report

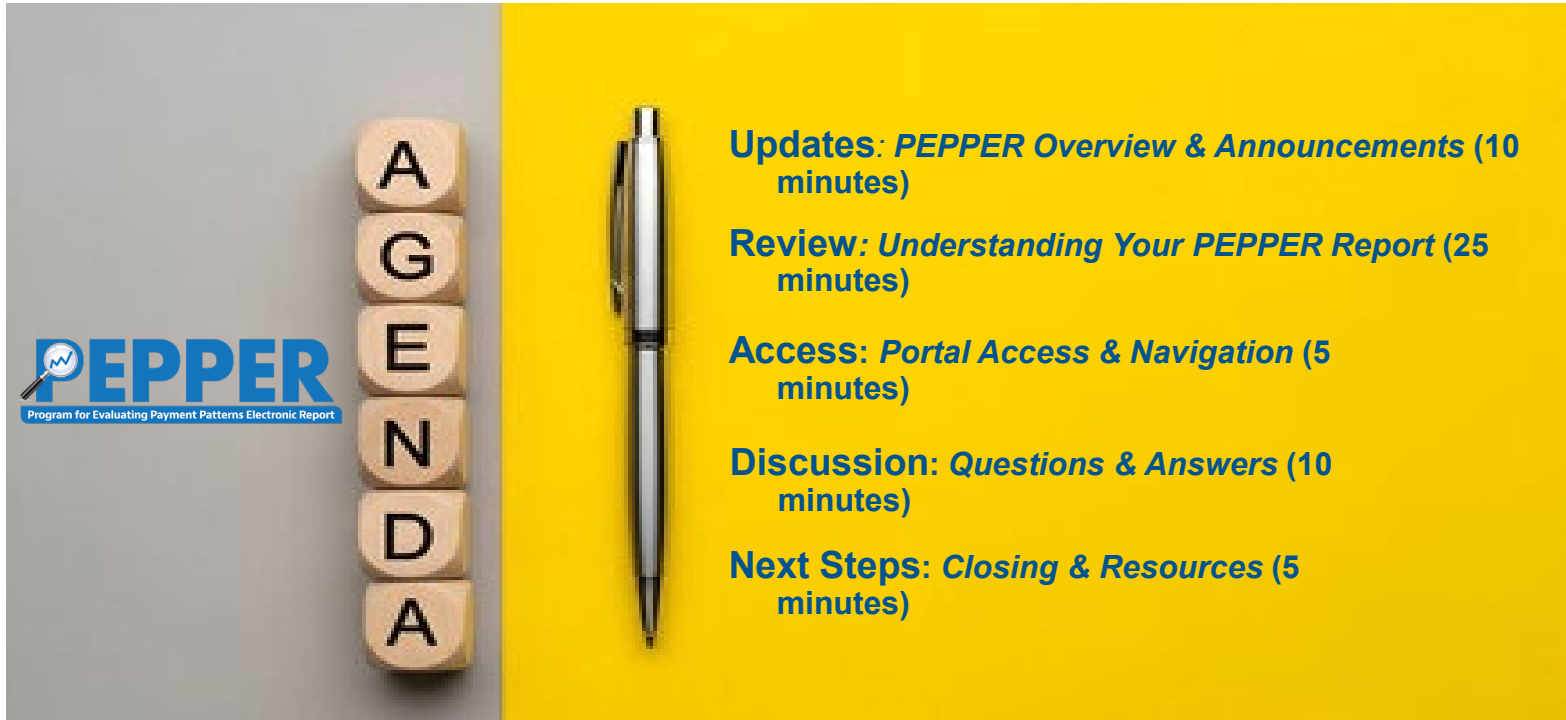
PEPPER Webinar

September 29, 2026

Thank you for joining today's presentation. We will begin momentarily.

Webinar Agenda

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)

A graphic divided into two vertical panels. The left panel has a grey background and features the PEPPER logo (a magnifying glass over a line graph) and the text 'Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Report'. To the right of the logo, the word 'AGENDA' is spelled vertically using wooden blocks. The right panel has a yellow background and lists the agenda items in blue text, with a silver pen placed vertically between the two panels.

PEPPER
Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Report

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Updates: *PEPPER Overview & Announcements* (10 minutes)

Review: *Understanding Your PEPPER Report* (25 minutes)

Access: *Portal Access & Navigation* (5 minutes)

Discussion: *Questions & Answers* (10 minutes)

Next Steps: *Closing & Resources* (5 minutes)

We will begin momentarily.

All participants will be muted for the presentation. To submit a question, please enter your question in the Q&A box in Zoom.

PEPPER Overview

What Is a PEPPER?

- A Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Report (PEPPER) is an electronic report that provides facility-specific Medicare statistics for discharges and services vulnerable to improper payments.
- Each PEPPER includes statistics for the most recent fiscal years for each area at risk for improper payments (“target areas”).
- PEPPERS for Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) are released annually.
- PEPPER is generated only for hospitals and facilities with sufficient data (more than 11 claims or episodes) for the target areas included in the report.



PEPPER Purpose

How to Use Your PEPPER?



PEPPER encourages providers to review data about their billing practices to help ensure they submit accurate claims for payment.



PEPPER provides a comparison of your facility's claims-data statistics against other facilities in your Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) jurisdiction, your state, and the nation.



PEPPER provides education to providers on their payment patterns and potential risk for improper payments.



PEPPER can be used to strengthen compliance programs, prepare for audits, and improve documentation and care planning.

Note: PEPPER does not identify improper Medicare payments.

PEPPER Updates

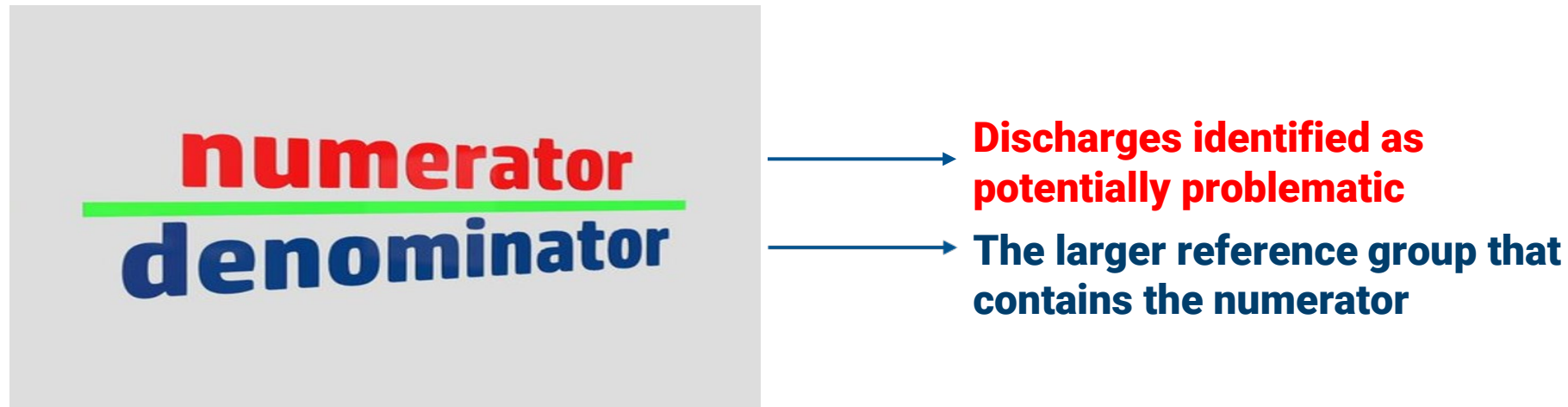
What Changed?

- PEPPERS have been redeveloped. Beginning with the FY 2025 PEPPER, users may notice slight differences in their target area performance compared with historical PEPPERS.
- This release marks the first SNF PEPPER available through the new PEPPER Portal. The Portal is accessible to Authorized Officials (AOs), Access Managers (AMs), and users with the Staff End User (SEU) business function in the Identity & Access Management (I&A) System.
- Staff End Users should contact their Authorized Official or Access Manager to request access.



PEPPER Target Areas

- PEPPERS display information on SNF payment patterns for specific areas identified as potentially at risk for improper Medicare payments, referred to as **Target Areas**.
- These Target Areas were originally identified through Quality Improvement Organization reviews and studies conducted by the Office of Inspector General.
- Target areas may change over time as MACs identify new risks and policy changes are implemented.



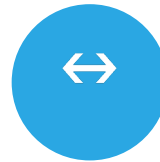
How to Use PEPPER

While PEPPER does not identify the presence of payment errors, SNFs can use PEPPER data to:



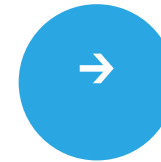
Review

Pinpoint areas for auditing or monitoring



Compare

Assess performance against national, MAC jurisdiction, and state peers



Act

Use findings to guide education, documentation, and monitoring

Example SNF Target Area Review: High Nursing Case Mix

Benchmark	Target Percentage	If Target Area Percentage is Below?	If Target Area Percentage is Above?
National 20 th Percentile	7.1%	<i>Low outlier</i>	Not an outlier
National 80 th Percentile	28.8%	Not an outlier	High outlier

Facility	Target Area Discharge Count (Numerator)	Denominator Discharge Count (Denominator)	Target Area Percentage	Outlier Status
SNF 1	30	600	5.0%	<i>Low outlier</i>
SNF 2	276	899	30.7%	High outlier
SNF 3	9	80	<i>N/A – fewer than 11 claims in numerator</i>	No data

Example SNF Target Area Review: 90+ Days Episodes of Care (GE90 Day)

Benchmark	Target Percentage	If Target Area Percentage is Below?	If Target Area Percentage is Above?
National 80 th Percentile	30.9%	Not an outlier	High outlier

Facility	Target Area Discharge Count (Numerator)	Denominator Discharge Count (Denominator)	Target Area Percentage	Outlier Status
SNF 1	15	200	15.0%	Not an outlier
SNF 2	58	180	32.2%	High outlier
SNF 3	9	110	<i>N/A – fewer than 11 episodes in numerator</i>	No data

Understanding the Compare Targets Report

Compare Targets Report:

- Shows Target Area information for the most recent fiscal year.
- Includes your facility's percentile rankings.
- Think of it as: *How does your facility compare to others this year?*

Table 2 Compare Targets Report

Target	Numerator Count	Percent	SNF National %ile	SNF Jurisdict. %ile	SNF State %ile	Sum of Payments
High PT and OT Case Mix	443	70.3%	16.8	15.1	18.7	Not Calculated
High SLP Case Mix	100	15.9%	42.5	41.6	55.3	Not Calculated
High Nursing Case Mix	73	11.6%	37.5	52.8	72.4	Not Calculated
20-Day Episodes of Care	30	10.7%	85.9	86.9	84.1	\$299,762
3- to 5-Day Readmissions	12	2.3%	24.1	21.7	35.5	Not Calculated

Understanding the Comparative Data Table

Target Area Comparative Data Table:

- Shows National, Jurisdiction, and State information for the respective Target Area.
- If your facility's target area percentage is greater than the National 80th percentile for that target area, you are considered a high outlier.
- Think of it as: *How do 80% of facilities score for this target area?*

Table 4 Comparative Data for 20-Days Episodes of Care

Time Period	National 80th Percentile	Jurisdiction 80th Percentile	State 80th Percentile	Target Area Rate
FY 2023	8.7%	19.5%	20.4%	6.9%
FY 2024	8.8%	25.5%	23.1%	10.6%
FY 2025	10.0%	20.1%	20.6%	10.7%

Example Next Steps For a High Outlier

Target Area Has a High Outlier Status

Audit Cases

Review cases that meet the numerator criteria for potential billing anomalies.

Implement Intervention

For more information, review the suggested interventions for high outliers in the User Guide.

Follow Up

Track progress in this area following the intervention.

PEPPER Content

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)

Purpose
Definitions
Compare
High PT and OT Case Mix
High Nursing Case Mix
20-Day Episodes of Care
High SLP Case Mix
90+ Days Episodes of Care
3- to 5- Day Readmissions

PT – Physical Therapy
OT – Occupational Therapy
SLP – Speech-Language
Pathology (Speech
Therapy)

Sample PEPPER Review



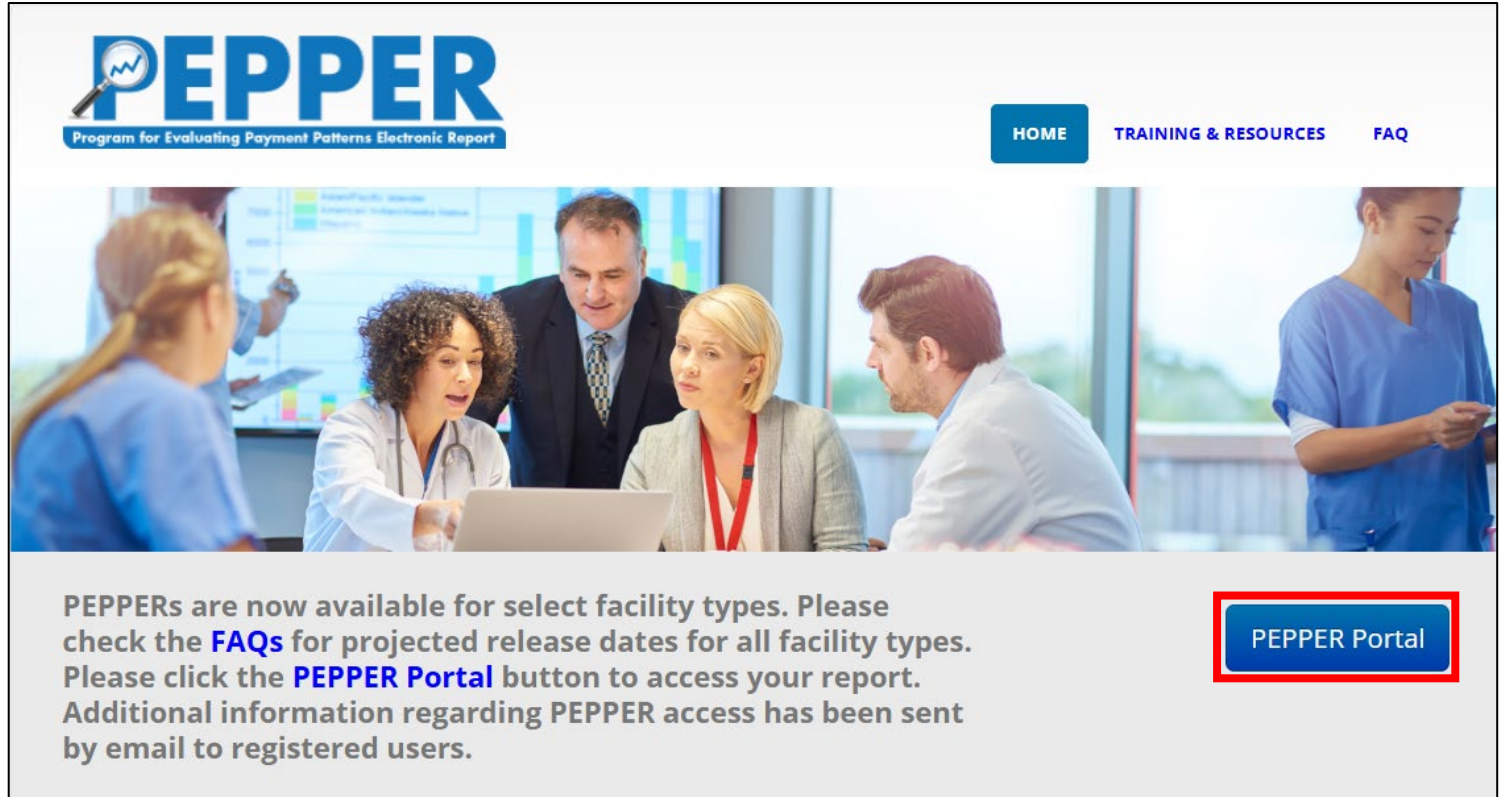
Website Portal Overview



PEPPER Website

Visit the [CMS PEPPER website](#) for more information, including links to the following tools:

- **FAQs**
- **User Guide**
- **PEPPER Help Desk**



PEPPER
Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Report

[HOME](#) [TRAINING & RESOURCES](#) [FAQ](#)

PEPPERS are now available for select facility types. Please check the [FAQs](#) for projected release dates for all facility types. Please click the [PEPPER Portal](#) button to access your report. Additional information regarding PEPPER access has been sent by email to registered users.

[PEPPER Portal](#)

PEPPER Login Page



Login

Username

Password

Submit

A valid Identity & Access Management (I&A) System account is needed to access the Provider Portal of the website. This account is the same login information that is used to access NPES and PECOS systems. Only Authorized Officials and Individual Practitioners who have been vetted will be able to access Pepper reports.

If you have forgotten your Password, click the [Identity & Access Management System - Reset Forgotten Password](#) hyperlink to navigate to the Reset Password page.

If you enter an incorrect User ID and Password combination three times, your User ID will be disabled.

Please contact the EUS help desk if your account is disabled, you have forgotten your User ID, or you need to modify your account to accurately reflect your Authorized Official or Individual Practitioner status:

PECOS External User Services (EUS) Help Desk:

Phone: 1-866-484-8049

E-mail: EUS_Support@cms.hhs.gov

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday, 7am-7pm EST

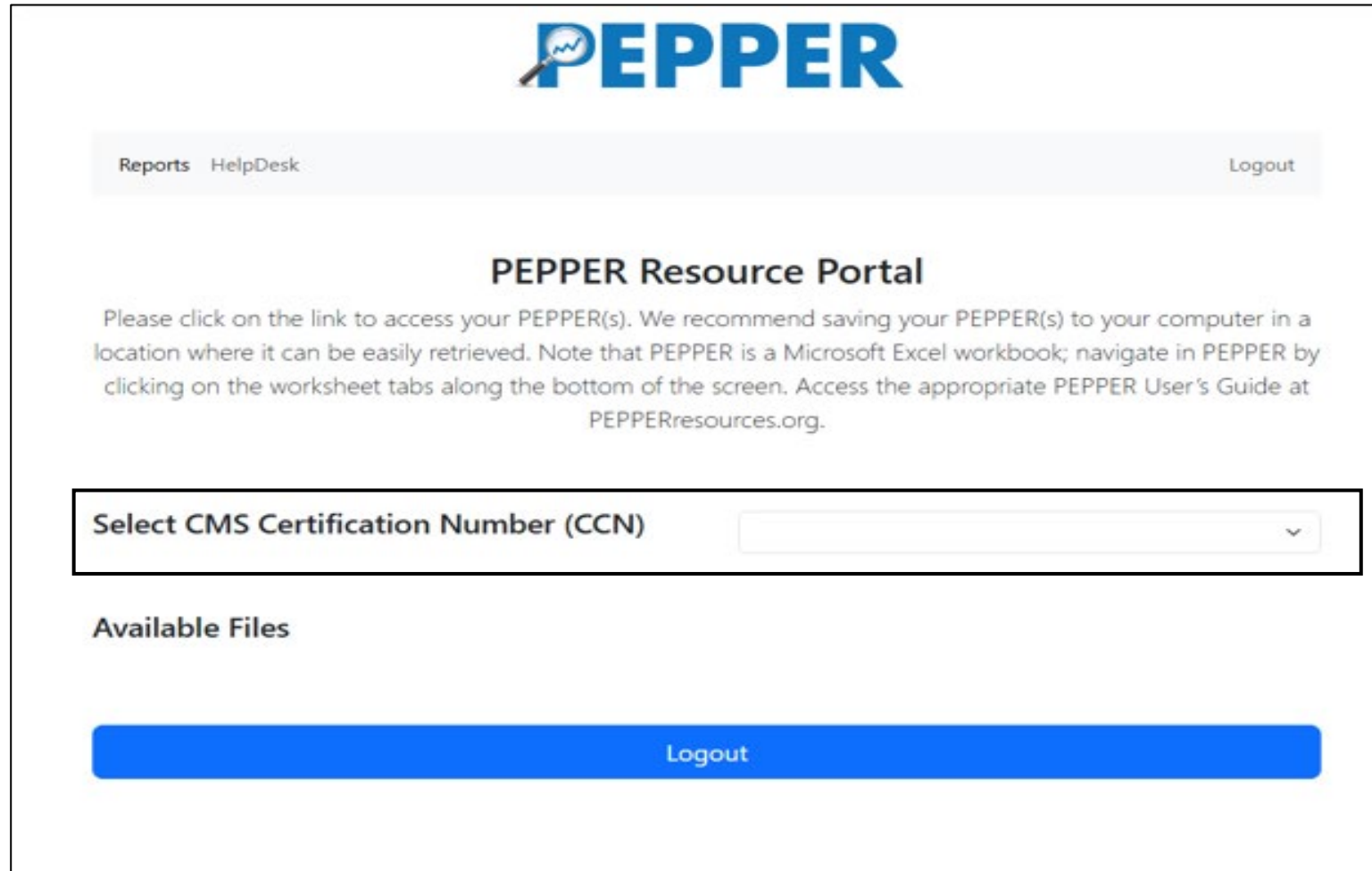
Website: <https://eus.cms.gov>

IMPORTANT! - Every individual user with access to the I&A system is responsible for:

- Keeping login information secure.
- Selecting strong passwords.
- Reporting any unauthorized use of accounts.

Sharing of login information is strictly prohibited!

Accessing Your PEPPER: Select Your Organization



The screenshot shows the PEPPER Resource Portal interface. At the top is the PEPPER logo, which consists of a magnifying glass icon over a line graph, followed by the word "PEPPER" in blue. Below the logo is a navigation bar with "Reports" and "HelpDesk" on the left and "Logout" on the right. The main heading is "PEPPER Resource Portal". Below this is a paragraph of instructions: "Please click on the link to access your PEPPER(s). We recommend saving your PEPPER(s) to your computer in a location where it can be easily retrieved. Note that PEPPER is a Microsoft Excel workbook; navigate in PEPPER by clicking on the worksheet tabs along the bottom of the screen. Access the appropriate PEPPER User's Guide at PEPPERresources.org." Below the text is a form with a label "Select CMS Certification Number (CCN)" and a dropdown menu. Below the form is the text "Available Files". At the bottom is a large blue button labeled "Logout".

PEPPER

Reports HelpDesk Logout

PEPPER Resource Portal

Please click on the link to access your PEPPER(s). We recommend saving your PEPPER(s) to your computer in a location where it can be easily retrieved. Note that PEPPER is a Microsoft Excel workbook; navigate in PEPPER by clicking on the worksheet tabs along the bottom of the screen. Access the appropriate PEPPER User's Guide at PEPPERresources.org.

Select CMS Certification Number (CCN)

Available Files

Logout

View and Download Your Available PEPPER



Reports HelpDesk Logout

PEPPER Resource Portal

Please click on the link to access your PEPPER(s). We recommend saving your PEPPER(s) to your computer in a location where it can be easily retrieved. Note that PEPPER is a Microsoft Excel workbook; navigate in PEPPER by clicking on the worksheet tabs along the bottom of the screen. Access the appropriate PEPPER User's Guide at PEPPERresources.org.

Select CMS Certification Number (CCN) 010001

Available Files

i Click filename to download

010001 20251205043009 Short-term Acute Care Hospital.xlsx	337 Kb
010001 20260204023009 Short-term Acute Care Hospital.xlsx	286 Kb

Logout

PEPPER Resources Portal Help Desk Request Form



Reports **HelpDesk** Logout

Submit a New Help Request

If you would like to submit a question or request support, please complete the form below and click on the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page.

Select CMS Certification Number (CCN)

Issue Category

Problem Description

Contact e-mail

Phone Number

Interpreting PEPPER Target Area Results



Demonstration: Interpreting SNF PEPPER Results (Part 1)

- Table 3 shows the High PT and OT Case Mix Target Area results for one SNF.
- In FY 2025, High PT and OT Case Mix was billed for 455 of the SNF's 665 total beneficiary episodes.
- As a result, the SNF's Target Area percentage for FY 2025 is 77.9%.
- Table 4 shows that the National 80th percentile for FY 2025 is 91.3%.
- Because the SNF's Target Area percentage is less than the National 80th percentile, the SNF is not an outlier for this Target Area.

Table 3 Facility Statistics for High PT and OT Case Mix

Time Period	Outlier Status	Target Area Percent	Target Count	Denominator Count
FY 2025	Not an outlier	77.9%	455	665

Table 4 Comparative Data for High PT and OT Case Mix

Time Period	National 80th Percentile	Jurisdiction 80th Percentile	State 80th Percentile	Target Area Percent
FY 2025	91.3%	89.4%	89.2%	77.9%

Demonstration: Interpreting SNF PEPPER Results (Part 2)

- Table 9 shows the 20-Day Episodes of Care Target Area results for one SNF.
- In FY 2025, the SNF had 30 beneficiary episodes that lasted 20 days out of a total of 280 beneficiary episodes.
- The SNF's Target Area rate for FY 2025 is 10.7%.
- Table 10 shows that the National 80th percentile for FY 2025 is 10.0%.
- Because the SNF's Target Area rate is higher than the National 80th percentile, the SNF is considered a high outlier for this Target Area.

Table 9 Facility Statistics for 20-Day Episodes of Care

Time Period	Outlier Status	Target Area Percent	Target Count	Denominator Count	Target Area Average Length of Stay (ALOS)	Denominator Average Length of Stay (ALOS)	Target Average Medicare Payment	Target Sum Medicare Payment
FY 2025	High Outlier	10.7%	30	280	20.0	31.9	\$10,005	\$299,762

Table 10 Comparative Data for 20-Day Episodes of Care

Time Period	National 80th Percentile	Jurisdiction 80th Percentile	State 80th Percentile	Target Area Percent
FY 2025	10.0%	20.1%	20.6%	10.7%

Questions & Answers



Call to Action



- 1 Complete the Webinar Feedback Survey
- 2 Register for the Staff End User (SEU) PEPPER Business Function
- 3 Download and Use Your PEPPER