



**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Center for Program Integrity (CPI)**

# Electronic Submission of Medical Documentation (esMD) System



esMD Overview  
April 12, 2022

# Introduction - Background

- The Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) Program makes billions of dollars in estimated improper payments.
- CMS employs several types of Review Contractors (RC) to measure, prevent, identify and correct these improper payments.
- Over 2 million medical documentation requests or Additional Documentation Requests (ADRs) are sent annually by CMS RCs.
- Historically, the provider responded with the requested documentation via mail or fax.

# What is esMD?

- The esMD system was implemented in September 2011 as an additional option for Medicare FFS providers to send medical documentation electronically to CMS Medicare Review Contractors (RC).
- The esMD system is comprised of a CONNECT Gateway, which is capable of exchanging documents with other CONNECT compatible gateways. The gateways are built in accordance with the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health Information Technology (HIT) standards.
- The esMD system facilitates the secure exchange of medical documents from Providers' HIT systems via Health Information Handlers (HIHs) to the CMS CONNECT Gateway.
- esMD also allows for the secure exchange of documentation between RCs.

# Benefits of esMD

- **Administrative convenience and productivity:**
  - Efficient to respond to documentation requests electronically.
- **Quicker turnaround:**
  - Providers have reported the payment turnaround when using esMD is 6 days as opposed to the paper process, which is approximately 3 weeks.
- **Reduced labor costs:**
  - esMD helps to reduce the amount of labor required to fulfill these requests by no longer having to print and mail paper, feed a fax machine or burn CD's.
- **Reduced hard costs:**
  - esMD can also reduce hard costs like shipping and handling expenses.

# Health Information Handlers (HIH)

Health Information Handlers (HIHs) are organizations that develop and maintain CONNECT compatible gateways to facilitate the exchange of documents between providers and RCs. A HIH acts as an agent on behalf of the provider. Examples include:

- **Health Information Exchange (HIE)/Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO)**
- **Release of Information (ROI) Vendor** – A company that manages the release of information for providers. Their services may include logging and tracking requests, retrieving patient records from multiple locations in multiple formats, identifying the information needed to fulfill requests, requesting additional authorization, if needed, packaging and mailing.
- **Electronic Health Record (EHR) Vendor**
- **Claim Clearinghouse**
- **Health Internet Service Provider (HISP)** – An entity that provides services that enable providers or health organizations to exchange health information using the internet

# esMD Review Contractors (RC)

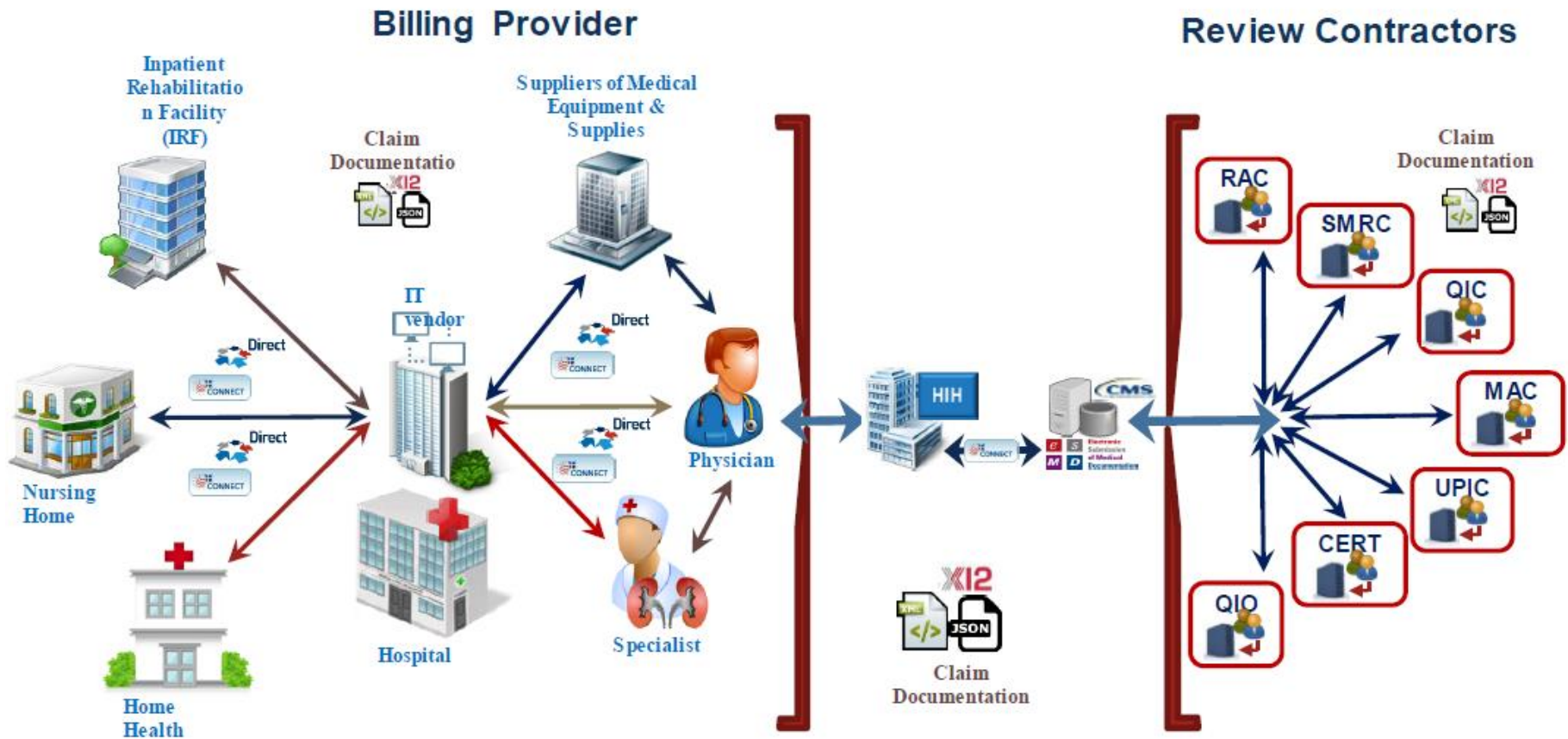
- A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MAC)
- DME Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MAC)
- Comprehensive Error Rate Testing (CERT) Contractor
- Payment Error Rate Measurement (PERM) Contractor
- Qualified Independent Contractors (QIC)
- Quality Improvement Organizations (QIO)
- Railroad Retirement Board (RRB)
- Recovery Audit Contractors (RAC)
- Supplemental Medical Review Contractor (SMRC)
- Unified Program Integrity Contractors (UPIC)

[https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Computer-Data-and-Systems/ESMD/Information for Providers](https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Computer-Data-and-Systems/ESMD/Information%20for%20Providers)

# esMD Supported Lines of Business

- Electronic Medical Documentation Requests (eMDR) & eMDR/ADR Responses
- First Level and Second Level Appeal Requests
- Advanced Determination of Medical Coverage (ADMC) Requests
- Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) Discussion Requests
- Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Phone Discussion Requests
- Paperwork (PWK) Unsolicited Documentation
- Prior Authorization (PA) or Pre-Claim Review (PCR) Requests/Responses
  - Hospital Outpatient Department (OPD) Services
  - Repetitive Scheduled Non-Emergent Ambulance Transport (RSNAT)
  - Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS)
  - Review Choice Demonstration for Home Health Services

# esMD Process Flow





# Questions?

