



**CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES**

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**DATE:** December 20, 2024

**TO:** All Current and Prospective Medicare Advantage, Prescription Drug Plan, Section 1876 Cost, PACE, and Demonstration Organizations

**FROM:** Vanessa S. Duran, Director  
Medicare Drug Benefit and C & D Data Group

**SUBJECT:** Contract Year (CY) 2026 Plan Benefit Package (PBP) Industry Testing

This memo provides technical guidance for the upcoming CY 2026 PBP module and application programming interface (API) testing activities.

**PBP API Testing**

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Starting on **January 6, 2025**, plan and consultant users may begin testing the CY 2026 PBP API on the HPMS sandbox website (<https://hpmssandbox.cms.gov>).

Comments on the PBP API must be submitted to the HPMS API Technical Support team at [hpmstechsupport@softrams.com](mailto:hpmstechsupport@softrams.com). The subject line must include the following: CY 2026 PBP API Testing Comment

All plan organizations and consultants must use the HPMS API Key Management module on the HPMS plan testing sandbox website to request, generate, and manage HPMS API keys to be used solely for testing purposes.

Users should refer to the Documentation section of the HPMS **production** landing page at <https://hpms.cms.gov> for the following technical guidance:

- HPMS API Key Management User Guide
- HPMS Plan API Documentation
- PBP CY 2026 JSON Mapping
- PBP CY 2026 API Documentation

For API technical support, please contact [hpmstechsupport@softrams.com](mailto:hpmstechsupport@softrams.com).

## PBP Module Testing

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Starting on **January 6, 2025**, plan and consultant users may begin *previewing* the CY 2026 PBP module on the HPMS sandbox website. While users will have full access to the PBP functionality, CMS is treating this as a preview window, as industry comments will not be collected. This functionality will be temporarily disabled starting at 5:00 p.m. ET on Friday, January 31, 2025 to prepare the module for the formal test period.

Beginning on **February 3, 2025**, plan and consultant users may begin formal CY 2026 PBP module testing on the HPMS sandbox website. The test window will end on **February 21, 2025**.

Comments on the PBP module must be submitted to the HPMS Help Desk at [hpms@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:hpms@cms.hhs.gov). The subject line must include the following: CY 2026 PBP Module Testing Comment

The PBP module will be available at <https://hpmssandbox.cms.gov>. As communicated in the November 14, 2024 HPMS memorandum entitled “Migration of the Plan Benefit Package (PBP) Sandbox,” CMS migrated existing PBP sandbox users to the HPMS sandbox website. This included existing API Key Management Module access (e.g., responsible user).

New plan and bid consultant users must submit a request to obtain access to the HPMS sandbox site. There are three access types available by request:

Access Type Name	Description
<b>PBP Data Entry (2139)</b>	Allows designated plan and consultant users to perform data entry in the Plan Benefit Package (PBP) for their assigned contract numbers.
<b>PBP View-Only (2140)</b>	Provides designated plan and consultant users with read-only access to the Plan Benefit Package (PBP) for their assigned contract numbers.
<b>PBP Reports (2142)</b>	Provides designated plan and consultant users with access to the Plan Benefit Package (PBP) reports for their assigned contract numbers.

### To obtain module access as a direct plan employee:

- The plan organization must send an email to the [hpmsconsultantaccess@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:hpmsconsultantaccess@cms.hhs.gov) mailbox requesting access to the HPMS sandbox for PBP testing. This email must include the user name(s), CMS user ID(s), organization name, applicable PBP access type(s), and contract number(s) for which this access is needed.

### To obtain module access as a bid consultant:

- The sponsoring plan organization must follow the routine instructions for establishing a bid consultant user in HPMS, as outlined in the HPMS memo sent on February 23, 2024 entitled “Instructions for Requesting Consultant Access to the Health Plan Management System (HPMS).”

- If the bid consultant user needs the ability to access the PBP on the HPMS sandbox website, the sponsoring plan organization must clearly request the assignment of one or more of the PBP access types on the HPMS sandbox in the official letter.
- If the user also needs to perform PBP API testing, the sponsoring organization should include the appropriate API access types in the official letter. Refer to the HPMS API Key Management User Guide for more information.

## Testing Schedule

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Below is a recap of the PBP testing schedule:

Date	Event
January 6, 2025	Start of CY 2026 PBP API testing. CMS will retire the CY 2025 PBP sandbox module that resides on HPMS production.
January 6, 2025	Start of CY 2026 PBP module preview for plan and consultant users.
February 3 - 21, 2025	Formal CY 2026 PBP industry test window.

We strongly encourage you to submit your API and module comments as soon as possible so that they can be considered for the production release in early April 2025.

Please contact the HPMS Help Desk at either [hpms@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:hpms@cms.hhs.gov) or 1-800-220-2028 for questions about CY 2026 PBP testing.