

Ground Emergency Medical Transport Quality Assurance Fee

March 14, 2019 Update:

- Federal Approval of the Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) Quality Assurance Fee (QAF) Program;
- Additional Transport CPT Codes Subject to the QAF Assessment;
- Updated QAF Rate; and
- Data Submission Required by April 17, 2019

Background

In accordance with [Senate Bill \(SB\) 523](#) (Chapter 773, Statutes of 2017), DHCS established the GEMT QAF program. SB 523 authorizes DHCS to collect from GEMT providers the following data: (1) on a quarterly basis, the number of emergency medical transports, by payer type, and (2) on an annual basis, gross receipts received from the provision of emergency medical transports per Fiscal year (FY). All providers of GEMT services are required to submit data to DHCS.

The data collected is used to calculate an annual GEMT QAF rate that will be imposed on each emergency medical transport provided by each GEMT provider subject to the QAF. The QAF collected will be used to increase reimbursement to GEMT providers by application of an add-on to the fee-for-service (FFS) fee schedule rate for the affected emergency medical transport billing codes.

Upon federal approval, DHCS will implement the GEMT QAF and provide the add-on to the FFS fee schedule rate for the affected emergency medical transport billing codes, effective July 1, 2018. DHCS will post notice of the QAF and rate add-on by June 15 of each year should the GEMT QAF program be extended into subsequent FYs.

Updates

Federal Approval of SPA 18-004

On February 7, 2019, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved State Plan Amendment (SPA) 18-004, effective July 1, 2018. SPA 18-004 provides a reimbursement rate add-on to certain GEMT services rendered on or after July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Services eligible for the add-on are Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Codes A0429 BLS Emergency, A0427 ALS Emergency, and A0433 ALS2, excluding any transports billed for dry runs.

Reimbursement Rate Add-On

FY 2018-19 Add-On: \$220.80

The FY 2018-19 add-on amount is \$220.80, with a resulting total FFS reimbursement amount of \$339.00 for CPT Codes A0429, A0427, and A0433. The reimbursement rate add-on will be implemented retroactively to the July 1, 2018 effective date once the necessary changes have been made to the payment system.

To view the approved GEMT QAF SPA 18-004, please visit the [2018 Approved State Plan Amendments page](#).

GEMT QAF Rate and Assessment

FY 2018-19 QAF Rate: \$25.23

The QAF will be assessed on CPT Codes A0429, A0427, and A0433, and will also be assessed on CPT Codes A0434 Specialty Care Transport, and A0225 Neonatal Emergency Transport. For purposes of obtaining federal approval, CPT Codes A0434 and A0225 were added to the list of Codes subject to the QAF. With the addition of CPT Codes A0434 and A0225, the QAF rate has been recalculated and established at the amount of \$25.23 per transport.

The QAF is assessed on each qualified emergency medical transport, regardless of payer type. Providers are required to pay the QAF retroactively to the July 1, 2018 effective date. DHCS will establish a QAF payment schedule in consultation with GEMT providers, and will publish the payment schedule on the GEMT QAF webpage once final. Providers may be subject to penalties if payments have not been submitted within 45 days of the payment dates included in the forthcoming schedule. In addition, DHCS will include a link to an online QAF payment webpage that will generate an invoice delivered via email and provide a direct link to pay the QAF through electronic fund transfer (EFT).

Data Collection Process & Deadlines

GEMT providers are required to periodically submit data reports that include the following:

- The total number of emergency medical transports, as defined below, by payer type, including Medi-Cal FFS and Medi-Cal managed care transports, dual Medicare/Medi-Cal (Medi-Medi), and all other payer types, for each calendar year quarter.
- The gross receipts, as defined below, received from the provision of emergency medical transports for each FY.

Data Submission Required by April 17, 2019, as follows:

GEMT providers are required to submit to DHCS emergency medical transport data for the following quarters:

Total number of emergency medical transports for Codes A0427, A0429, A0433, A0225, and A0434 in quarter 4:

- Q4: October 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018

Total number of emergency medical transports for Codes A0225 and A0434 provided in the following quarters:

- Q2: April 1, 2018 through June 30, 2018
- Q3: July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018

Data Collection Forms & Instructions:

- 1) [GEMTQAF Submission Form Q22018Q32018](#) 2) [GEMTQAF Submission Form Q42018](#)

The data to be included in the reports are described below:

- An "emergency medical transport" is defined as "the act of transporting an individual from any point of origin to the nearest medical facility capable of meeting the emergency medical needs of the patient by an ambulance licensed, operated, and equipped in accordance with applicable state or local statutes, ordinances, or regulations that are billed with billing codes A0429 BLS Emergency, A0427 ALS Emergency, and A0433 ALS2, and any equivalent, predecessor, or successor billing codes [X0030, A0434 Specialty Care Transports, and A0225 Neonatal Emergency Transport]."
- "Gross receipts" are defined by statute as "gross payments received as patient care revenue for emergency medical transports, determined on a cash basis of accounting, [and] shall include all payments received as patient care revenue for emergency medical transports billed with billing codes A0429 BLS Emergency, A0427 ALS Emergency, and A0433 ALS2, and any equivalent, predecessor, or successor billing codes [X0030, A0434 Specialty Care Transports, and A0225 Neonatal Emergency Transport; as determined] by [DHCS] and any other ancillary billing codes associated with emergency medical transport[s]."

Methodology

DHCS will utilize the data collected to develop the QAF rate annually as follows:

- For FY 2018-19, the annual QAF rate was calculated using self-reported gross receipts divided by self-reported transport data plus Medi-Cal FFS and Managed Care transport data.
- For FY 2019-20, and each subsequent FY thereafter, the annual QAF rate shall be calculated by a ratio, the numerator of which is the sum of the projected aggregate fee schedule amount multiplied by the state medical assistance percentage and a portion of the administrative costs for the FY, and the denominator is 90% of the total projected emergency medical transports by all GEMT providers subject to the QAF.

Contact DHCS

Questions or comments can be submitted to the DHCS GEMT QAF email box: GEMTQAF@dhcs.ca.gov

Legislation

- [SB 523 \(2017\)](#)