INTRODUCTION

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) use a Bid Submission process to receive, negotiate, and approve the plan benefit packages offered by both Medicare Advantage (MA) organizations and stand-alone Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs) for the upcoming calendar year. This Bid Submission User Manual provides detailed instructions for how to successfully submit plan bids to CMS.

The Health Plan Management System (HPMS) supports this Bid Submission process. Using the HPMS, users will download bid-preparation software, establish plan contact information, define plan structures, and upload the Bid Submission.

The Bid Submission comprises the Bid Pricing Tool (BPT) and the Plan Benefit Package (PBP) data entry software, which designated MA organizations and PDPs must complete and submit to CMS. The BPT spreadsheets and the PBP software were developed by CMS to set a standardized protocol for collecting the pricing and plan benefit information for MA organizations and PDPs. The BPT is the pricing document, whereas the PBP is a description of the plan benefits, premiums, and cost sharing.

- The **BPT** is a collection of spreadsheets submitted by MA organizations and PDPs that justify the benefits offered and the premiums and cost sharing charged by each plan. The BPT ensures that each plan offers a minimal set of benefits, and that premiums and cost sharing do not exceed lawful amounts.

- The **PBP** enables organizations to electronically enter plan-benefit and cost-sharing data into a standard record format and to create data records to send to CMS. The information is used to support the regulatory process by providing CMS with a mechanism for objectively collecting benefit information. It also provides CMS with information to analyze trends. In addition, the *Medicare & You* handbook and the Medicare Plan Finder on Medicare.gov are generated based on data entered in the PBP.

This manual details the process by which an MA organization and a PDP should prepare and submit their bids to CMS. The chapters provide instruction on how to:

- Download and install bid-preparation software and set up plans (Chapters 1 and 2).
- Enter benefits and cost-sharing data in the PBP (Chapters 3–7).
- Get help and/or troubleshoot the bid-preparation software (Chapter 8).
- Upload Bid Submissions and actuarial certification (Chapters 9 and 10).
- Perform exceptions plan crosswalk and request plan corrections (Chapter 11).