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From: Inpatient VIQR Support Contractor
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To: IQR Improve

Subject: Release of Specifications Manual for National Hospital Inpatient Quality Measures, Version 5.18

Version 5.18 of the *Specifications Manual for National Hospital Inpatient Quality Measures* (Specifications Manual) for the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program is now posted to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services QualityNet website (<https://qualitynet.cms.gov/>). Use Version 5.18 of the manual with acute inpatient discharges from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

This manual includes updates to chart abstracted measures (currently only the Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock Management Bundle) and the removal of the COVID-19 exclusion from the Initial Patient Population. A complete list of changes can be found in the release notes.

The Specifications Manual has been posted to [QualityNet](#) for the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program. You may download the entire manual, download the release notes, or view specific sections of the manual. A complete list of changes can be found in the release notes.

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