

**CAQH Committee on Operating Rules for Information Exchange (CORE)
Code Combinations Task Group**

***Task Group Initial Straw Poll on Potential Market-based Adjustments to the CORE Code Combinations February 2016 v3.2.2:
Introduction & Instructions***

Background

Per the [CAQH CORE Code Combinations Maintenance Process](#), the CAQH CORE Code Combinations Task Group (i.e., Task Group) conducts two types of review and adjustment to the [CORE-required Code Combinations for the CORE-defined Business Scenarios](#) (i.e., *CORE Code Combinations*)¹: Compliance-based Reviews (CBRs) and Market-based Reviews (MBRs). Market-based Reviews occur once a year and consider adjustments to the *CORE Code Combinations* to address ongoing and evolving industry business needs. In December 2015, CAQH CORE initiated a public 60 day period, the *Industry-wide CAQH CORE 2015 Market-based Adjustments Submission Period*, during which industry entities could submit potential Market-based Adjustments (i.e., additions, removals, and relocations) to the code combinations in the *existing* CORE-defined Business Scenarios. For each code combination adjustment, submitters were asked to provide criteria, a strong business case and, at the submitters discretion, real world usage data.

This Task Group Market-based Review Initial Straw Poll addresses the potential Market-based Adjustments received during the *CAQH CORE 2015 Market-based Adjustments Submission Period*. The Task Group approved adjustments to the *February 2016 CORE Code Combinations* based on the Market-based Review will be published by 06/10/16 in the *CORE Code Combinations v3.3.0 June 2016*. The *June 2016 CORE Code Combinations* is also expected to include Task Group approved adjustments due to the Compliance-based Review in response to the [CARC](#) and [RARC](#) list updates published on 03/01/16 by the respective Code Maintenance Committees.

Market-based Review of February 2016 CORE Code Combinations: Process & Scope

The *CAQH CORE 2015 Market-based Adjustments Form* allowed industry entities to submit adjustments to the *CORE Code Combinations* in the *existing* four CORE-defined Business Scenarios. As shown in Table 1 below, potential adjustments that could be submitted included:

- **Addition** or **removal** of existing *CORE Code Combinations*
- **Relocation** of a *CORE Code Combination* from an *existing* CORE-defined Business Scenario to another *existing* CORE-defined Business Scenario

Table 1: Potential Code Combination Adjustments To Existing CORE-defined Business Scenarios		
Additions	Removals	Relocations
1. Add CARC and RARC along with a CAGC(s)	1. Remove CARC and all associated RARCs and CAGC(s)	1. Remove CARC and all associated RARCs from an existing CORE-defined Business Scenario and add to another existing CORE-defined Business Scenario with associated CAGC(s)
2. Add CARC along with a CAGC(s)	2. Remove RARC and associated CAGC(s) from existing CARC	2. Remove CARC and all associated RARCs from an existing CORE-defined Business Scenario and add CARC and some or no associated RARCs to another

¹ As of 01/01/14, all [HIPAA covered entities](#) must comply with the ACA-mandated [CAQH CORE EFT & ERA Operating Rules](#) when using the HIPAA-mandated EFT and ERA transaction standards, including the CAQH CORE 360 Rule and *CORE Code Combinations*.

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		existing CORE-defined Business Scenario with associated CAGC(s)
3. Add RARC to an existing CARC along with a CAGC(s)	3. Remove CAGC(s) from existing CARC	
4. Add CAGC(s) to an existing CARC	4. Remove an existing CAGC(s) from an existing CARC and RARC combination	
5. Add CAGC(s) to an existing CARC and its associated RARC		

A total of **173 requests** for adjustments to the *CORE Code Combinations* were submitted during the 2015 potential Market-based Adjustments submission period:

- Of the 173 **total** submissions, 171 (99%) were unique²
- Of the 171 **unique** submissions, 9 (~5%) were determined to be invalid³
 - **NOTE:** Section 8 of the Task Group MBR Initial Straw Poll asks respondents to indicate if their organization supports the CAQH CORE Staff recommendation that these 9 submissions are invalid and cannot be considered for application to the *CORE Code Combinations*.

As such, the Task Group Market-based Review Initial Straw Poll presents **162 unique, valid** code adjustment submissions for the Task Group to consider, addressing **62 unique CARCs**.

NOTE:

- During the 2015 public Market-based Adjustments submission period, the most recent version of the *CORE Code Combinations* was the *CORE Code Combinations v3.2.1 October 2015* (now deprecated). On 02/01/16, the *October 2015 CORE Code Combinations* was replaced by the current *CORE Code Combinations v3.2.2 February 2016* which includes Compliance-based Adjustments to align with updates to the CARC and RARC lists published on 11/01/15. The Task Group will use the current *February 2016 CORE Code Combinations* to review the submissions received during the 2015 public Market-based Adjustments submission period.
- The *CAQH CORE 2015 Market-based Adjustments Form* validated CARC and RARC entries against the 11/01/15 code lists. Updates to the CARC and RARC lists were published on 03/01/16. To ensure compliance with the most current code lists, the Task Group will refer to the 03/01/16 code lists when considering submissions received during the 2015 Market-based Adjustments submission period. Additionally, concurrent with the Market-based Review, the Task Group will also consider Compliance-based Adjustments in response to the code list updates published on 03/01/16.

² A unique submission is defined as a single concept that can be submitted by multiple respondents.

³ An invalid submission is defined as an adjustment that cannot be applied because it already exists in the *February 2016 CORE Code Combinations* or because it is noncompliant (e.g., addition of a CARC that requires a RARC by description but was submitted without an associated RARC).

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MBR Initial Straw Poll: Format

The *Task Group Initial Straw Poll on Potential Market-based Adjustments to the CORE Code Combinations February 2016 v3.2.2* is divided into **eight** sections which address⁴:

- Section 1. Introduction
- Section 2. Instructions
- Section 3. Task Group Participant Information
- Section 4. Adjustments to Business Scenario #1: *Additional Information Required - Missing/Incomplete/Invalid Documentation*
 - Section 4A. Additions
 - Section 4B. Removals
- Section 5. Adjustments to Business Scenario #2: *Additional Information Required – Missing/Incomplete/Invalid Data from Submitted Claim*
 - Section 5A. Additions
 - Section 5B. Removals
- Section 6. Adjustments to Business Scenario #3: *Billed Service Not Covered by Health Plan*
 - Section 6A. Additions
 - Section 6B. Removals
- Section 7. Adjustments to Business Scenario #4: *Benefit for Billed Service Not Separately Payable*
 - Section 7A. Additions
- Section 8. Non-Applicable Requested Adjustments

Respondents are asked to indicate their organization’s support/non-support for each potential code combination adjustment submitted on the *CAQH CORE 2015 Market-based Adjustments Form*. For each potential code combination adjustment, an optional text box is provided for respondents to submit any rationale or comments on their organization’s position.

As noted above, submitters were required to provide supporting criteria, a strong business case, and discretionary real world usage data for each requested code combination adjustment. Task Group Participants are encouraged to review this supporting information to inform your response to the Initial Straw Poll. Please consult [*Doc#1: Appendix to Task Group Initial Straw Poll for Potential Market-based Adjustments to the CORE Code Combinations v3.2.2 February 2016*](#) to review the supporting information.

Task Group Co-chairs and CAQH CORE staff **strongly** encourage Task Group Participants to complete the Straw Poll given the results will be used to analyze potential adjustments to the *CORE Code Combinations*, drive future Task Group calls, and update the existing version of the *CORE Code Combinations*. As a member of the CAQH CORE Code Combinations Task Group, you are responsible for maintaining the *CORE Code Combinations* and contributing to the development of operating rules.

⁴ **NOTE:** No valid requests were received to remove a code combination from CORE-defined Business Scenario #4 or to relocate a code combination to another existing CORE-defined Business Scenario.

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MBR Initial Straw Poll: Instructions

The Market-based Review Initial Straw Poll is to be completed by CAQH CORE Code Combinations Task Group Participants only. Limit one response per organization.

- Step 1.** Each CORE Code Combinations Task Group Participating Organization will receive a unique link (URL) to enter your responses for the MBR Initial Straw Poll. You must use this link to access the online Initial Straw Poll and provide your organization's response.
- Step 2.** Provide a response to each straw poll question. The online MBR Initial Straw Poll has been designed so you can suspend entering responses on the straw poll and then resume entering responses up to the final due date. You will not be able to resume entering data and submit the form after the final due date. If you leave and resume entry in the MBR Initial Straw Poll, you must use your unique link to re-enter the Initial Straw Poll. You will be taken to the last question that was left unanswered.
- Step 3.** Once you have completed all of your responses, you **MUST** click on the ***Finish Initial Straw Poll*** button. This will send the full response – with all votes – to CAQH CORE for analysis and consideration by the Task Group. Once you have clicked the ***Finish Initial Straw Poll*** button, you will not be able to reenter the straw poll.

Responses to the *Task Group Initial Straw Poll on Potential Market-based Adjustments to the CORE Code Combinations February 2016 v3.2.2* are due by **5 pm ET, Wednesday, 04/06/16**. You must submit your response by this date as you will be unable to re-enter the Initial Straw Poll after the due date.

NOTE: In accordance with CAQH CORE policy, all responses will be kept strictly confidential and only identified by stakeholder category. If your organization chooses not to complete the straw poll, CAQH CORE will not be able to capture your organization's feedback on the potential Market-based Adjustments to the *February 2016 CORE Code Combinations*.

Additional Resources

Additional reference documents are necessary to complete the MBR Initial Straw Poll:

- Task Group Participants should refer to the following documents attached to the MBR Initial Straw Poll launch email:
 - [*Doc #1: Appendix to Task Group Initial Straw Poll for Potential Market-based Adjustments to the CORE Code Combinations v3.2.2 February 2016*](#): Task Group Participants should reference this document to review all information submitted by the respondents to the *CAQH CORE 2015 Market-based Adjustments Form* for individual code combination adjustments requests. To assist Task Group Participants in developing their response to the Initial Straw Poll, this document includes checklists to track your organization's support for each adjustment prior to completing the online straw poll. **NOTE: These checklists are included as a reference tool only; all responses must be submitted via the online tool.**
 - [*Doc #2: CAQH CORE 2015 Industry Market-based Adjustments Submission Period: Summary of Results*](#): Summarizes the quantitative results of the 2015 public Market-based Adjustments submission period with background information regarding the *CAQH CORE 2015 Market-based Adjustments Form*.

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- The published CARC list maintained by the Claim Adjustment Status Code Maintenance Committee is available [HERE](#). The published RARC list maintained by the Remittance Advice Remark Code is available [HERE](#). Additional information regarding the published code lists and how to sign up for the WPC Alert Services is available [HERE](#).

Next Steps

- Straw poll responses are due by **5 pm ET on Wednesday, 04/06/16** and must be submitted via the online tool in order to be considered.
- The Task Group will review the initial straw poll results on its Tuesday, 04/19/16 call in order to reach agreement on Market-based Adjustments to include in the *June 2016 CORE Code Combinations* and potential adjustments to include on the MBR Follow-up Straw Poll.
- **Goal:** Per CAQH CORE policy, publish the *CORE Code Combinations v3.3.0 June 2016* on the CAQH CORE website by 06/10/16 to ensure compliance is met. The *June 2016 CORE Code Combinations* is expected to also include Task Group approved Compliance-based Adjustments in response to the updated code lists published 03/01/16.