

MIPS Success in 2026

The Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) is a core component of Medicare's Quality Payment Program (QPP), aiming to incentivize healthcare providers to deliver high-quality care at the lowest cost possible. In MIPS, Medicare payments are adjusted based on performance across four categories. This document will cover MIPS changes in 2026, provide guidance to help you improve your performance, and tips to work with your Mingle Health Consultant effectively.

MIPS Performance Threshold & Scoring

In MIPS, healthcare providers are scored on their performance across the four MIPS Performance Categories: Quality, Cost, Promoting Interoperability, and Improvement Activities. Your performance in each category is calculated into a final composite score and that score is compared to the MIPS Performance Threshold (the minimum score you need to achieve to avoid a negative payment adjustment).

In the 2026 Final Rule, Medicare provided the following information about MIPS scoring and how different MIPS scores translate to Medicare payment adjustments:

MIPS Score	Medicare Payment Adjustment
0.00 → 18.75 points	-9%
18.76 → 74.99 points	Between -9% and 0%
75 points	0%
75.01 → 100 points	Positive payment adjustment

MIPS in the 2026 Final Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the 2026 Final Rule for the Quality Payment Program (QPP) on October 31, 2025. This is part of an annual cycle used to update the Quality Payment Program with a Proposed Rule released in July, followed by a public comment period, and a Final Rule released in October or November. Understanding the changes in annual rules can help you maximize your MIPS performance and mitigate penalties. On the next page, you'll find a summary of important changes to MIPS for the 2026 Performance Year.

Performance Category	Change for 2026	Explanation
Quality (30% of score)	Measure Inventory	190 Quality measures with 5 additions, 10 removals, 30 modifications
	High Priority Measures	Removal of "Health Equity" from the definition of High Priority
	Topped Out Measures	19 measures topped out with a full range of possible points for measures for specialties with limited options
	Administrative Claims Measure Scoring	Revision aligns scoring with Cost category methodology Median performance rate set at 7.5, with cut-offs calculated based on standard deviations from median
Cost (30% of score)	Measure Inventory	35 measures total, no measures added
	TPCC Measure Revisions	Exclude candidate events initiated by advanced care providers if all other non-advanced care providers in group are excluded by specialty Second service must be E/M or primary care within 90 days Second service must be from TIN-NPI not excluded by specialty criteria
	Feedback Period	New Cost measures will be introduced with a 2-year informational scoring feedback period before affecting score
Promoting Interoperability (25% of score)	Security Risk Analysis Measure	Two part attestation for conducting security risk analysis and conducting security risk management "No" response equals zero points for Promoting Interoperability
	SAFER Guide Measure	Now requires use of 2025 version SAFER Guides
	Optional Bonus Measure	Addition of Public Health Reporting Using TECCA bonus measure
Improvement Activities (15% of score)	Measure Inventory	109 measures with 3 additions, 8 removals, and 7 modifications
	Subcategory Changes	Removal of "Achieving Health Equity" subcategory, addition of "Advancing Health and Wellness" subcategory

MIPS Success: Focus Areas and Resources

Improve Your MIPS Performance

MIPS reporting requires a proactive approach to comply with new requirements and improve your performance. Incorporating the following tips from Mingle Health's experts could help you increase your chances of earning an incentive and avoiding a penalty.

- **Engage with Your Mingle Health Consultant Early and Often**
 - Practices that engage with their Mingle Health Consultant throughout the year to ask questions, address their concerns, and share their goals for their MIPS submission tend to achieve higher scores.
 - Start planning as early as possible, ideally in the first quarter of the year. This helps improve data collection, data validation, and performance optimization processes.
 - Regular communication with your Mingle Health Consultant is crucial. Your Consultant can provide timely recommendations and address potential issues if you stay in touch.
- **Explore New and/or Different Measures**
 - It's important to review measures each year to ensure you're using the best option for your needs and goals. Measures change over time, and you may be missing out on opportunities to improve your performance if you don't take a moment to explore your options.
 - Consider starting the year with 10 measures and narrow it down to your best performing measures when you make your MIPS submission.
- **Ask for Cost Category Guidance**
 - Your Mingle Health Consultant can help you review CMS reports and your previous Cost performance to address issues and understand your Cost measure liabilities. If you've struggled with Cost previously, get in touch with your Consultant early in the year to begin the improvement process.
 - [If you haven't done so, download our "MIPS and Your Cost Scores" PDF here >>](#)
- **Prioritize the Promoting Interoperability Reporting Period**
 - Remember that PI now has a 180-day reporting period. This requirement can represent a challenge if you're struggling with technical issues. Plan for this increased reporting period early in the year to ensure you're ready to meet the requirements.
- **Prepare for Audits**
 - Discuss audit procedures with your Mingle Health Consultant and understand the documentation requirements in the event of an audit. This can make the process less burdensome if you are audited.



Consider an MVP Submission

For practices with an applicable MIPS Value Pathway (MVP), this route can be a great way to reduce some of the reporting burden and risk for your organization. MVPs require fewer Quality measures and Improvement Activities and limit exposure to Cost measures.

Optimize Your MIPS Performance

Success in MIPS is a 5-Quarter Cycle

MIPS Performance Year	Quarter One: Planning and Review	- Start early! Schedule your kickoff call with your Mingle Health Consultant to discuss goals, previous performance, and potential challenges. - Review new and retired Quality measures and Improvement Activities to identify the best options. - Review Quality measure benchmarks to ensure that updated benchmarks for previously selected measures won't have a negative impact on your score. - Consider any technical challenges that may impact reporting in the coming year, such as switching EHRs or billing companies, and any new requirements from your selected measures and activities. - Make a plan for the 180-day PI reporting period.
	Quarter Two: Implementation and Validation	- Regularly upload your data to Mingle Health. - Work with your Consultant to analyze your data to identify trends, vulnerabilities, and concerns. - Confirm whether your selected measures are a good fit, or make adjustments as needed.
	Quarter Three: Feedback Reports and Proposed Rule Review	- Review CMS feedback reports with your Consultant to understand the prior year's performance. - CMS publishes the Proposed Rule outlining intended changes for the coming year. - Take advantage of the comment period to provide feedback on the Proposed Rule and advocate for changes that would benefit your practice and patients. - Monitor your current performance and make adjustments as needed.
	Quarter Four: End-of-Year Decisions	- Submit any Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances (EUC) hardship applications if necessary. - Narrow down your selection of quality measures to your best six, if needed. - Decide whether to pursue a traditional MIPS submission, a MIPS Value Pathway (MVP) submission, or both, choosing the option that will provide the best score.
	Quarter Five: Submission	- Make your final MIPS submission to CMS. Meet with your consultant to ensure all decisions are made and you're ready to submit. - Begin the cycle again for the next performance year.

Additional Information and Resources

Mingle Health customers gain access to unmatched MIPS expertise from their Mingle Health Consultant, regularly updated educational content, and easy-to-use technology.

- If you'd like to get in touch with your Consultant (or become a Mingle Health customer), [use our Contact Us form here >>](#)
- Bookmark our [MIPS Success webpages](#) to ensure you're up-to-date on MIPS changes, project timelines, and requirements.

On the Mingle Health YouTube channel, you'll find answers to your MIPS & value-based care questions, along with instructional videos like:

- [Merit-based Incentive Payment System \(MIPS\) Basics](#)
- [2026 Final Rule: Orientation and Summary | Ask Dr. Mingle](#)
- [MIPS Changes in the 2026 Final Rule](#)
- [How to Improve Your MIPS Scores | Ask Dr. Mingle](#)
- [Quality Reporting Data Sources Explained](#)
- [Qualified Participant \(QP\) Status Explained](#)
- [Mingle Health | Instructional Videos](#)
- ["If my specialty has a hard time finding suitable measures, should I use an MVP?"](#)
- [MIPS Value Pathways \(MVPs\) vs. Traditional MIPS: A Deep Dive](#)
- [MIPS in the 2026 Proposed Rule](#)

MIPS Resources from CMS

The links below will redirect you to helpful MIPS resources and information from the Quality Payment Program website. We suggest saving these resources and reviewing them often to ensure your MIPS project is on track with QPP Guidelines:

- [2026 Quality Quick Start Guide](#)
- [2026 Improvement Activities Quick Start Guide](#)
- [2026 Promoting Interoperability Quick Start Guide](#)
- [2026 MIPS Small Practice Guide](#)



Your Partner in MIPS & Value-Based Care

Your Mingle Health Consultant will help you plan for success and address issues that may arise throughout the year. We encourage you to engage your team and stakeholders early to understand your specific needs and improve your performance.

Please bookmark our [MIPS Success Guide](#) and remember you can always email us at hello@minglehealth.com with your questions.