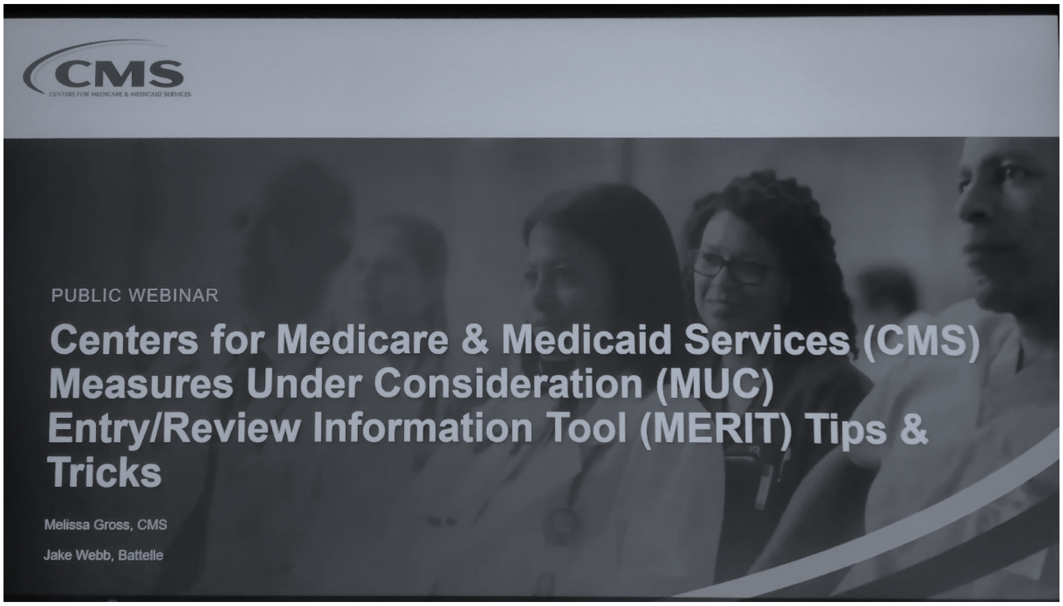


**MODERATOR:** Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for joining today's CMS MERIT Tips & Tricks webinar. Our presenters for today are going to be Melissa Gross and Jake Webb. So a few housekeeping items before we get started. So this meeting is going to be recorded, and the recording and the questions and answers (Q&As) will be uploaded to the pre-rulemaking resources webpage on the MMS Hub in the near future.

Additionally, we will be addressing questions later in the presentation. If you have any questions, you'll see that on the bottom ribbon of your screen there is a Q&A button. You can use that function to type in your question, and you just hit "send" to submit. We will answer during the meeting, or include it in the questions and answers (Q&As), which will be available in the near future. And with that, I'm going to hand it over to Mel Gross to get us started.

**GROSS:** Thank you. My name is Melissa Gross, and I am the CMS task lead for pre-rulemaking activities. We hold this annual presentation in the hopes that we can help submitters get more comfortable using MERIT, and what we're going to cover today is what the tool is. If you are new to submitting a measure to MERIT, this will be helpful to watch the demo.

We're going to discuss the CMS MERIT features. We're also going to discuss updates for the 2025 cycle. And then we will go into our live demonstration showing you how to log in, how to create a submission, and then other functions that you can see listed here. There's a copy-and-paste feature. You can change information that you've saved from a previous submission. You can add or delete attachments from a prior submission, and adding in components or survey-based measures into your submission, which is new this year. And then you can also view the information that you submitted. You can log back in and see what you've already submitted and what needs to be continually submitted afterwards. You can export and print a copy of the submission, and you can change the information that you submitted. You can also add a co-submitter.

After we go through the demo, we'll share some helpful resources to help you along this 2025 cycle. And then we will try to answer any questions. Hopefully, this will help you for this year's cycle, and with that I will pass it off to Jake. Thanks.

**WEBB:** Thank you, Mel. So hello, everyone. As Mel mentioned, my name is Jake Webb, and I am the MMS pre-rulemaking task lead. Before we get into the live demo, I did just want to take a couple minutes and highlight a few slides that were from the March pre-rulemaking webinar, just in case maybe you were not able to attend and to just kind of level-set everything.

So what is CMS MERIT? The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services MUC Entry/Review Information Tool is designed for measure developers to submit their clinical quality and efficiency measures for CMS consideration. However, CMS MERIT is more than just a submission tool. With login access, you can also explore the “past candidate measures” tab, which is a repository of the previous submissions. This feature allows you to filter by submission year, program, measure types, and the status of acceptance or rejection.

Once the measure submission period closes, CMS programs will then use this same tool to review the measures. By using CMS MERIT this helps to facilitate a more efficient communication between CMS programs and the measure submitters during that process.

CMS MERIT did open for submissions on February 5th and will be closing for the 2025 submissions on Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 8:00 pm ET. After this deadline no further submissions will be accepted, and if you haven't already, I recommend adding that date to your calendar just to ensure that you submit everything you need to for that 8:00 pm deadline.

CMS MERIT offers numerous features that help enhance the submission and review process. Automatic completeness checks ensure that all required measure information is filled out before the submission. You don’t have to complete your submission all in one sitting. You can save your progress and return later, which allows you to work at your own pace without feeling rushed. Both submitters and reviewers can track the status of the submissions, which will help provide visibility into each step of the review and decision process.

Designed with human-centered principles, CMS MERIT features an easy-to-navigate interface for a smooth user experience. The tool also includes improved copy-and-paste functionality, which allows for you to transfer information from other documents into CMS MERIT.  An example would be if you start with the Word version of the data template to collaborate within your team, you can easily copy and paste that information directly into the tool.  For best results we like to recommend using the “paste as plain text” option to help eliminate any hidden formatting that might appear in the system.  Lastly, CMS MERIT does allow you to print and save a copy of your submission in a PDF format.

So here are some of the most notable updates to CMS MERIT for the 2025 cycle.  The first notable update is the organizational structure of the questions.  Both the MERIT Data Template and the CMS MERIT tool now follow a structured format with sections and subsections.  An example is “properties” as a section while “measure information” is a subsection, and we’ll talk about more of that later in the demo.

Previously, the “steward” section was positioned midway through the submission process, and in 2025 the first section of questions is going to be the “steward or owner” section.  This change helps to allow submitters to provide this information up front — similar to putting your name at the top of a paper, and also making it easier to include collaborators early on and locate those submissions.   Throughout the tool you’re going to notice language updates that align with changes made across CMS over the past year.  You’ll see MADiE language and guidance to replace the MAT and Bonnie, due to the sunsetting in the summer of 2024.  With this change there’s also going to be updated eCQM submission guidance language for attachment requirements.

Additionally, new questions will be added for the 2025 submission cycle. CMS now will ask if any part of a measure or its use is proprietary and/or licensed.  If you select “yes,” you’ll need to answer additional questions about licensing fees for CMS, or measured entities, and provide further explanation if necessary.

And the most significant update for the 2025 submission cycle involves submissions of composite and survey measures. Previously, submitters had to enter basic high-level information into the CMS MERIT tool and then attach supplemental documentation for each component or survey-based measure. Now the CMS MERIT tool will allow submitters to directly input all necessary information for each component or survey-based measure into the submissions. This streamlines the submission process and ensures that all information is included in the tool making it easier for submitters to convey measures more effectively to CMS reviewers.

And if you've submitted a measure for consideration last year, this slide may look familiar. Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 helps to ensure that those with disabilities have equal access to government information and communications technology, thereby to the government employment programs and services to which all citizens are entitled. All attachments that are submitted to CMS MERIT are made available to the public to better improve transparency. Additionally, measures that are accepted to the MUC List have their attachments shared on the MMS Hub and then used by the CBE PRMR recommendation committees. So by these attachments being 508 compliant, this allows for more accessibility to interested parties, which then allows for more meaningful feedback.

CMS strongly recommends that all applicable submitted documents be Section 508 compliant prior to the submission of your measure to CMS MERIT. I do want to note that CMS will still consider measures that are submitted to CMS MERIT with attachments that are not 508 compliant. All noncompliant documents will be expected to be remediated in conjunction with the MMS team and the submitter prior to the MUC List being finalized.

I've also provided some resources here on this slide and will also put it in chat, if you're not fully familiar with the 508 process. And if you have any questions or would like any more guidance, feel free to reach out to MMSBattelle@Battelle.org. We would be happy to assist.

**[DEMO]**

**WEBB:** So now we're actually going to go ahead and start jumping into the live demo. As I share my screen, we're going to start out here on the homepage of CMS MERIT. So the homepage of MERIT actually has a few resources that I want to point out that might be helpful to you, if you get stuck in your submissions, or maybe just want a little extra guidance.

So last year here on the top of the screen, you can see that we created a new animated video that talks about CMS MERIT's purpose, some of the features, and that it's rule and pre-rulemaking. So everything that we've kind of talked about to this point is in this video. I highly recommend if you haven't seen it, it's about eight minutes. It's a really good video, and it also might be helpful for any new employees that you might have to kind of orient them to the tool.

Going through the screen you're going to see a hyperlink to the pre-rulemaking webpage on the MMS Hub. Here you're going to find additional resources and documents, such as the 2025 CMS program *Needs & Priorities Report*. You're going to find past MUC Lists. You'll find frequently asked question (FAQ) documents that we update annually, and then other documents that might be beneficial as you're submitting your measure.

You're also going to see here the MERIT Data Template. The data template has all the same information and questions that you're going to find in the CMS MERIT tool. Some people find it helpful to have this handy to see the notes or the guidance, or even just to look up where questions are a little bit easier. Also, some people like to start with this and have their group fill it out, because it's easier to share a Word document between the workers. And then once it's done, then you can use that copy-and-paste feature to transfer that information.

You're also going to see a QuickStart Guide. The QuickStart Guide is going to walk you through things such as how to get your password, how to use your two-factor authentication (2FA) and how to add a co-submitter. A lot of things that I'm going to show you today are going to be in that QuickStart Guide. So if you maybe need a refresher down the road, you can just come to this QuickStart Guide.

The last resource I just want to point out at the bottom of the screen is the recording of a webinar that we held early in March that went over the timelines for the submission cycle in 2025, as well as highlighting some of those changes that we talked about earlier. And if you haven't already seen the video, please check that out as well.

At the top of the screen if you click on the "about," there's going to be a dropdown. There's a "contact us" section. I want to point this out if as you're going through your submission you have questions — or if you run into some technical issues — please use this MMSsupport@battelle.org email.  That is the best way to communicate with us for a couple different reasons.  One of the main ones being is if you have trouble or if something's not working correctly, you can actually screenshot it and send it to us so we can see what the issue is and try to be able to support you. You can also fill out this form right here as well, if you'd like, and then just, you know, fill out your first and last name, any organization, email, and a message.  We'll get back to you.

We do also offer a phone number.  I do just want to mention that you will not get a live action.  That will take you to a voicemail.  So again, the best way is going to be that MMSsupport@battelle.org email, and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

So let's go ahead and actually log in.  The one thing I want to point out is if you don't already have a MERIT account, I would highly recommend doing that sooner than later.  It does take about 24 hours for your account to be created.  So if you click the "request an account" button, it's going to ask for some of that basic information — first/last name, company, organization, email, and phone number.

And then it's going to ask you what tool you'd like access to.  If you already have access to the CMIT tool, that does not guarantee that you have access to MERIT.  They do have separate request accounts.  So if maybe back in the day you requested CMIT, but you didn't request MERIT, you will have to do that.  Maybe you don't have either and you'd like both, you can do that at the same time to help save a step.  Once you fill out this form, you'll click the "submit request" button.  And then you'll get an email within 24 hours letting you know that your account has been created.  And then the steps to create your two-factor authentication (2FA) code.

So let's go ahead and log in. So give me one minute as I put in my information. As I mentioned, we do have two-factor authentication (2FA). For non-CMS, you're going to use Google Authenticator, and then for CMS you'll use your VIP Access.

So now that we're actually in CMS MERIT, you'll see at the top the three different tabs. So CMS MERIT is broken down into those three different sections. The first one is going to be "my submissions." The next is "2025 candidate measures." The third is that "past candidate measures" tab. The "my submissions" is the default tab that you'll see when you log in. This is where you're going to see all the measures that you specifically create and submit. It's going to help separate your submissions from all the rest of the submissions, just for easy navigation. You can see here that I have two different measures currently that I've created.

The next tab is the "2025 candidate measures." This is where all the 2025 submissions are going to be listed. So you can see here right now we only have two measures submitted, and these are both example measures, but you can see this one is mine. And then this was one that my colleague created. So this will be where you'll see all the measure submissions for that 2025 cycle.

The final tab is going to be the "past candidate measures." As you might remember, from earlier in today's presentation, MERIT is not only a submission tool but also that repository. So here you can actually use filters and find past MUC submissions. So if I click on the filters, and let's just say I'm looking for a measure that was submitted in 2022, and it was submitted to the "hospital inpatient quality reporting program." I click the "apply filters." You can see it went from almost 3,000 to 15 results, and here it shows the year of when it was submitted, MUC ID, title, program, measure type, steward, and if it was added to the MUC List — yes or no.

You can then actually come up here to “show/hide columns” and pick and choose which tabs you would like to see. So maybe I'm not as concerned about who the measure steward is, but I would like to know the description, numerator and denominator. So as I click those, you can see that this information has changed. We’ve added a description, numerator and denominator. If you would like, if this is the information you're looking for, you can actually come up here and click “export to Excel.” It will download all these columns and results into an Excel file for you.

So let’s go ahead and actually take a look at submitting a new measure. So on the “my submissions” page, if you look at the top right corner, you’ll see a “submit a new measure” button. When you first log in, you actually might see two boxes in the middle of your screen that say, “submit a new measure” or “submit an existing measure.” It’s the same information as if you click this button, so it will be what it looks like as well. So there are two different options for submitting a measure. You have “submit a measure” which is submitting a new measure from scratch that’s not been previously submitted. So this is a completely blank submission. Nothing will be filled out. Everything will be blank and very clean if you’d like to start, you know, completely from scratch.

The other option is “submitting from an existing measure.” This is a tool that you can use if maybe you submitted a measure, maybe last year. It was rejected and you did some extra testing, and maybe you needed to update the numerator/denominator, but you don’t want to start completely from scratch. You can use this feature to search using the repository for that past submission and pull it to the front. It will actually autogenerate some of that information from last year's submission.  Then you would just go in and update the sections that need to be updated, as well as answering any new questions that have been added from this year.

Something I do also like to mention is that, you know, every year we kind of update the data template based off of new needs and ideas. Sometimes we do our best to kind of translate from one language to another, but we always recommend that you as you're going through the process, that you just make sure that everything has migrated over and it still makes sense and it's exactly how you wanted it.  So even though it autogenerates, please just review and make sure that everything looks correct.  It also does not translate over attachments.  So if last year you had a submission and you had attachments, you will have to reupload those this year to your submission.

So I've already created a demo measure, which is Demo Measure 1.  So I'm going to click on the "edit" button.  So here on the left-hand side you're going to see a navigation bar, and on the left-hand side you're going to see, as we were talking about, here is the section "steward and owner," and then subsections such as "steward or owner information," "measure developer information" and "submitter information."  Each of these have a section and subsections.  And if you click the "+" or "-" it will have the accordion field open and closed.

You're also going to see "green" checkmarks and a "pencil."  The "pencil" means that you are still working on that section.  It means it's not fully complete, and that there's something that still needs to be addressed.  If you see a "green" checkmark, it's showing that that section has been completed.  You've met all the requirements, and all the required questions have been addressed.

Here to the right of that, you're going to see the "MUC ID" and the "title." To update the title, if you come to "properties" and "measure information," it should be the first question asked. So what you would do is just type in your title here and click "save," and it would automatically update this for you. To the right of the "MUC ID and title" you're going to see two buttons. One is to delete a measure. Maybe you just want to restart from scratch. You can just click that "delete measure," and it will erase everything.

There's also an "export measure" button that, as we mentioned, once you are done with your submission or at any time, you can click that button and it will download a PDF document. Because it is a PDF document, you can't go in and check information on it. So we do highly recommend that, you know, once you're done with your submission and submitted it, that's the best time to do that export. But then, as I mentioned, you can do it anytime you would like.

Just below it we have a "save" button. We actually have one at the top and at the bottom. These are very important, because CMS MERIT does not automatically save your information. So, as you fill out a section, it does not automatically save. So what we like to recommend is if there's a really big section that you've been working on, it's always better to save more than less, but also if you go through and fill out this one subsection, if you click the "save and continue," it will actually save and move you to the next section. So it's almost like a built-in process. So if you just remember at the end of your page, click the "save and continue," it will save that section and move you to the next one.

Something I do want to mention is that in the past—if CMS MERIT does have an inactivity timeout, and in the past it's been about 15 minutes. So if you have logged into CMS MERIT and you step away from your computer for 15 minutes, it does automatically log you out.  This year it actually has been updated to 60 minutes, and so you now have 60 minutes of inactivity before it logs out.  So we do still recommend, you know, if you feel like you're going to step away for longer than an hour, to definitely make sure you save it.  Because if it does log you out, it still doesn't save anything.

There is also a note here on every page, and this is just a note reminding you that if you're going to use the copy-and-paste functionality, as I mentioned, maybe you work in the data template and now you're going to paste it into the form here — it's always best to use that paste as "plain text."  Because sometimes the system when you click the traditional paste, it's going to collect and show some hidden formatting characters that you might not necessarily see at the beginning.  But when you click "submit" and you click the "export," it's going to come up in those fields.  So you might see that some are blank boxes or spaces that you didn't necessarily add or show in your original form.  It's just something that the system captured, and so by pasting as "plain text," you're helping to eliminate those and just help in making a cleaner submission.

You're also going to see a "red asterisk," and these are going to be noting if a field is required.  So anytime you see a "red asterisk," that is required for a submission.  If you don't have that field filled out and you try to submit, it will stop you.  You're also going to see a "view definition" button. Every section has this, and this is just going to talk about what we are looking for in your submission at this spot.  It's the same thing as the guidance in the Word template, or in the data template, but here for the measure steward or owner that the guidance is to enter the current measure steward or owner.  Technically, this is organization or other agency, institution or entity name.  So if you're not 100% sure what to put here, definitely check out that "view definition" button.

We have a mix of text boxes and multiple-choice selections.  On "text boxes" if you don't see a word count comment below, it automatically defaults to 4,000 characters.  So in this case it doesn't say a character limit, and so it would be 4,000.  There are some instances if I come to the characteristics, there are some instances where based off of what you selected for a question, multiple questions might pop up after it.

So then in this question right here where it's asking if this measure is in the CMS Measures Inventory Tool or CMIT, if I click "yes," a follow up question comes up and asks us to put in what is that CMIT ID.  So then I would just fill in that information.  So there are going to be some instances with based on how you answer, follow-up questions will come up.

So let's say that maybe you have a measure that's a composite or survey. As I mentioned earlier, new to this year you can actually put information directly into the tool.  So if I come to "measure information," there's going to be a question just a couple down that's asking if this measure is a composite, survey, and/or paired measure.  This is not necessarily a new question.  We've had this in the past, but what's new is based on how you answer will tell the system if it needs more questions or not.  So for this example, if I click "yes," that this is a composite measure — and you click "composite" or "survey" — it's going to look the exact same, and so don't worry about that.  But then just as an example we use composite.  It's going to mention down here if you choose one of those, what you'll need to do is click "save."  Then you're going to see some new tabs up here at the top.  So I clicked "yes," that this is a composite measure.  And if I come up here and click “save,” it takes a moment or two to generate, but what you’re going to see is two new tabs appear at the top.

The first one is going to be the general information, all the information that we’ve been filling out already.  And then the second tab is where you’re going to put in those components or survey-based measures.  You can see here up at the top that you have the first tab which is “composite,” and as I just mentioned, that’s all the information that we’ve just been originally putting in.  So steward or owner, and some of the property information. And then that second tab is the components or survey-based measures. This is where you would put all the components or all the survey-based measures.  You can see here that it automatically generates the first one. As I mentioned, you can add as many as you need for your measure.

So I'm going to go ahead and click on this one really quickly.  It’s going to look almost exactly the same as a traditional submission.  The biggest thing that you’re going to notice that’s different is there’s a bunch of sections over here on the left that are grayed out.  This is because we worked with CMS to identify what fields and what questions would need to be answered just at the component or survey-based measure level.  Some information and some steward or owner that we can get from that original composite first tab, that we don’t need again.  So this is supposed to help eliminate some burden.

So you can see for component or surveys, you have some information in properties, characteristics.  It’s going to look exactly the same, as you can see the pencil.  So it looks like we’re still working on this section, and as you complete it, you’ll see some green checkmarks to help you identify that you’ve filled out everything that you need.

You're going to see up here that it automatically generates a title of component or survey-based measure. The very first question is actually going to ask you, you know, what the title is. So let's say in this case it's just a component measure, so I'm just going to take out "component or survey-based measure," and call it "Component Measure #1." You can see as I do that, it automatically changes up here. And then you would just want to make sure that you click "save" to have it save. And then, as I mentioned, you just fill it out, add this in for as many measures as you need. And then once that's all complete, you come back to the other tab and finish your submission.

For the sake of this demonstration I am going to say that this is not a composite or survey-based measure. So I'm going to click that and click "save" so it will take those tabs off. So as that loads, the next thing I just want to touch base on is going to be the attachments. So we'll give that a moment to load here. So as we move to the "attachments" section, again I just want to reiterate the notion of if possible and if applicable, please submit all the attachments 508 compliant. CMS will still accept them if they're not 508 compliant. We will just work to make sure that they get 508 compliant before publication of the MUC List.

Here on the attachment page we do have some information about the sunsetting of MAT and Bonnie and with it being replaced by MADiE. This was something that you might have seen last year. We decided to keep it in because it is still fairly new. So if you have any questions or need any guidance on the MADiE submission process or the tools, there are some links here as well.

We also have a downloadable measure information and justification form. So if this is something you would like to fill out, you can click the “download form,” and it will generate it for you. It’s also found on the MMS Hub, if that’s where you found it as well. It’s the same form. If you scrolled down, you’re going to see that this is where you will add attachments. So one of the things that we do is you can upload as many attachments as you need for your submission. There is a limit per upload of 25MB. So if you have one paper that is 25MB or five papers that total 25MB, you can do that in one upload. As I mentioned, you can have as many attachments as you need. It’s just based on the upload at a time, and so you might have to upload two or three times, or once.

Once everything is uploaded, and maybe you uploaded something in early April and a couple weeks later you found out that you needed to change something. Here you can see that I have a “demo MIF document.” If I wanted to change it, I would just click “change” and reupload with the most up-to-date correct document, or maybe say you decide that you don’t want it anymore. You can click the “delete” button and it will remove it for you.

Something new to this year as well is we’ve added a dropdown box or attachment label, and what this is essentially going to do is sometimes when we see attachments, we’ve had a comment section which we still have that we’ve asked that submitters, you know, kind of briefly explain maybe what this attachment is. Sometimes the title does a really great job. If it’s a MIF form, it will say it's a MIF, but sometimes it’s just a little tricky for reviewers to maybe fully understand what the document is. So by having this dropdown feature, there are a couple of selections. You just choose what the best field is based off of your selection. In this case, I have a MIF form, and so I click the “measure information form.”

There is also an “other.” So if it doesn't fit with one of these categories, you can just put “other” and then briefly explain what it is. “Submitter comments" is a section that we have that maybe you have information that just doesn't fit in one of the submission questions we had before, or maybe you submitted last year and were rejected and you got some guidance on maybe what you needed to address. You'd like to provide that. This is just a section that you can put any information that you feel is relevant that you would like the reviewers to know, as I mentioned, or even elaborate. If there's something that you submitted earlier but you'd like to elaborate a little bit more, this is that spot. It is optional, and so don't feel like you are obligated to have to fill it out. It's just that if you'd like to add additional information, it's there.

So let's say that you've completed everything and you are ready for submission. If you click the "review and submit" button, the first thing it's going to have you do is it's going to check the submission for errors. So it's going to run a check to make sure that you've completed every field and everything looks, you know, correct based off of what it sees. So if I run that, it's telling me that it looks like I missed a field. It looks like I have an incomplete submission, and it looks like my missing information was "measure information/measure description."

You can also tell up here. You can see the red triangle. You can either click here and it will take you directly to that spot, or you can just use the navigation bar. And once it loads if you scroll, it will actually tell you in the big red box that this is what's missing. So it actually will help you see, you know, what's missing, and it does look like I missed the "measure description." So I'm just going to put "demo." You can see as you type in the information that this box does disappear. And once I click "save," if everything is complete, we should see that red box go away, and it should turn into a "green checkmark." So let's doublecheck to make sure that everything is complete.

All right, and it looks like that is a green checkmark now, and so it does look like everything is complete. So if I come back to the “review and submit,” it’s going to tell me that the error check is complete and that there were no errors found. So now we are able to submit our measure. So I've clicked the “submit measure,” and then it would take us back to the “my submissions.” So I’ll go ahead and click the “submit measure” button, and it takes just a moment here. Now you can see that the measure is complete, and it’s going to have if you maybe are submitting multiple measures, you can then start on the next measure.

I'm going to come back up here to “my submissions.” Now let’s talk about, you know, if once you’re submitting a measure and it’s submitted, kind of what are the next steps and what to expect? After you submit a measure and we get to that deadline of May 1st, and then it starts to go through a review process. It goes through an initial QC check to make sure everything looks great; that you submitted all of the required fields, making sure the logic makes sense, and making sure of little things like that.

From there it then goes to CMS for their program reviews. Throughout this whole review process, there might be times where the reviewers maybe want to ask a clarifying question. They might need to ask you to, you know, update your submission based off of what you’ve selected and things like that. And then how that comes is via a comment that they put on your measure. You then should get an email notification that a comment has been made to your measure selection. So you’ll log in and then this is kind of what you’ll see.

So on this Demo Measure 2, if you scroll to the bottom here, there’s an “activity” section. You can see here that it looks like a reviewer has asked me to provide a more descriptive measure description. So what I would then do is I would come up here and click the “request change” button. The “request change” button is going to be after you submit a measure, any change that you would like to make you have to request. So you can see here that it looks exactly the same. The only differences you’re going to see is in the navigation bar. You’re going to see a comment bubble, which is going to show you where that comment is. And then you’re also going to see on the right-hand side a “change request” button, and you’re going to see that on every question that you have.

So I'm going to come to the “properties” and I'm going to come to this “measure information” where that comment is. Once it pops up if you scroll to the bottom, you're going to see the comment. So here’s the exact same comment, to provide a more descriptive measure description. I'm going to find where the measure description is, which is right here, and I'm going to click the “change request” button. What that is going to do is that’s going to show you the original you submitted. It’s going to come up with a field for a new value. And then it’s going to have a field for you to put the reason for your change request.

So I'm going to put that this is a demo measure. And then reason for change, I'm just going to put that this was requested by a reviewer. Once this information is put in, I'm going to click that “submit change request.” It’s going to then say that all changes are subject for review and approval by CMS programs. So you’re just going to say “submit.” And then what that is going to do is that’s going to send that change back to the reviewer who made the comment for them to review and approve that change.

What I’d like to do is I’d like to recommend that once you’ve made that change and you come back to this main page and you come back to this “reply” button where the comment is, I like to just say that “the change has been made.” This just helps me in my eyes make sure that I've completed all of the comments, and that also again sends that notification to the program.

The last thing that I just wanted to touch base with, before we go into the Q&A, is just the notion of once you’ve submitted and how to keep track of your submission. If you look here on the “my submissions” page about the middle of the screen, you’re going to see these bubbles. This is actually going to show you where it is in the review process. So that first bubble says “in progress,” and that’s going to be when you are creating your measure. So prior to submission you’ll see “in progress.” Once you have submitted, you’re going to see it go to that first and second level review.

This is that review that we do, a quality check, to make sure everything looks great, it’s updated, and all of the attachments are there. From there it then goes to CMS review. The CMS review then is where the programs will decide their decisions. And then from there you’ll then see if it’s accepted or rejected.

So this “my submissions” page will show you every step of the way. And then this is also where you’ll see your decision. So with that I will go ahead and stop sharing. And then we can go to the Q&A.

| **Q&A** |
| --- |
| *Q: “Can you remind me what the deadline for measure submission is?”* |

**WEBB:** So yes, that deadline is 8:00 pm ET on Thursday, May 1st. I am going to mention that Battelle will have a staff member available up to that 8:00 pm deadline just to help with any troubleshooting issues. So if things come up while you're submitting, you can definitely reach out to us. With that being said, please don't wait until that last day to start your submission. Just in case things do arise, as we mentioned, once that deadline closes, submissions will no longer be accepted, or submissions can't be changed after that submission without a request by CMS.

*Q: "Is there a prompt or an alert that will inform you to save information, if you move to the next section without saving?"*

**WEBB:** So CMS MERIT does not have that prompt or alert that reminds you to save. That's why it is important to make sure that as you finish a section, that you click that "save" or that "save and continue" button. It doesn't tell you, you know, like if you go to the next section like a reminder to save. So yes, it's very important, that "save and continue" button.

*Q: "Can you reclarify that if I type my response in Word and paste them into CMS MERIT, will the system retain my text formatting?"*

**WEBB:** So CMS does support text formatting. And with that being said, you know, it should always be best practice that once you paste and save to review what you pasted to make sure that it came out the exact way that you wanted it. Sometimes there are instances where, as I mentioned, figures and your text will show up as like random symbols or things like that that will need to be removed. So, as we mentioned, just the best way to do that is to put your information in and "save," and then just a review to make sure that it has saved the way that you are expecting it to.

*Q: “So is there a limit to the number of documents I can attach to my submission, or a file size limit for attachments?”*

**WEBB:** There is no limit to the amount of attachments. We recommend the amount that you need for your submission. There is, as I mentioned, there is that limit to 25MB to the file size of an attachment. So if you have one attachment that is 30MB, unfortunately you won’t be able to upload that. You’d have to either break it out or make it a little bit smaller to fit into that form. The only thing that you’d have to remind yourself is you can only upload 25MB at a time. So again, if it’s that one attachment or five, but you can upload as many as you want. It’s just a matter of uploading it into the system.

*Q: “Is there a sample of a submission available?”*

**WEBB:** So I think we don’t necessarily have an example. We could definitely provide you one. I think the best thing is like that past measure submissions repository, because you can see how everybody—like the past submissions. So I would recommend that. But if you would like to email us, we could also discuss that a little bit further as well.

**GROSS:** Hi, I was thinking for that question even though it’s not a sample of a submission, I don't know, Terry if you think the MERIT template would be helpful and along the lines of what you’re looking for? Feel free to speak up or not, but I was just thinking that maybe that template will, you know, kind of be the most helpful if you don’t have a previous submission to look at. Thanks.

**WEBB:** That's a good point, yes. So yes, like the data template that was on the home screen, that does have all of the questions that are going to be asked. So that is a very good point, too, of kind of like the questions that would be on the data template—or on the MERIT submission.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, Jake and Mel. And then Mel, I think we have a question here for you. Someone noted that they got a notification last year asking, after their initial submission asking for additional testing data in support of their MUC submission. So we just want to confirm if that's part of the annual protocol now.

**GROSS:** Yes, there are a couple of things that I wanted to address with this question about additional testing that will be requested. That is for the consensus-based entity (CBE) or the Partnership for Quality Measurement (PQM) powered by Battelle that will request that additional testing, and that's only for purposes of the Pre-Rulemaking Measure Review (PRMR) under the CBE work, not related to necessarily the MUC review, like the measures under consideration (MUC) review.

If you are thinking that your submission is not going to be complete and you want to submit late data, we ask that you only submit a completed submission by that May 1 deadline. So there is no opportunity to submit late data for purposes of, you know, the CMS programs reviewing those measure submissions for the measures under consideration (MUC) list. I hope that answers the question. If not, please, you know, feel free to speak up and we can discuss it further.

*Q: "Is there a window of time after which you cannot change the attachments you have submitted?"*

**WEBB:** So if say you submit your measure right now, any changes that come before that May 1st deadline, you can change. You just have to go to that "submit change," but we can make those updates. Once it comes after that May 1st deadline, everything is subject to CMS decision. So you can put the request in, and then it's up to the program lead to allow if they would accept it or not. So it's a case-by-case basis based on how the program has responded.

So again, as Mel just mentioned, please try to submit everything that you can at that May 1st deadline. And then anything after—if there are maybe things that CMS would like, you know, maybe the follow up or additional resources, you can then provide those. But after that May 1st deadline everything has to go through the CMS program approval process.

*Q: "Is there an estimate of how long it takes to complete all of the questions for submission?"*

**WEBB:** Yes, I think it really depends on the submission. I think there are different factors in how the submitter wants to approach it, but we always recommend to do it sooner than later just because of that decision. I think it depends on how detailed your measure is and things like that. So definitely, as I mentioned, it's better to start early. And then that's also where that beneficial "save and continue" feature comes in handy that you don't have to do it all in one sitting, but we do recommend, you know, definitely doing it sooner before that May 1st deadline if this is your first year just to kind of get that idea based off of what your measure is.

*Q: "Does MERIT and CMIT share the same login information? Also, how do you get assistance with troubleshooting issues that you may encounter with the system?"*

**WEBB:** So MERIT and CMIT do have the same username and password. As I mentioned, if maybe you had a CMIT account but you didn't register for MERIT, then you do have to request them separately. In this case, if you maybe had a MERIT and a CMIT account in the past and it's not working, if you reach out to the MMSsupport@battelle.org we can definitely help you get that account set up. It maybe just has been like a little while since you've logged in and it just needs to be rebooted. But if you just email MMSsupport@battelle.org we can definitely help you get that account set back up and see what's going on.

*Q: "Just to clarify, is there another chance in August or September to submit additional testing data as discussed in the prior webinar?"*

**GROSS:** So we want complete submissions by May 1. We don't accept any late testing data if the measure is not complete in August or September. What is asked of measure submitters for the measures under consideration (MUC) list, those measures go through the CBE review known as PRMR or the Pre-Rulemaking Measure Review. In those instances, those measures and CMS can request for additional testing data to help the PRMR committees review those measures. Hopefully, that helps clarify, but in terms of late testing data to kind of fulfill your measure submission, we do not accept that. Thanks.

**MODERATOR:** Wonderful. So I'm just looking through just for any latebreaking questions, and I think we have addressed everything here.


**MODERATOR:** So thank you all so much for taking the time to join today's webinar. We hope that the information was valuable. Again, the recording and the Q&As will be posted to the MMS Hub in the near future. Feel free to reach out to us at MMSsupport@battelle.org with additional questions or concerns. Everyone have a wonderful rest of the day.

**WEBINAR CONCLUDES**