

**Date:** February 22, 2019

**Request:** The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) requests approval of non-substantive changes to the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) Program Deeming Application for Health Centers (OMB #0906-0035, expires 04/30/2021).

**Purpose:** The proposed changes are necessary to better align the FTCA Program Deeming Application for Health Centers with HRSA's Health Center Program Compliance Manual while maintaining alignment with the FTCA program's statutory requirements. Additionally, the proposed changes will improve the application's clarity, reducing potential confusion among health centers participating in the FTCA program. The proposed alignments will have minimal, if any, impact on burden for applicants and will enable a more efficient and expedited application review process.

**Time Sensitivity:** HRSA regularly reviews and evaluates the annual FTCA deeming cycle to determine how well health centers understand program requirements based on application answers and other requested documentation. Based on a recent review of application responses to the most recent deeming application cycle, HRSA has determined that the FTCA program deeming application for health centers requires slight modification to better align with the requirements of the Health Center Program Compliance Manual. HRSA will need to implement these changes prior to the upcoming annual deeming cycle. For coverage for calendar year 2020, the annual deeming application period will run from early April to early May 2019. HRSA must adhere to this application timeline in order to review applications and make deeming determinations prior to December 31 of the calendar year, the last day a deeming determination is valid. This timeline also allows HRSA to issue deeming determinations in sufficient time on behalf of the health centers prior to the fall of each calendar year, which is normally the time that other healthcare entities, such as hospitals, require proof of medical malpractice coverage. HRSA requests expedited approval to prevent any disruption to the critical health care services that FTCA-deemed health centers provide to millions of patients across the nation.

## **PROPOSED CHANGES**

HRSA proposes updates to Risk Management, QI/QA, Credentialing and Privileging, and Claims Management application questions in the following ways: (1) updating language for clarity; (2) separating questions into multiple questions for clarity; and (3) updating requested documents that demonstrate compliance to align with Health Center Program Compliance Manual. Because these updates will increase clarity and reduce confusion, HRSA anticipates minimal impact on health centers' burden and increased efficiency in processing the applications.

Attachment:

1. FTCA Program Deeming Application for Health Centers tracked with proposed non-substantive changes