

PROCESS OVERVIEW FOR EXTERNAL CODE LIST

This document provides the procedures and rules for the requests and maintenance of the External Code values that support the NCPDP approved standards.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document provides the process to request additions, modifications, and deletions to the data element values existing in the External Code List (ECL). It provides the rules governing the procedures and steps for this process and maintenance of the ECL as approved by the NCPDP Board of Trustees. In addition, this document outlines the Telecommunication ECL implementation time table used to facilitate consistency across the industry.

During the May 2002 Joint Technical Work Group (JTWG) meeting of Maintenance and Control (MC) there was discussion from a submitted Data Element Request Form (DERF) regarding the assignment of codes, values, and qualifiers to data elements within the NCPDP Standards. Was there a process whereby values could be added to a data element without going through a ballot? By not going through the ballot process, the timeline to incorporate a value into a business need could be shortened. A Task Group was formed to review and discuss the process to determine if revisions for improvement could be made. The Task Group provided updates to MC and at the August 2002 JTWG meeting, the MC membership voted to approve the development of an External Code List Process by the Task Group. The first release of this document is a result of the Task Group's endeavors as approved by the MC membership and NCPDP Board in October 2003.

A. WHAT IS AN EXTERNAL CODE LIST?

An external code list is a list of value codes with descriptions for data elements. The actual data elements still appear in the main Data Dictionary. However, the codes with descriptions are removed from the main Data Dictionary and appear in a separate document, called an **External Code List** document. A reference to the ECL document is made in the values column of the Data Dictionary for applicable fields. Data elements that contain published values have been chosen for the ECL document based on the "Rules" section in this document.

II. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Changes to the ECL document generate a completely new list with a new date of release. Tracking of changes with each new release is indicated within the ECL document. A change to a value may require comments in the field limitation column if the change impacts the functionality of the Standard(s) in which the field resides.

Values for fields maintained in the ECL document will not be listed in the Data Dictionary. A reference to the ECL document will be made in the VALUES column of the Data Dictionary for applicable fields.

The ECL is intended to go hand-in-hand with the Data Dictionary and is a subset of that document. For this reason, the publication of a new ECL will always generate the release of a new publication of the Data Dictionary. Conversely, a new Data Dictionary would not necessitate the publication of a new ECL. Should a new Data Dictionary be published without need for a new publication of an ECL, the last published ECL will accompany the latest publication of the Data Dictionary.

To promote consistency, an ECL implementation process for the Telecommunication Standard has been defined and approved by the NCPDP membership. See Section III.

ECL DERF requests are reviewed and voted on at the JTWG meetings. Should an ECL DERF request have a particular importance to one's business needs, it is imperative to either attend or send a representative to the meeting where ECL requests will be discussed. If one is unable to attend, specific comments should be sent prior to the meeting to the Work Group Co-Chairs and/or Work Group Liaison. Final determination as to the resolution of the ECL DERF request will be made in Maintenance and Control. Any changes to an established ECL value will only be considered through the submission of a new DERF.

III. ECL IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FOR THE TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARD

During the May 2010 JTWG meeting of MC the ECL Implementation Task Group was formed to develop an ECL implementation process as it applied to the Telecommunication Standard Version D.0 and above. The purpose of this task group was to facilitate consistent adoption of the approved ECL versions within a reasonable, workable timeframe, across all industry participants.

The task group identified risks associated with inconsistent implementation of versions of the ECL:

1. If the ECL version was not consistent across all industry participants, COB processing would be at risk, and could ultimately jeopardize patient care.
2. As of the 01/01/2012 HIPAA mandate of the NCPDP Telecommunication Standard Version D.0 Compliance Date, ECL versions in use could range from July 2007 – December 2011.
3. No specific guidance existed to recommend the use of approved ECL versions by a specific date, across all industry participants.
4. Considering the scope of work that may be required to implement an entire ECL publication, a traditional 180 day implementation period, with the potential to recur at a quarterly frequency, was not always practical.

During the November 2010 JTWG meeting of MC, the following task group recommended solutions were approved:

1. To mitigate claims processing risks, the March 2010 ECL publication should be the highest version in use when implementing the NCPDP Telecommunication Standard Version D.0 to meet the January 01, 2012 compliance date.
2. To achieve consistency and standardization across all industry participants, adoption of an annual ECL implementation schedule to incorporate up to four (4) ECL publications each year should be enacted. The annual implementations are effective each October, starting with the first in 2012. Timing of the schedule is intended to avoid conflicts with the traditional peak in year-end and new-year business activities and assuring the needed ECL changes are ready in advance of those activities.
 - o The claim transaction date, versus the claim date of service should be used to determine the appropriate ECL Publication and associated Annual Implementation Date.
3. For expedited implementation of values added to the ECL that are specific to regulatory requirements, an Emergency ECL Value Exception process is allowed. While the normal quarterly ECL publication process will be followed, these “emergency approved” values will also be published and tracked in a separate document referred to as the Emergency Telecommunication ECL Value Addendum.
 - o The Data Element Request Form (DERF) was modified to identify requests for values that are required for regulatory and legislative compliance prior to the scheduled annual implementation date for the next ECL Publication.
 - o The emergency implementation date must be documented on the DERF
 - a. The emergency implementation date can be any date prior to the scheduled annual implementation date of the next ECL Publication, but must be at least 180 days from the scheduled ECL Publication date.

See the Emergency Telecommunication External Code List Value Addendum document for the list of values approved for emergency implementation and the ECL Publication and Implementation Chart.

ECL Publication and Implementation Chart

The ECL Publication and Implementation Chart was developed to provide key dates in which full ECL Publications and ECL Emergency Values should be implemented across all industry participants supporting the NCPDP Telecommunication Standard.

KEY DATES:

- DERF APPROVAL DATE
 - JTWG meeting date when the ECL DERF was approved by Maintenance and Control
- ECL PUBLICATION DATE
 - Date when the new ECL document containing the values approved in the most recent JTWG and or Ballot process is published
 - For purposes of the chart, the published date is assumed to be the first of the month, but the actual month of publication may vary within the given quarter
 - No more than four ECL publications will occur each year and no more frequently than once each quarter following the JTWG meeting during which changes were approved (actual months may vary within a given quarter)
- ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE
 - Initial annual implementation is to occur October 15, 2012 with all industry participants to support ECL publications up to and including October 2011
 - Thereafter, the Annual Implementation date of October 15 is the date when the quarterly ECL Publications for the previous year are implemented across all industry participants
- DAYS BETWEEN ECL PUBLICATION AND ECL IMPLEMENTATION DATES
 - Number of days between the ECL Publication Date and the Annual ECL Implementation Date
 - Provides the industry a timeline as to how long it will be before new ECL values specific to the Telecommunication Standard will be available for use
- EMERGENCY IMPLEMENTATION DATE
 - The Emergency Implementation date is approved during the DERF Review process when the Emergency ECL value request is discussed
 - Refer to the [Adjudicated DERFs](#) on the NCPDP website for the emergency implementation date. This date will be **no earlier** than 180 days from the publication of the ECL containing the new ECL value(s)
 - The emergency implementation date can be any date prior to the scheduled annual implementation date of the next ECL Publication, but must be at least 180 days from the scheduled ECL Publication date,
 - Examples
 - Example 1 – Approved for 180-day implementation (earliest allowed implementation date)
 - At the February 2012 Work Group meeting, Emergency ECL value is approved for 180-day implementation
 - **Annual Process:** ECL is published April 1, 2012 and annual implementation scheduled for October 15, 2013 (562 days between publication and implementation)
 - **EMERGENCY Process:** ECL is published April 1, 2012 and emergency implementation scheduled for October 15, 2012 (195* days between publication and implementation)
 - *Note: Because the emergency implementation date falls in October, it is the expectation that implementation will occur on the 15th rather than the 1st to support synchronization with the annual implementation schedule.
 - Example 2 – Approved for a specific requested date (greater than 180-day implementation but before the annual ECL implementation date):
 - At the February 2012 Work Group meeting, Emergency ECL value is approved for January 1, 2013 implementation
 - **Annual Process:** ECL is published April 1, 2012 and annual implementation scheduled for October 15, 2013 (562 days between publication and implementation)
 - **EMERGENCY Process:** ECL is published April 1, 2012 and emergency implementation scheduled for January 1, 2013 (275 days between publication and implementation)

DERF Approval Date	ECL Publication Date	Annual Implementation Date	Days Between ECL Publication Date and ECL Implementation Date	#Earliest Emergency Implementation Date = ECL Publication Date + 180 Days
05/01/2010	* 06/01/2010	10/15/2012	867	01/01/2012
08/01/2010	* 09/01/2010	10/15/2012	775	01/01/2012
11/01/2010	01/01/2011	10/15/2012	653	01/01/2012
02/01/2011	04/01/2011	10/15/2012	563	01/01/2012
05/01/2011	07/01/2011	10/15/2012	472	01/01/2012
08/01/2011	10/01/2011	10/15/2012	380	04/01/2012
11/01/2011	01/01/2012	10/15/2013	653	07/01/2012
02/01/2012	04/01/2012	10/15/2013	562	10/01/2012
05/01/2012	07/01/2012	10/15/2013	471	01/01/2013
08/01/2012	10/01/2012	10/15/2013	379	04/01/2013
11/01/2012	01/01/2013	10/15/2014	652	07/01/2013
02/01/2013	04/01/2013	10/15/2014	562	10/01/2013
05/01/2013	07/01/2013	10/15/2014	471	01/01/2014
08/01/2013	10/01/2013	10/15/2014	379	04/01/2014
11/01/2013	01/01/2014	10/15/2015	652	07/01/2014
02/01/2014	04/01/2014	10/15/2015	562	10/01/2014
05/01/2014	07/01/2014	10/15/2015	471	01/01/2015
08/01/2014	10/01/2014	10/15/2015	379	04/01/2015
11/01/2014	01/01/2015	10/15/2016	653	07/01/2015
02/01/2015	04/01/2015	10/15/2016	563	10/01/2015
05/01/2015	07/01/2015	10/15/2016	472	01/01/2016
08/01/2015	10/01/2015	10/15/2016	380	04/01/2016

*The March 2010 ECL publication was recommended as the highest ECL publication to be used with the January 1, 2012 implementation of the Telecommunication Version D.0 standard. Therefore, the June and September 2010 ECL publications were included in the 10/15/2012 Annual Implementation.

#The emergency implementation date can be any date prior to the scheduled annual implementation date of the next ECL Publication, but must be at least 180 days from the scheduled ECL Publication date.

IV. PROCESS FOR REQUESTING ECL MODIFICATIONS

All requests for additions, deletions, and changes, including the implementation timelines, of data element values must be sent on a Data Element Request Form (DERF). The ECL process follows many of the established rules of the [DERF process](#), including submission timelines and notification processes; however some steps in the approval process are different.

The DERF will have two separate numbering systems, one for a DERF and one for an ECL DERF. The reasons the DERF and ECL DERF are submitted on the same form include:

- Ease and acquaintance with filling out the DERF form.
- An ECL DERF request may need to follow the DERF process if the request is determined to be a balloted item.
- A DERF request may need to follow the ECL DERF process if the request is determined to be an ECL request.

ECL DERF Process Flow:

1. In order for a DERF (Attachment A) to be reviewed at the next quarterly JTWG meeting, it must be submitted to the Council office thirty (30) days prior to the meeting date.
2. The DERF is date-stamped and assigned the next sequential DERF number.
3. Copies of the DERF are sent to the Standardization Co-Chairs and the MC Co-Chairs for review; where consensus is reached on whether the DERF should be reviewed as a DERF or an ECL DERF.
 - If a DERF is determined to be reviewed as an ECL DERF, an ECL DERF number is assigned in addition to the originally assigned DERF number. The ECL DERF number will appear in the upper right hand corner of the form under the DERF number.
 - If the ECL DERF is submitted as an emergency and proper justification is provided, it will automatically be assigned for review by WG1 Telecommunication and any other impacted work groups. If emergency justification is not provided, the submitter will be notified (See step 4 below) prior to the WG meetings and the request follows the defined ECL DERF process.
4. Once review is completed, by the Standardization Co-Chairs and the MC Co-Chairs, the DERF is assigned to the applicable WG(s).
5. Each ECL request is reviewed by staff to insure that the same value does not already exist for the field and that a new ECL request is not for a field that is currently being balloted or has a new DERF submitted. A list of the existing codes for the field is added to the electronic DERF for reference. All affected Standards' examples and stand-alone Implementation Guides (i.e., Medicaid Subrogation) must be reviewed by the Standardization and MC Liaison to insure that the added/deleted values requested do not change the intent of the examples. Any conflicts will also be noted on the DERF.
6. A memorandum to include the below information is sent from NCPDP staff to the submitter, acknowledging receipt of the DERF.
 - the title or reason for the DERF,
 - the number(s) assigned,
 - the fact that it was determined to be an ECL request or an Emergency ECL request,
 - Work Groups which will review the DERF.

The memo also explains the importance of the submitter's presence in those designated Work Groups when the DERF is reviewed.

7. Two weeks prior to the JTWG meeting, copies of the appropriate DERFs are distributed to the Council Staff Liaisons and Work Group Co-chairs for their review.
8. The membership is notified of the DERF(s) that will be reviewed during the work group meetings. ECL DERFs and Emergency ECL DERFS are identified as such on the electronic DERF. ECL DERFs may then be downloaded from the Maintenance and Control (MC) webpage. Members who are unable to attend the JTWG meeting may submit comments to the assigned WG Co-Chairs and Liaison.
9. ECL DERFs are reviewed by applicable Work Group(s). (*For Emergency ECL DERFs, consideration should be made to the status of the regulation (finalized versus proposed)*). Any modification and actions taken by the Work Group(s) are recorded by the Work Group Liaison in the DERF Modifications area on the last page of the DERF. This documentation reflects:
 - Approved/Reviewed with no modifications
 - Approved/Reviewed with modifications (modifications recorded on the DERF or accompanying document)
 - Pended by work group (reason is supplied)
 - Denied by Work Group
 - Withdrawn by submitter
 - Changed ECL DERF to a DERF only
10. MC will review the modifications and actions taken by the Work Group(s). Co-Chairs (or their appointed representatives) are responsible for presenting the results of their Work Group's discussion.
 - If during MC discussion, it is determined that individual Work Group modifications to the ECL/DERF are in conflict and cannot be resolved, MC may refer the ECL/DERF back to the impacted work group(s) for further discussion.
 - If there are differences in the actions taken by more than one Work Group, MC will determine the final action.
11. MC approval, with or without modifications is recorded by the MC Liaison in the DERF Modifications area on the last page of the DERF. The final disposition of the ECL DERF as determined by MC is documented on the first page of the ECL DERF.
12. The numbers assigned to a DERF/ECL DERF follow the DERF until final disposition. All modifications and changes to a DERF/ECL DERF occurring during the Work Group review process are made to the original DERF/ECL DERF. Submission of a new DERF and assignment of a new number will only be required if the stated business purpose for submission of the DERF/ECL DERF is modified significantly during the review process.
13. After the JTWG meetings, the Standardization Liaison notifies the submitter of the outcome of the DERF. All reviewed DERF(s) are posted on the MC Webpage and include modifications and disposition.
14. ECL values for approved ECL DERFs are assigned by the MC Liaison prior to publication.
15. Approved ECL DERFs are published in the next quarterly release of the ECL.
 - Section III Publication Release Modifications within the ECL, identifies the modifications made for each publication and, when applicable, the Emergency ECL publication date. Refer to the Emergency Telecommunication External Code List Value Addendum when an Emergency ECL publication date is listed.
 - When applicable, the Emergency Telecommunication External Code List Value Addendum is published at the same time as the ECL. The most current publication will be available on the website and will include all values approved through the emergency process.

V. RULES

Field values maintained in the External Code List document must not be listed in a Standard's Specifications document and Implementation Guide. Values may be referred to as guidance for usage, but lists of values will not be allowed.

A DERF for ECL modification may only be submitted for an approved field. Such a request may not be submitted on a field that is being balloted as a new field.

General Rules:

- 1) Field values may be removed.
- 2) Once removed, field values will not be reassigned.
- 3) Changes to values should be for descriptive purposes (an acronym change for example) and not to redefine a value; or for implementation timelines.
- 4) External business rules will not be added to the ECL document.

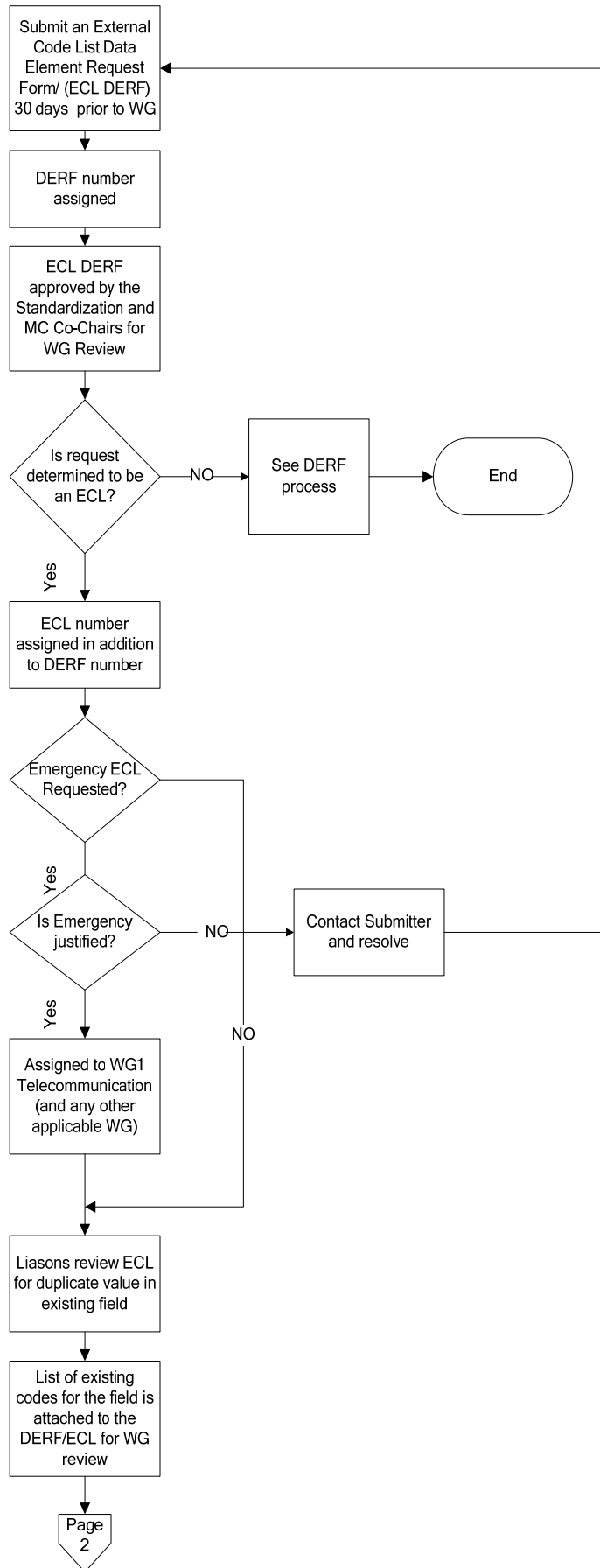
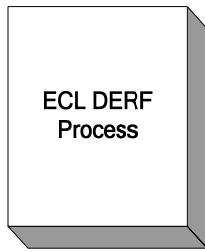
The WG should also apply due diligence to insure:

- the value request does not conflict with existing codes
- the value request does not have the same meaning as existing codes
- the value request requires value additions to associated fields, (e.g. COB processing)

VI. ATTACHMENT A – DATA ELEMENT REQUEST FORM (DERF)

For a copy of the DERF document, go to [DERF](#)

VII. ATTACHMENT B – ECL FLOW CHART



VIII. ATTACHMENT B – ECL FLOW CHART (PAGE 2)

