**MARYLAND
HEALTHBENEFIT
EXCHANGE**

# Essential Community Providers Template Instructions

1. Introduction

This document provides instructions to QHP and SADP issuers on how to use the Essential Community Provider (ECP) Templates (standard or dental) to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of sufficient number and geographic distribution of ECPs. It also allows issuers to utilize the CMS Network ID Template to detail the network(s) associated with each QHP.

2. Data Requirements

To complete this template, issuers will need the following:

   a. HIOS Issuer ID
   b. Completed Network ID Template (provided by CMS on this page)[1]
   c. Any Write-in ECPs (qualified ECPs not listed on the MD ECP List PY 2024)
   d. A list of Uncontracted ECPs (if the issuer is unable to meet the reporting requirements using the general ECP standard calculation[2]) including a brief narrative explaining the steps taken to contract with the ECP and their response.

WARNING: Due to a change in how Microsoft Excel handles macro-enabled workbooks downloaded from an online source, users may need to save the downloaded ECP template file into a **non-network folder**. The template will show a red error box as shown below, if users encounter this error, it can be bypassed by saving the document to a local folder (such as "My Documents" on your main system hard drive). If you still see the error banner after saving to your local folder, follow the steps provided by Microsoft to unblock a single file here.

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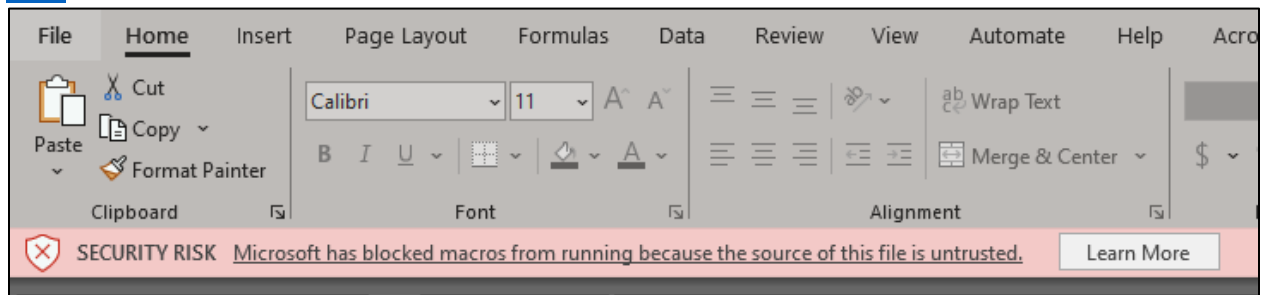
[1] NOTE: Network templates with only one network may result in blank lines being populated to the "Network ID" list for the drop-downs on the ECP tabs. Please keep this in mind and be sure to scroll up on the drop-down using the up arrow.

[2] NOTE: An issuer may not realize they need to be considered under the Alternate ECP Calculation until they have completed the template. Should you encounter this issue, please reference the first topic in the "Troubleshooting Common ECP Template Issues" section for a detailed guide on what to do including helpful tips that will prevent the issuer from having to duplicate efforts they have already done and significantly cut down on revision time.

3. Detailed Section Instructions

User Control Tab	Steps
HIOS Issuer ID	Enter the five-digit HIOS Issuer ID.
Source System	Select the name of the system used to submit the QHP Application (for MD, this is always SERFF).
State	This is pre-populated with the correct state (Maryland).
Is this an Alternate ECP Calculation Issuer?	Choose from the following options: ❖ **Yes** – if the user issuer is unable to meet the general ECP standard and needs to be considered under the Alternate ECP Calculation standard. ❖ **No** – if the user is a general ECP standard issuer.

The first tab of the Essential Community Provider template is the **User Control** tab. This tab contains the issuer identifying information, instructions on the proper order to complete the template, a button to import the Network ID template (which must be completed ahead of the ECP template), a Validate button used to identify any errors, and the ECP counts and ECP contracting requirements calculation (generated by clicking on the "Calculate" button after completing the other steps listed).

A sample completed **User Control** tab looks like **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 - Sample User Control Tab

Import Network IDs: Click the **Import Network IDs** button to import data from the Network ID Template provided by CMS. Once the Network ID Template is imported, it will automatically populate networks into the **Network IDs** field as a drop-down menu in the **Contracted ECP List**

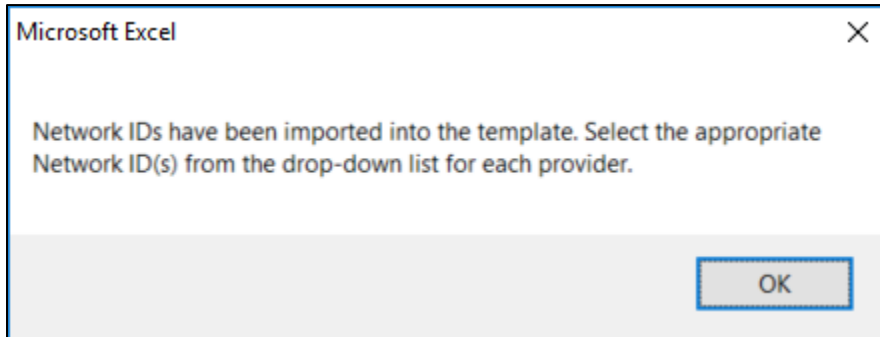tab. The confirmation message shown in **Figure 2** will display if the import was successful.
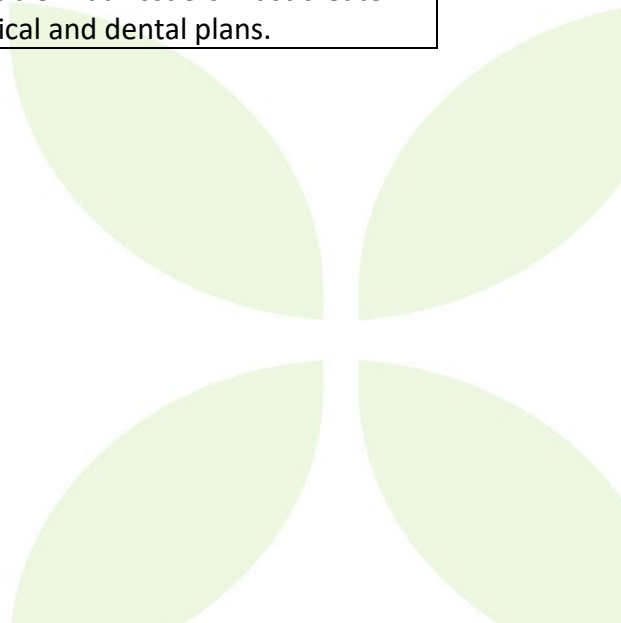

Figure 2 - Successful import of Network IDs

ECPs:

Select ECPs Tab	Steps
Filter ECPs	The columns on the **Select ECPs** tab can be filtered to make selecting ECPs easier. For example, filter the Site City column to only view ECPs in "Baltimore".
Add ECPs	Double-click anywhere on the row for the ECPs the user wants to add to the ECP tabs. Once selected, the row will be highlighted in blue and "ADD" will appear in the "Add ECP?" column. Continue selecting the ECPs until all contracted ECPs from the ECP list are selected. ❖ To unselect an ECP, double-click on the selected row. The blue highlighting will be removed, and the ECP will not be added to the ECP tabs. ❖ To clear *all* selected ECPs, click the **Clear All** button at the top of the tab, and all highlighted ECPs will be deselected and will not be added to the ECP tabs. ❖ To show only those ECPs that have been selected, click on the **Show Selected** button at the top of the tab, and all highlighted ECPs will be displayed. To undo this action and show all ECPs, click the **Show All ECPs** button.
Insert ECPs	❖ Click the **Insert Selected** button. The selected ECPs will be added to the **Contracted ECP List** tab. The template will not populate duplicate ECPs into the tabs. The issuer must complete any field within the **Contracted ECP List** tab that is not populated from the **Select ECPs** tab before the template is validated. ❖ For each ECP that was selected and inserted from the **Select ECPs** tab, a record will be added to the **Contracted ECP List** tab that includes the following: the MHBE number, NPI[3], facility name, provider name, street address, city, state, ZIP, county, and all the ECP categories.

A sample **Select ECPs** tab looks like **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 - Sample ECPs Tab

To complete the information on the **Contracted ECP List** tab, follow the steps in the table below.

Contracted ECP List Tab	Steps
Physician/Non-Physician	Indicate the type of provider. Choose from the following: ❖ **Physician** – if the provider is a physician practitioner. ❖ **Non-Physician** – if the provider is a non-physician practitioner.
Specialty Type (area of medicine)	Select the appropriate specialty type for each ECP. Issuers may select multiple specialty type for each ECP, as applicable. If none of the facility type selections apply to the ECP, select **000 OTHER**. If the user makes a mistake in selection, they can click the cell to select it and press the "DELETE" button on their keyboard. The cell will be cleared, and the user can start over with their selection.
Network IDs	Select the network IDs for each ECP. Issuers may select multiple network IDs for each ECP, as applicable. Dual issuers must create separate network IDs for their medical and dental plans.

A sample completed **Contracted ECPs** tab looks like **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 - Sample Contracted ECP List Tab

To remove ECPs from the **Contracted ECP List** tab, double-click the record to be deleted in the Remove ECPs column. The provider will be highlighted in blue. Click the **Remove Selected ECPs** button to remove the ECPs from the template.

Issuers proposing Write-In ECPs: If an issuer would like to add a **qualified ECP** that is not contained in the MD ECP list (or on the **Select ECPs** tab), please input all the required information for that ECP on the **Contracted ECP List** tab. In the MHBE Number column, input "Write-In" to indicate this is a write-in ECP that the issuer is requesting be added to the MD ECP list. You must then complete (or prompt the ECP themselves to complete) an entry of the "Essential Community Providers Petition" found at this URL to submit any Write-In ECPs to be added to the official list. Write-In ECPs will be evaluated by MHBE against the Write-In list provided by CMS on their QHP certification website (https://www.qhpcertification.cms.gov/s/ECP%20and%20Network%20Adequacy) and for General ECP Standard Issuers, only those providers who are listed on the ECP Write-In List will count as qualified ECP write-ins.

The **Uncontracted ECP List** tab will be used by issuers who selected yes in response to the "Is this an Alternate ECP Calculation Issuer?" due to being unable to meet the 35% threshold MHBE has set using the general ECP standard calculation. The first topic under the "4. Troubleshooting common ECP Template Issues" section details some helpful tips for completing this section that issuers should consult along with the detailed steps listed in the table below. **New in 2024: the Uncontracted ECP List tab has been updated to now include the County the selected ECP is in and the National Provider Identifier number (this will auto-populate on selection of MHBE number from the dropdown in the "MHBE Number" column, just like Provider Name) and the "Reason unable to contract" column has been updated to be a drop-down menu with a limited number of available responses. Carriers should select the appropriate reason from the drop-down list and then provide any additional information needed in the next column, "Additional Information".**

Uncontracted ECP List Tab	Steps
MHBE Number	This column contains a drop-down that lists all the MHBE numbers for carriers on the "Select ECP" list. When the user selects a number, the corresponding details will be auto populated to the County, NPI, and Provider Name columns. The user can either select each uncontracted ECP using the drop-down or copy and paste MHBE numbers from the **Select ECPs** tab.
National Provider Identification (NPI)	After selecting the MHBE Number from the list in Column B, this information will auto-populate with the NPI information from the ECP List. No user action required.
County	After selecting the MHBE Number from the list in Column B, this information will auto-populate with the County the ECP is in from the ECP List. No user action required.
Provider Name	After selecting the MHBE Number from the list in Column B, this information will auto-populate with the Provider Name information from the ECP List. No user action required.
Reason Unable to Contract	After selecting the MHBE Number from the list in Column B, the user will select from a list of responses to indicate the reason they were unable to contract with this ECP. The available responses are: ❖ Provider moved/retired or facility closed (provide contact information if it differs from MHBE's ECP List). ❖ Good faith contract offer(s) for upcoming plan year rejected by provider (please detail efforts in next column). ❖ Provider contracts exclusively with another carrier/organization (please list the carrier in the next column). ❖ Provider does not contract with your organization's plan type (provide contract information for MHBE to follow-up).
Additional Information	After selecting the "Reason Unable to Contract" from the list in Column F, the user will provide any additional information needed as per the selected reason and/or any additional information the carrier believes would help MHBE verify the inability to contract with this selected ECP.
Remove Selected ECPs	If the user needs to remove an ECP from this list, they can double-click the "Remove ECP?" column, just like on the **Select ECPs** or **Contracted ECPs**, to highlight the entire row and click on the "Remove Selected ECPs" button at the top of the tab to delete that row.

A completed **Uncontracted ECP List** tab looks like **Figure 5**.

Figure 5 - Uncontracted ECP List screenshot.

The **Errors** tab displays any validation errors identified when a completed MD ECP Template is validated.

- ❖ Column A – "Tab" indicates the tab that produced the error.
- ❖ Column B – "Cell" indicates the cell location for the specific error and a hyperlink that allows the issuer to navigate to the exact cell in the correct tab.
- ❖ Column C – "Validation Error Message" describes the error.

Reference information is provided in the three tabs listed below:

- ❖ The **Specialty Type** tab contains the specialty/facility types that can be added into the MD ECP Template.
- ❖ The **County Names** tab contains the county names that are used and accepted in the MD ECP Template.
- ❖ The **HPSA** tab contains the HPSA and low-income ZIP codes. The issuer can filter by Zip code.

The **Geographic Analysis** tab has been added to allow MHBE to analyze the distribution of ECPs by county and across carrier networks. These data will be compiled to pinpoint areas that may be lacking ECPs and allow MHBE to improve the ECP program statewide to the benefit of consumers on the exchange. To complete the **Geographic Analysis** tab, please follow the directions in the table below:

Geographic Analysis Tab	Steps
Complete the "Contracted ECP List" tab	The Geographic Analysis tab relies on the data in the **Contracted ECP List** tab, so that tab must be fully completed first.
Refresh Pivot Table	This button will begin a macro that will update the "Count of ECPs by County" pivot table next to the static "Contracted ECPs" table. The update will be near instantaneous and will show a summation of the ECPs by County and by Network.*

*If it appears that any counties or networks are missing, please reach out to MHBE and we will review your template to ensure the pivot table is properly displaying all data.

The completed **Geographic Analysis** tab will look like Figure 6 below.

County Name	Contracted ECPs
Allegany	0
Anne Arundel	0
Baltimore County	0
Baltimore City	0
Calvert	0
Caroline	0
Carroll	0
Cecil	0
Charles	0
Dorchester	0
Frederick	0
Garrett	0
Harford	0
Howard	0
Kent	0
Montgomery	0
Prince Georges	0
Queen Annes	0
Saint Marys	0
Somerset	0
Talbot	0
Washington	0
Wicomico	0
Worcester	0
Out of State	0

Refresh Pivot Table

Count of ECPs by County

	MDN001	MDN002	MDN003	Grand Total
Allegany		1		1
ANNE ARUNDEL	3	3	1	7
Baltimore City	18	6	4	28
Baltimore County	7	4	3	14
CALVERT	1			1
CAROLINE		1		1
CARROLL			1	1
CECIL		1		1
CHARLES	1			1
DORCHESTER		1		1
FREDERICK	3			3
Garrett	1			1
HARFORD		2		2
Howard	2	1		3
KENT			1	1
MONTGOMERY	2	3	1	6
Out of State		1		1
Prince Georges	9	8	2	19
QUEEN ANNES			1	1
SAINT MARYS	1			1
Somerset	2		1	3
TALBOT	1	1		2
WASHINGTON	2	2	1	5
WICOMICO		1	1	2
Worcester	1			1
Grand Total	**54**	**36**	**17**	**107**

Figure 6 - Geographic Analysis tab screenshot.

Once the MD ECP Template is completed, issuers must validate, finalize, and upload the template to SERFF.[4]

Template Validation	Steps
Validate Template	Click the **Validate Data** button on the **User Control** tab. The validation process identifies any data issues that need to be resolved. If no errors are identified, finalize the template.
Errors	If the template has any errors, they will appear on the **Errors** tab showing the data element and cell location of each error. Correct any identified errors and click **Validate** again. Continue this process until all errors are resolved.
Save Template	Save the template. MHBE recommends that the issuer save the validated template on its computer as a standard Excel .XLSM file.
Submit Template	Submit the template in the SERFF binder with the other documentation listed in the instruction letter from MHBE.

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[4] There may be some validation errors that are not resolvable by the carrier/issuer. If that is the case, please reach out to MHBE so we can advise you on how to proceed with submission.
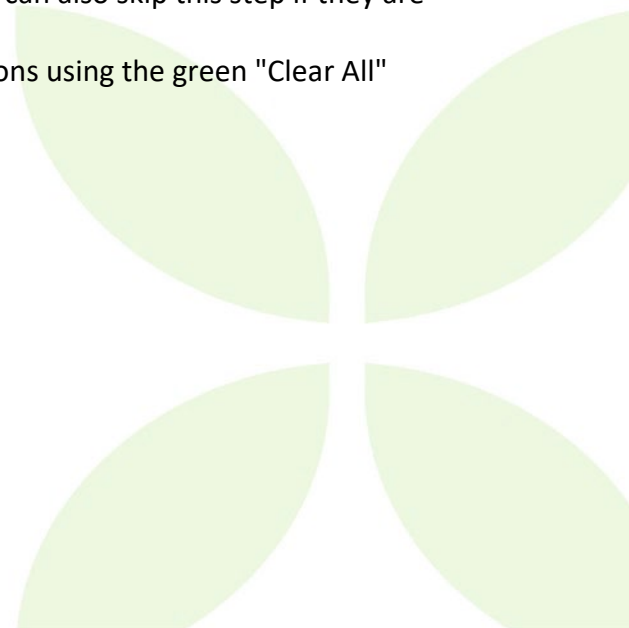
4. Troubleshooting common ECP Template issues

Since the creation of this template in 2018, MHBE Policy and Plan Management has assisted carriers with many common issues or questions about how to complete the template correctly. This section details the most common hurdles carriers have encountered and provides detailed steps to resolve the issue quickly and efficiently. **We highly recommend carriers read this section first, even if you have not encountered issues completing the template as it contains helpful usage "tips" that will certainly improve your experience using the ECP Template or the Dental ECP Template.**

I.   *The user is unable to contract with enough ECPs to reach the designated 30% threshold using the general ECP standard calculation but has proof of their reasonable effort to contract with additional ECPs.*

MHBE Policy and Plan Management understands that there are scenarios where the issuer is unable to contract with enough ECPs to meet our threshold using the general ECP standard calculation, often due to the ECP not accepting their plan offerings or a breakdown in communication that is no fault of the issuer. In this scenario, we suggest following these detailed steps to demonstrate that the issuer did attempt to meet the general ECP standard and list out the ECPs they were unable to contract with. It may also be the case that a user does not realize this until they have finished completing the ECP Template or Dental ECP Template and the steps below include helpful tips to ensure the user does not duplicate effort they have already put in on filling out the template.

1. If the user has already completed the template, go back, and select and copy all the ECPs on the **Contracted ECP** tab (from cell A1, "REMOVE", to the last row in column W, "Network IDs") and paste this into a new workbook. The user can skip this step if they have not already completed the template.
2. Go to the **User Control** tab and change the dropdown to "Yes" for the question "Is this an Alternative ECP Calculation Issuer?". This will wipe all the ECP data on the Contracted ECP tab (hence why the first step asks the user to copy it to another workbook first).
3. Copy and paste the ECP data from the new workbook to the Contracted ECP. Even fully protected, it should allow the user to do this. The user can also skip this step if they are completing the template fresh.
4. Go to the Select ECPs tab and clear all previous selections using the green "Clear All" button (if any ECPs are selected).

750 EAST PRATT STREET, 6TH FLOOR
BALTIMORE, MD 21202
marylandhbe.com

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Before clicking "Clear All":

After clicking "Clear All":

5. Select the ECPs they do not want to contract with by double clicking in the "Add ECP?" column.

6. Click the "Show Selected" button on the top.

   After clicking the "Show Selected" button:

Add ECP?	MHBE Number	Site Name	Organization Name	National Provider Identifier	ECP Type: Hospital	ECP Type: FQHC	ECP Type: Ryan White	ECP Type: Family Planning	ECP Ind Prov
ADD	MD_65858187_ECP	A BRIGHTER DAY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER	A BRIGHTER DAY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER	1093332595 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_24371560_ECP	ABOVE ALL ODDS	ABOVE ALL ODDS	1851850044 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_78120455_ECP	ABSOLUTE CARE INC	ABSOLUTE CARE INC	1578182945 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_14107288_ECP	ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	1275978165 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_29909545_ECP	BALTIMORE CITY HEALTHY START	BALTIMORE CITY HEALTHY START	1104091594 ✖	0 ✔	1 ✖	0 ✔	1 ✖
ADD	MD_42919730_ECP	BOARD OF CHILD CARE OF THE UMC	EASTERN SHORE CAMPUS	1548708803 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_22960092_ECP	Center for Vein Restoration	Center for Vein Restoration	1487772349 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_82551018_ECP	CHOPTANK COMMUNITY HEALTH	FASSETT-MAGEE HEALTH CENTER and Cambridge	1356388599 ✖	0 ✔	1 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_75675985_ECP	CLINIC MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENTAL SE	DBA CMDS	1376063164 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖
ADD	MD_64318552_ECP	DXT THERAPEUTIC SERVICES	DXT THERAPEUTIC SERVICES	1659919983 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖	0 ✖

7. Copy all the "MHBE Number" cells and paste them into the "MHBE Number" column on the "Uncontracted ECP List" tab. The NPI and name columns will auto populate with the correct info and then they can fill in the "Reason unable to contract" column.

Copy:

Add ECP?	MHBE Number	Site Name
ADD	MD_29781071_ECP	ORAL HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM
ADD	MD_65014426_ECP	Chase Brexton Health Care at Colu
ADD	MD_66727455_ECP	Cheverly Health Center
ADD	MD_70838244_ECP	Choptank - North Dorcester High Sc
ADD	MD_24560338_ECP	CHOPTANK COMMUNITY HEALTH
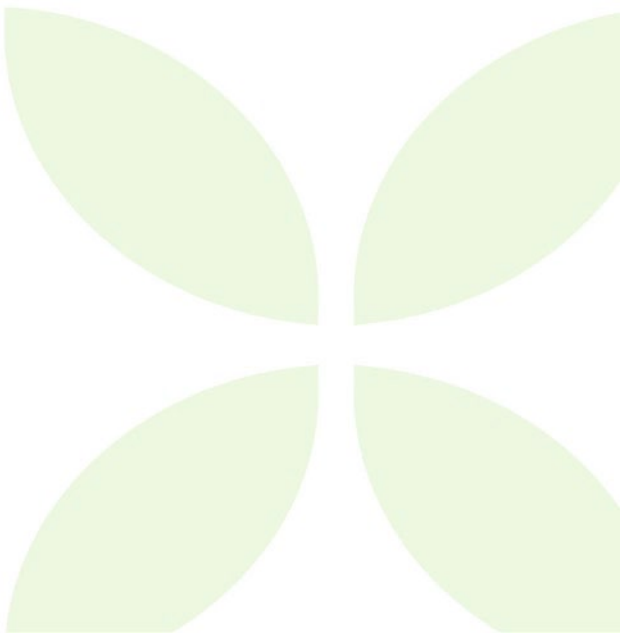
Navigate to "Uncontracted ECP List" and paste:

Remove ECP?	MHBE Number*	National Provider Identification (NPI)*	County	Provider Name*
	MD_81670867_ECP	1659037943	Baltimore County	180 DEGREE CHANGE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
	MD_81670867_ECP	1659037943	Baltimore County	180 DEGREE CHANGE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
	MD_52483689_ECP	1427661883	Baltimore County	4 2 RESTORE LLC
	MD_17547302_ECP	1235371584	Baltimore City	A Step Forward
	MD_65858187_ECP	1093332595	Howard	A BRIGHTER DAY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER

Uncontracted ECP List — Clear All

ECP MHBE Number
Please select an ECP from the drop-down list.

The next two columns will auto populate when the user puts the MHBE numbers they copied into the "MHBE Number" column. The user can then fill in the "Reason unable to contract" column for each uncontracted ECP.

II.   *The ECP we have contracted with is not listed on the "Select ECPs" tab.*
We recognize that there can be times when a valid ECP has been left off either of the source lists (from the CMS or MDH) or was erroneously removed during de-duplication and as such we provide the option to "Write-in" an ECP on the **Contracted ECP List** tab. The procedure for this scenario requires the user to first input "Write-in" in the MHBE Number column so it is easy for MHBE Policy and Plan Management staff to identify the write-in ECPs, then fill in all required tabs (as indicated by the red asterisk on the column heading). Even though the template is locked, it will still allow the user to input all required information. The user may then complete validation and finalize the template and the ECP(s) will be included in the denominator of the ECP standard calculation.

A write-in ECP will look like the last row in the figure below:

REMOVE	MHBE Number	National Provider Identifier (NPI)*	Name of Provider*	Suffix of Provider	Physician/Non Physician*	Specialty Type (area of medicine)*	Provider Entity Name*	ECP Type: Hospital	ECP Type: FQHC	ECP Type: Ryan White
	MD_65858187_EC	1093332595	A BRIGHTER DAY BEHAVIORAL HEAL		Non-Physician	Community Ment	A BRIGHTER DAY I	0	0	0
	MD_24371560_EC	1851850044	ABOVE ALL ODDS		Non-Physician	Community Ment	ABOVE ALL ODDS	0	0	0
	MD_78120455_EC	1578182945	ABSOLUTE CARE INC		Physician	Family Planning F	ABSOLUTE CARE I	0	0	0
	MD_14107288_EC	1275978165	ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH		Physician	Federally Qualifi	ADVANCED BEHA	0	0	0
	Write-in	(fill in NPI #)	(Fill in name)		Physician	Black Lung Clinics	(Fill in Entity Nan	0	1	0

Select All — Clear All — Remove Selected ECPs