

## ASOP No. 8—March 2014

### Appendix 2

#### Comments on the Exposure Draft and Responses

The exposure draft of ASOP No. 8, *Regulatory Filings for Health Benefits, Health Insurance, and Entities Providing Health Benefits*, now titled *Regulatory Filings for Health Benefits, Accident and Health Insurance, and Entities Providing Health Benefits* was issued in June 2013 with a comment deadline of October 15, 2013. Six comment letters were received, some of which were submitted on behalf of multiple commentators, such as by firms or committees. For purposes of this appendix, the term “commentator” may refer to more than one person associated with a particular comment letter. The Task Force on Regulatory Filings and the Health Committee of the Actuarial Standards Board carefully considered all comments received, and the Health Committee and ASB reviewed (and modified, where appropriate) the changes proposed by the task force.

Summarized below are the significant issues and questions contained in the comment letters and the responses.

The term “reviewers” in appendix 2 includes the task force, Health Committee, and the ASB. Also, unless otherwise noted, the section numbers and titles used in appendix 2 refer to those in the exposure draft.

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	
Comment	One commentator was concerned that the proposed revised title for the ASOP may not clearly indicate that this ASOP is intended to apply to a broader definition of health benefits (for example, long-term care or disability insurance), and suggested revising the title to include reference to “accident” or “disability”—for example, <i>Regulatory Filings for Health Benefits, Accident and Health Insurance, and Entities Providing Health Benefits</i> .
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.
Comment	<p>One commentator noted that all references to “reviewing actuaries” are intended to reflect the perspective of the regulatory reviewing actuary only and not the peer-reviewing actuary. In order to clarify that different standards apply to regulatory actuaries as opposed to filing/peer reviewing actuaries, the commentator suggested the following changes to paragraphs 2 and 3 on page v:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revisions to ASOP No. 8 will give guidance to actuaries that must prepare <b>or peer review</b> rate filings under more rigorous state and federal requirements for filing health insurance premium rate increases. It also provides further guidance to actuaries reviewing regulatory filings <b>either as peer reviewers or as regulatory actuaries</b>.</li><li>• ASOP No. 8 was revised to add guidance on the preparation and review of health insurance rate filings for medical lines of business that are required by state or federal regulations. The standard will apply to actuaries preparing <b>or peer reviewing</b> the rate filing, <b>peer reviewing the rate filing</b>, and <b>to actuaries</b> reviewing the rate filing on behalf of state and federal regulators.</li></ul> <p>In addition, the commentator noted that item 6 on page vi should reference section 3.12 rather than section 3.2.10.</p>
Response	The reviewers removed the distinction of peer reviewers or regulatory actuaries in the first paragraph but retained the distinction of three roles in the second paragraph. The definition of “filing actuary” in

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

	section 2.2 of this final ASOP includes reference to peer review activity. In addition, the reviewers made sure the reference is correct.
<b>SECTION 1. PURPOSE, SCOPE, CROSS REFERENCES, AND EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	
<b>Section 1.2, Scope</b>	
Comment	Several commentators noted that in section 1.2 the reference to health filings being defined in section 2.4 instead of 2.5 is incorrect.
Response	The reviewers agree and made sure the reference is correct.
Comment	One commentator suggested that in section 1.2, Scope, the ASB consider including within the scope of this ASOP actuaries who may be called upon to testify and/or review filings on behalf of consumers.
Response	The reviewers agree and added language to include those actuaries.
Comment	One commentator suggested that, in order to draw attention to the primacy of statute/regulation over standards of practice, the last paragraph of this section be revised to state: “This Standard applies to the extent it is not inconsistent with the regulatory requirements with which the filing is to comply. If the actuary departs from the guidance set forth in this standard in order to comply with applicable laws (statutes, regulations, and other legally binding authority), or for any other reason the actuary deems appropriate, the actuary should refer to section 4. It is noted that the final decision as to the approval or disapproval of a filing may not rest ultimately in the hands of the reviewing actuary.”
Response	The reviewers note that the ASOP already contemplates the primacy of applicable law and, therefore, made no change.
Comment	One commentator suggested that the scope of the guidance in ASOP No. 8 should include filings made within the scope of ASOP No. 26, <i>Compliance with Statutory and Regulatory Requirements for the Actuarial Certification of Small Employer Health Benefit Plans</i> .
Response	The reviewers believe that the purpose of filings made within the scope of ASOP No. 26 is different than that of filings made within the scope of ASOP No. 8 and, therefore, retained the exclusion for filings subject to ASOP No. 26.
Comment	One commentator noted that, despite the last sentence in section 1.2, explicit disclosure of such a departure is not included in section 4 and, therefore, recommended adding the following to section 4.1: “k. in all instances where, and the reasons that, the filing actuary departed from the guidance set forth in this standard in order to comply with applicable law (statutes, regulations and other legally binding authority), or for any other reason the actuary deemed appropriate.”
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change to section 4.1(f) of this final ASOP. The reviewers also refer the commentator to ASOP No. 41.
Comment	One commentator suggested that the sentence in section 1.1 that refers to “performing professional services with respect to preparing or reviewing required regulatory filings related to rates or financial projections” and the sentence in section 1.2 that states, “This standard is not meant to provide a complete set of recommended practices for the determination of health rates, financial projection entries, or other numerical information required to be included in health filings” are inconsistent.
Response	The reviewers agree and removed the language from section 1.2.
<b>SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS</b>	
Comment	One commentator stated it was not clear what would constitute a “peer review,” and that adding a definition would be helpful.
Response	The reviewers believed that the term peer review is commonly used and made no change.

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

Comment	One commentator noted the difference between “rate of investment return” and “discount rate” is not clear and suggested that definitions be provided for both of these items.
Response	The reviewers agree and added definitions.
<b>Section 2.1, Filing Actuary</b>	
Comment	Several commentators noted that the reference to section 2.9 should be section 2.7.
Response	The reviewers checked the reference in the final version, and it is now correctly referred to as section 2.9.
Comment	One commentator noted that this section refers to work “on behalf of a health plan issuer” but that there is no definition of “health plan issuer.” The commentator suggested this section refer to “health plan entity” to be consistent with the definition in section 2.5.
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.
Comment	One commentator noted that it could be interpreted that this definition only applies to the actuary(ies) who are ultimately responsible for the filing and believed that it should apply to any actuary who worked in any way on the filing.
Response	The reviewers note that ASOP No. 1, <i>Introductory Actuarial Standard of Practice</i> , section 4.3 requires each individual actuary to be responsible for determining which ASOPs apply to the actuary’s work. When the actuary is only responsible for part of the rate filing development or review, the actuary should follow the appropriate ASOPs that are applicable to the task at hand. Therefore, no change was made.
<b>Section 2.2, Financial Projection</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted an inconsistency in that sometimes instead of “applicable law” reference is made only to “law” (as is in section 3.9) and suggested “or regulation” be removed and a definition be added to explain “law.”
Response	The reviewers agree and modified the language to remove “or regulation” as the scope has a parenthetical making it clear that the definition extends beyond “law.”
<b>Section 2.3, Health Benefit Plan</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that this section defines a health benefit plan to include a broad range of coverages, including vision, disability income, long-term care, etc., but most of the examples in the remaining sections seem to deal primarily with medical insurance. Therefore, the commentator felt that more non-medical examples should be included.
Response	The reviewers note that changes in the prior ASOP No. 8, which covered all lines of business, were reviewed and believe the revised ASOP No. 8 is still appropriate for the lines of business outlined in the scope, and made no change.
Comment	One commentator noted that the reference to “whether on a reimbursement, indemnity, or service benefit basis” should be expanded to “whether on a reimbursement, indemnity, service benefit or other basis” to reflect possibly that other mechanisms may be used, such as capitation or bundled payment systems.
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

<b>Section 2.4, Health Filing</b>	
Comment	One commentator felt that since some companies present substandard rating factors only in their underwriting manuals without referring to them elsewhere, that this section should be revised to read “a. filing of manual rates, rating factors, and underwriting manuals.”
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.
Comment	One commentator felt that an item should be added to the list of rate or benefit filings such as “determinations of the actuarial value or actuarial equivalence.”
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.
<b>Section 2.5, Health Plan Entity</b>	
Comment	One commentator questioned what is the definition of a “health benefit plan sponsor”?
Response	The reviewers note that this is a commonly used term that refers to the entity responsible for the health benefit plan and made no change.
<b>Section 2.6, Regulatory Benchmark</b>	
Comment	One commentator suggested it could be made clearer that the specific quantities referenced (loss ratio or capital ratio) are illustrative examples only and suggested the following rephrasing: “Regulatory Benchmark – A measurement which may be used by the regulatory authority in evaluating a health filing. Possible benchmarks include, but are not limited to, the loss ratio, a capital ratio, or actuarial value.”
Response	The reviewers agree and modified the language.
<b>Section 2.7, Reviewing Actuary</b>	
Comment	Two commentators suggested changing the term “reviewing actuary” to “regulatory actuary” so that it is clear that the reviewing actuary is always the regulatory actuary.
Response	The reviewers believe that “regulatory actuary” is a subset of “reviewing actuary” and made no change.
Comment	One commentator felt that “reviewing actuary” should be defined as an actuary who is responsible for reviewing a health filing on behalf of the health plan issuer. The commentator said; “This would include actuaries employed by the health plan issuer and consulting actuaries, as there seems to be a trend of health plan issuers obtaining independent review of health filings by an actuary either employed by the health plan issuer or by a consulting actuary.” The commentator believes this to be a different role than a peer review.
Response	The reviewers believe that the definitions of “filing actuary” and “reviewing actuary” are clear as written, and made no change.

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

<b>SECTION 3. ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES</b>	
<b>Section 3.1, Introduction</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that the phrase “thus giving the actuary significant discretion to exercise professional judgment” appears to make a distinction between “discretion” and “significant discretion.” What is the reason for including the word “significant” as a modifier to “discretion”? The commentator felt that the use of the modifier would appear to give the actuary a greater degree of latitude than simply indicating that the actuary has discretion. For clarity, the commentator recommend adding: “This Section 3 and the following Section 4 provide guidelines for filing actuaries where the law may be silent as well as in other situations where actuaries have discretion to exercise professional judgment in preparing and reviewing filings.”
Response	The reviewers removed the term “significant” but believe the recommended additional language was not necessary.
<b>Section 3.3, Legal and Regulatory Requirements</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that, in the current ASOP No. 8, the predecessor of the new section 3.3 is a second paragraph of 3.2.1, which deals with the statement of the purpose of the filing. The new 3.3 is more general. The commentator suggests that the greater generality requires some changes in wording.
Response	The reviewers agree and changed section 3.3 and added an item (h) under section 4.
Comment	One commentator recommended editing the second sentence to state “If the actuary believes applicable law is silent or ambiguous on a relevant issue, the actuary should disclose this and should consider obtaining guidance from an appropriate expert.” The commentator also recommended that after this sentence, the following sentence should be inserted: “The name, credentials and qualifications, and guidance received from such an expert should be disclosed.”
Response	The reviewers made revisions based on the first suggestion. With respect to the second, the reviewers do not believe it is necessary to disclose the name, credentials, and qualifications of anyone who was consulted, and made no change.
Comment	One commentator noted that this section indicates that “the actuary should have the necessary knowledge and understanding of applicable law.” The commentator noted that laws and regulations governing health filings are very extensive. The commentator believed that either this standard or a practice note should indicate that it is extremely difficult for an actuary to know the nuances of every law or regulation in every state.
Response	The reviewers believe the actuary has always been required to understand the applicable laws where the filing is being made, and made no change.
<b>Section 3.4, Assumptions</b>	
Comment	Two commentators noted that the introductory paragraph contains inconsistencies and also appears to be very prescriptive. One commentator suggested adding clarification that the assumptions listed be reviewed by the actuary for “necessity and relevancy” to the rate filing.
Response	The reviewers agree and made clarifying changes to this section.
<b>Section 3.4.4, Non-Benefit Expenses</b>	
Comment	One commentator indicated that in the sentence “When estimating the latter amounts, the actuary should consider the health plan entity’s own experience when appropriate, reasonably anticipated internal or external future events, inflation, and business plans” it is unclear why the phrase “when appropriate” modifies only “the health plan entity’s own experience” as opposed to any of the other items.
Response	The reviewers agree with the commentator’s suggestion and removed the phrase “when appropriate.”

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

Comment	One commentator noted that the last sentence states “The actuary should consider the adequacy of the non-benefit expense component of premium rates relative to projected costs.” The commentator went on to say that the same section, however, notes that an acceptable method for reflecting non-benefit costs is the “use of a target loss ratio.”
Response	The reviewers agree and changed “adequacy” to “reasonableness” in sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.7.
Comment	One commentator stated that it is unclear why reference is made only to “relevant industry and government studies.” The commentator believed that other entities such as academic institutions and public interest groups could also have published relevant studies.
Response	The reviewers agree and modified the language to include relevant external studies.
<b>Section 3.4.5, Investment Earnings and the Time Value of Money</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that in the sentence, “The actuary should consider whether to reflect investment earnings and the time value of money in the calculations used in the filings,” the words “whether to reflect” should be removed and that the actuary should be required to consider these factors.
Response	The reviewers believe that there are situations where these considerations are immaterial and made no change.
<b>Section 3.4.6, Health Cost Trends</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that trends are addressed solely in terms of medical insurance. The commentator indicated that there probably should be some mention of LTC or DI. For long-term care the commentator recommended the following: “When long-term care trends are projected, the actuary should consider the frequency, utilization, and duration of future claims by care setting (for example, nursing home, home care, or assisted living facility).”
Response	The reviewers agree and revised the section to be more general, as well as included examples from other lines of business, to address the commentator’s concerns.
Comment	One commentator suggested that a statement indicating that trends may be based on insured or population data should be included.
Response	The reviewers agree and included a sentence in section 3.4.6.
Comment	One commentator noted that the last paragraph states that, “the actuary should select an estimate of the trend based on the actuary’s professional judgment. For example, historical trends may or may not be the best predictor of future trends.” The commentator felt that the paragraph is probably not necessary since the process of selecting assumptions is almost always based on professional judgment.
Response	The reviewers agree and modified the language.
Comment	One commentator noted that this section includes a number of items that should be considered when determining trend. The commentator recommended also including items that should not be considered, essentially identifying factors that are outside of trend. The commentator suggested adding language such as, “In analyzing trend, the actuary should make an effort to remove and separately analyze other factors that affect cost.”
Response	The reviewers agree and revised the language accordingly.
Comment	One commentator suggested adding “provider contracting” to the following: “The actuary should consider changes in benefit provisions and provider contracting when projecting future trends from historical trends, as the change in unit costs and utilization may differ from prior periods.”
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

Comment	One commentator stated that the sentence, “When medical expense trends are projected, the actuary should consider detail by service category (for example, inpatient, outpatient, professional, and drug), separated by cost and utilization, if available, credible, and determined by the actuary to improve the accuracy of the calculation used in the filing” is problematic. The qualifier “if available” can be interpreted in different ways.
Response	The reviewers made changes to clarify the guidance.
Comment	One commentator asked if the qualifier “credible” means that the data needs to be 100% credible, or that less than fully credible data could be used to the extent of its credibility.
Response	As discussed in ASOP No. 25, <i>Credibility Procedures</i> , the reviewers believe that the determination of “credible” is up to the actuary’s professional judgment and, therefore, made no change.
Comment	One commentator stated that, with regard to the phrase “determined by the actuary to improve the accuracy of the calculation used in the filing,” it is unclear how the actuary could make that determination until after the detailed trend data have been reviewed and analyzed.
Response	The reviewers agree and removed the language.
<b>Section 3.4.7, Expected Financial Results, such as Profit Margin/Surplus Contribution, Loss Ratio, or Surplus Level</b>	
Comment	One commentator stated that the last sentence that states “The actuary should consider the adequacy of the profit margin/surplus in relation to current surplus levels” is not universally consistent with current practices nor should it be. The commentator believes that this section should be much less prescriptive than “should consider” with respect to any particular rate filing. Another commentator stated that part of that consideration of profit margin should be consistency between the target return on capital and the investment return on assets.
Response	The reviewers agree with both comments and made appropriate changes to the section.
Comment	One commentator stated it may not be clear to all actuaries what the significance of Profit Margin/Surplus Contribution is. The commentator noted that the last paragraph reads “The actuary should consider whether the provisions for adverse deviation are appropriate to provide a margin for variability and uncertainty in projected health costs. The actuary should consider the cumulative effect of any such provisions built into other assumptions.” The commentator recommended the following language: “The actuary should consider whether the aggregate provisions for adverse deviation are sufficient to cover anticipated costs under moderately adverse experience.”
Response	The reviewers agree and added this language as a new section 3.4.10.
Comment	One commentator stated that the sentence, “When a target return on capital is used, the actuary should consider the relationship between risk and return” could imply that when a procedure other than a target return on capital is used (for example, loss ratio target), the actuary need not consider the relationship between risk and return. The commentator felt that this is incorrect and that the actuary should always consider the relationship between risk and return when determining an appropriate “Profit Margin/Surplus Contribution.”
Response	The reviewers agree and modified the language.

## ASOP No. 8—March 2014

Comment	One commentator stated that the sentences, “The actuary should consider whether provisions for adverse deviation are appropriate to provide a margin for variability and uncertainty in projected health costs. The commentator stated that “The actuary should consider the cumulative effect of any such provisions built into other assumptions” appears to imply that the actuary can include hidden additional profit margins in various places in the filing by using values for various parameters/assumptions that are higher than the expected value. Such a procedure is not appropriate. The commentator felt that; “All the projections in the filing for various costs such as benefits and expenses should be based upon the expected future reasonable values. If the actuary believes that various margins for variability and uncertainty need to be included in the rate, those provisions should be explicitly included as part of the underwriting profit provision instead of being hidden and dispersed in various other components of the rate calculation.”
Response	The reviewers believe that it is up to the actuary to determine the appropriate accounting and actuarial practice for the placement of margins for adverse experience. The reviewers removed the language in section 3.4.7 and added 3.4.10 regarding adverse deviation.
<b>Section 3.4.9, Expected Impact of Reinsurance and Other Financial Arrangements</b>	
Comment	One commentator stated that the sentence “The actuary should consider how risk sharing, risk adjustment, or reinsurance payments should be reflected ...” should be made more expansive. The commentator suggested possible wording: “The actuary should consider how risk sharing, risk adjustment, reinsurance payments, risk corridors and other financial arrangements should be reflected ....”
Response	The reviewers agree and added the phrase “and other financial arrangements.”
<b>Section 3.6, Use of Business Plan</b>	
Comment	Two commentators noted that business plans are not generally reviewed for every rate filing. One commentator suggested that “should consider” be replaced with “may consider” while the other commentator suggested adding “If appropriate, ...”
Response	The reviewers note “should consider” implies only that the actuary consider if business plans are relevant to the rates being filed, and made no change.
Comment	One commentator suggested that if the actuary considered business plans in preparing the filing, it should be explicitly stated in the filing, along with whether the filing actuary used the assumptions contained in the business plan. The commentator felt that; “When the actuary uses the assumptions from the business plan, there should be an explanation of why that was appropriate. Also, when the actuary does not use the assumptions in the business plan, there should be an explanation of why the actuary believed those assumptions were not appropriate for the filing.”
Response	The reviewers note that a business plan is only one potential data point in preparing assumptions for a rate filing and, therefore, made no change.
Comment	One commentator suggested that this section would benefit from language that helps distinguish how business plans should be used to develop rates versus disclosed in filings. The commentator further suggested the addition of the following sentence, “The regulatory actuary should consider requesting this information when it is important to the consideration of rate adequacy for solvency.”
Response	The reviewers believe that the guidance provided by this standard is adequate for appropriate practice, and made no change.

## ASOP No. 8—March 2014

<b>Section 3.7, Use of Past Experience to Project Future Results</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that in this section there is a statement that refers to “claims of a particular service category” but that it may not be clear what the term “service category” refers to.
Response	The reviewers note that in section 3.4.6, the parenthetical identifies “service categories” and made no change.
Comment	One commentator noted that this section indicates that “The filing actuary should update prior earned premium and incurred claim estimates to reflect premium and claim development experience...” but feel that that it should state: “ <i>When appropriate</i> , the filing actuary...”
Response	The reviewers note that in the phrase “in the actuary’s professional judgment” implies “when appropriate” and made no change.
Comment	One commentator recommended adding two more items to the list of items to which any changes may have a material effect on expected future results. Specifically the commentator suggested: One new item (k) would be “changes to federal or state regulations (e.g., risk adjustment, reinsurance, risk corridors, underwriting requirements, and benefit mandates).” The second new item (l) would be “underlying change in medical practice (e.g., changes in medical technology and provider organization).” While this could be included in item (f), listing it separately may help actuaries think about changes to these areas specifically.
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.
Comment	One commentator suggested the following language be inserted between the second and the third paragraphs of section 3.7:  “The actuary should consider the most recent data available for the plan, giving appropriate consideration to the degree of maturity likely to be present in the claim and claim liability reserves. The actuary should consider the principles of ASOP No. 23, <i>Data Quality</i> , in the use and application of the data.”
Response	The reviewers agree and added a sentence to indicate that data should be selected in accordance with ASOP No. 23, <i>Data Quality</i> .
Comment	One commentator suggested adding “The filing actuary should provide adequate documentation for such adjustments” to the paragraph.
Response	The reviewers agree and added section 4.1(i).
Comment	One commentator noted that in the sentence “To the extent that the actuary concludes that the experience data is not applicable or credible for a particular use, the actuary should identify additional sources that are appropriate (see ASOP No. 25, <i>Credibility Procedures</i> )”, both instances of “actuary” be changed to “filing actuary,” feeling the reviewing actuary should not be required to identify additional experience sources for use in the filing.
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.

## ASOP No. 8—March 2014

Comment	One commentator noted that the sentences “The actuary should determine whether past claims experience can be used to project future results. The actuary should also determine the extent to which past experience trends are relevant to assumed future trends” implies that the actuary could choose not to use actual historical claims experience and trends for the filing. The commentator felt that if the actuary makes that determination, there should be an explanation of why such data were not used, since typical actuarial analyses are based on the premise that the historical information forms an appropriate starting basis for making future projections.
Response	The reviewers disagree and made no change.
Comment	One commentator questioned when would “selection of risks” be an appropriate consideration for an actuary updating past experience, unless the actuary was considering selection of risks in the past that is no longer legal?
Response	The reviewers note that selection of risks is still practiced for some of the products covered by this ASOP, such as disability income, long-term care, and grandfathered plans and excepted products under ACA. The reviewers made no change.
Comment	One commentator stated that the sentence, “The filing actuary should update prior earned premium and incurred claim estimates to reflect premium and claim development experience to date when, in the actuary’s professional judgment, the difference is material” is unclear. The commentator went on to say; “Is that referring to a situation where the original data were in error and a correction has been made? Is it referring to a situation where more recent data are available than was originally used in preparing the filing? In any case, how can the actuary know whether “the difference is material” unless the actuary actually uses the new data and compares the results to that obtained from using the prior data? In any circumstance, the reason for a revision of interpretation of the data should be fully documented.”
Response	The reviewers believe the guidance is clear and appropriate, and made no change.
Comment	One commentator suggested that other considerations in selecting trends can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of higher cost sharing on decreasing utilization</li> <li>• Impact of the out-of-pocket expenses</li> <li>• Impact of narrower networks on decreasing utilization</li> <li>• Impact of cost containment or quality improvement initiatives, and</li> <li>• Impact of economic conditions on utilization and unit costs.</li> </ul>
Response	The reviewers determined that cost sharing and out-of-pocket costs are covered in section 3.7(c). The reviewers determined that considerations for narrower networks are covered in 3.7(e). The reviewers added language in section 3.7(m) to address cost containment and quality improvement initiatives, and in section 3.7(n) to address the impact of economic conditions.
<b>Section 3.8, Recognition of Plan Provisions</b>	
Comment	One commentator expressed concern that the expectations of section 3.8 were overly broad and did not represent typical practices of actuaries.
Response	The reviewers disagree with the assertion that actuaries do not typically consider these items. However, the reviewers deleted the section as it duplicated guidance provided in other sections.
<b>Section 3.9, Rating Factors</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted the word “variation” in the first sentence of the second paragraph should be “variations.”
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.

## ASOP No. 8—March 2014

<b>Section 3.10, New Plans or Benefits</b>	
Comment	One commentator suggested changing both instances of “actuary” to “filing actuary,” as the reviewing actuary will not generally have access to the same data resources as the filing actuary.
Response	The reviewers note both the “filing actuary” and the “reviewing actuary” have a role to consider the available data relevant to new plans or benefits, and made no change.
<b>Section 3.12, Regulatory Benchmarks</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that the use of the word “may” is weak and could imply that the rate may not be considered adequate under those circumstances. The commentator went on to say; “In addition, the wording implies that the rates are adequate to pay for the actual costs, when the proper actuarial criterion is that the rates should provide the payment of expected costs. Furthermore, only reasonable costs should be considered in making this determination. Excessive costs due to items such as inflated expenses and inefficient claim practices should be excluded.” Another commentator noted that rates must be considered unfairly discriminatory if they are based on differences that cannot be considered under applicable law or regulation. A third commentator expressed concerns with the phrase “reasonable contingency and profit margins,” and suggested using the term “not unreasonable” instead of “reasonable.”
Response	The reviewers note that this section of the standard relates to regulatory benchmarks set by the regulatory process, and made no change.
<b>Section 3.13, Reasonableness of Assumptions</b>	
Comment	Two commentators expressed concerns that the list of study sources was too narrow.
Response	The reviewers agree and broadened the language.
Comment	One commentator suggested the last sentence of the first paragraph be revised to read, “The reviewing actuary should make a reasonable effort to become familiar with such studies provided by the filing actuary.”
Response	The reviewers believe that both the filing and reviewing actuary should become familiar with such studies, and made no change.
Comment	One commentator noted that section 3.13 allows for the actuary to use his or her professional judgment to determine reasonableness of assumptions, stating that for any given assumption, it may be reasonable to vary the level of review of that assumption based on the materiality of the issue. To address this issue, the commentator suggests adding the following language: “The support for reasonableness should be determined based on the actuary’s professional judgment, using relevant information available to the actuary, <i>and taking into account all aspects of the filing.</i> ”
Response	The reviewers note that ASOP No. 1 includes guidance on the term “reasonable” and determined that the requirement that the actuary’s professional judgment be applied is appropriate. As a result, the reviewers believe that the additional language is not needed, and made no change.
Comment	One commentator noted it may be worth commenting in this section on assumptions that are regulated, as this is covered in section 4.1, but also could be added here in the second paragraph as follows “The filing actuary should use any such assumption only if the actuary believes it is reasonable, <i>unless it is prescribed by applicable law.</i> ”
Response	The reviewers agree and added the phrase to section 3.12 of this final ASOP.

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

Comment	One commentator noted that the sentences, “The filing actuary may rely upon others to provide assumptions for developing the regulatory filing. However, the filing actuary should review the assumptions for reasonableness. The filing actuary should use any such assumption only if the actuary believes it is reasonable” appears to be in conflict with section 4.1(i) which discusses “the disclosure in ASOP No. 41, section 4.3, if the actuary states reliance on other sources and thereby disclaims responsibility for any material assumption or method selected by a party other than the actuary.” The commentator stated that the former appears to indicate that the actuary is responsible for the assumption even if someone else provided it, whereas the later states the actuary can disclaim responsibility for an assumption provided by another party.
Response	The reviewers note that actuaries are always responsible for determining if the assumptions that they relied on are reasonable, unless prescribed by law. ASOP No. 41 requires that if actuaries disclaim responsibility for material assumptions, that disclaimer, and the reasons, must be disclosed. Therefore, no change was made.
<b>Section 3.14, Reliance on Data or Other Information Supplied by Others</b>	
Comment	One commentator suggested deleting “filing” from the first sentence, feeling this section should apply to both filing and reviewing actuaries.
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.
<b>SECTION 4. COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCLOSURES</b>	
<b>Section 4.1, Communications and Disclosures</b>	
Comment	One commentator suggested the following be added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• k. all instances where, and the reasons that, the filing actuary departed from the guidance set forth in this standard in order to comply with applicable law (statutes, regulations and other legally binding authority), or for any other reason the actuary deemed appropriate.</li> </ul>
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.
Comment	One commentator suggested adding that filings should be complete with respect to data templates and other documentation required by the applicable regulatory authority, and submitted in the form and manner defined by that regulatory authority. The commentator felt that the ASOP should specify that this requirement only applies to templates typically completed by the filing actuary or actuary’s staff as, typically, these are the templates based upon financial projections and/or premium rates.
Response	The reviewers note that the scope of this ASOP is limited to the actuarial components of a regulatory filing. The actuary should always follow applicable law, and section 4.1 provides guidance for disclosure in the event that the law requires deviation from the guidance in the ASOP. Therefore, no change was made.
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	
Comment	One commentator noted that the last sentence in the opening paragraph says “Beginning in 2013....” Since HHS promulgated its “10% threshold for unreasonable rate increases” in 2011, should “2013” be “2011” (or perhaps even 2010 with the passage of the ACA).
Response	The reviewers agree and made the change.

**ASOP No. 8—March 2014**

Comment	One commentator noted that clarification related to the discussion of the rate review practice note and addendum is needed and suggested the following language: “The addendum to the practice note addresses a revised HHS form filing called the uniform rate review template (URRT) and actuarial memorandum instructions. The commentator went on to say that the originally published practice note provided guidance on the preliminary justification form, which was replaced by the URRT and actuarial memorandum instructions by HHS.”
Response	The reviewers agree and modified the language.