



## **Preface**

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63 **Consideration of Uncertainty in**  
64 **Making Benefit-Risk Determinations**  
65 **in Medical Device Premarket**  
66 **Approvals, De Novo Classifications,**  
67 **and Humanitarian Device Exemptions**  
68

69 **Draft Guidance for Industry and**  
70 **Food and Drug Administration Staff**  
71

72 *This draft guidance, when finalized, will represent the current thinking of the Food and Drug*  
73 *Administration (FDA or Agency) on this topic. It does not establish any rights for any person*  
74 *and is not binding on FDA or the public. You can use an alternative approach if it satisfies the*  
75 *requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations. To discuss an alternative approach,*  
76 *contact the FDA staff or Office responsible for this guidance as listed on the title page.*  
77

78 **I. Introduction**

79 This guidance document describes the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA or Agency)  
80 current approach to considering uncertainty in making benefit-risk determinations to support  
81 FDA premarket decisions for medical device premarket approval applications (PMAs), De Novo  
82 requests, and humanitarian device exemption (HDE) applications.<sup>1</sup> FDA believes the approach  
83 described in this guidance promotes the public health by helping patients have timely access to  
84 new medical devices meeting the applicable statutory standard for safety and effectiveness,  
85 including that the probable benefits outweigh the probable risks, based on the totality of the valid  
86 scientific evidence.

87  
88 FDA's guidance documents, including this draft guidance, do not establish legally enforceable  
89 responsibilities. Instead, guidances describe the Agency’s current thinking on a topic and should  
90 be viewed only as recommendations, unless specific regulatory or statutory requirements are  
91 cited. The use of the word *should* in Agency guidance means that something is suggested or  
92 recommended, but not required.

<sup>1</sup> FDA has also issued several guidance documents discussing benefit-risk determinations in various contexts (identified in note 17 below), including 510(k) notification and investigational device exemption (IDE) submissions, and those are not addressed in this guidance document.

## 93 **II. Background**

94 The 1976 Medical Device Amendments (Public Law 94-295) to the Federal Food, Drug, and  
95 Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) established a risk-based framework for the regulation of medical  
96 devices. The law established a three-tiered risk classification system based on the risk posed to  
97 patients should the device fail to perform as intended. Under this system, devices that pose  
98 greater risks to patients are subject to more regulatory controls and requirements. Specifically,  
99 general controls are sufficient to provide reasonable assurance of a Class I device’s safety and  
100 effectiveness,<sup>2</sup> while special controls are utilized for Class II devices for which general controls  
101 alone are insufficient to provide reasonable assurance of device safety and effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> The  
102 FDA classifies into Class III devices intended to be used in supporting or sustaining human life  
103 or for a use which is of substantial importance in preventing impairment of human health, or that  
104 may present a potential unreasonable risk of illness or injury, and for which insufficient  
105 information exists to determine that general controls and special controls are sufficient to provide  
106 reasonable assurance of the safety and effectiveness of a device.<sup>4</sup> This highest-risk class of  
107 devices is subject to premarket approval to demonstrate a reasonable assurance of safety and  
108 effectiveness.<sup>5</sup> Even for this highest-risk class of devices, the evidence FDA requires for  
109 premarket approval has long been flexible, varying according to the characteristics of the device,  
110 its conditions of use, the existence and adequacy of warnings and other restrictions, among other  
111 factors.<sup>6</sup> There is generally more flexibility in the amount of clinical evidence needed for devices  
112 than for drugs and biological products, because they are subject to different statutory criteria and,  
113 among other things, the mechanism of action and modes of failure are generally more predictable  
114 and better understood for devices than for drugs and biological products, and the design process  
115 for a device is more often an iterative process based largely on rational design and non-clinical  
116 testing rather than clinical studies.

117  
118 Since 1976, Congress has repeatedly expanded the mandate of FDA, broadening its mission,  
119 making its focus more patient-centric, and making the regulatory paradigms it applies more  
120 flexible. For example, in the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act of 1997  
121 (FDAMA) (Public Law 105-115), Congress expanded FDA’s mission from “to protect public  
122 health” to include “to promote public health.”<sup>7</sup> The Agency has interpreted the latter to include  
123 fostering medical device innovation and facilitating timely patient access to high quality, safe  
124 and effective medical devices. In that same legislation, Congress enacted what have been called  
125 the “least burdensome” provisions for medical devices, to ensure that FDA only requests

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<sup>2</sup> See section 513(a)(1)(A) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(1)(A)).

<sup>3</sup> See section 513(a)(1)(B) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(1)(B)). Special controls were added to the FD&C Act through the Safe Medical Devices Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-629).

<sup>4</sup> See section 513(a)(1)(C) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(1)(C)).

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., section 513(a)(1)(C) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(1)(C)).

<sup>6</sup> See 21 CFR 860.7.

<sup>7</sup> Specifically, FDA’s mission includes “protect[ing] the public health by ensuring that...there is reasonable assurance of the safety and effectiveness of devices intended for human use” and “promot[ing] the public health by promptly and efficiently reviewing clinical research and taking appropriate action on the marketing of regulated products in a timely manner.” Section 1003 of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 393).

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126 information that is necessary to make substantial equivalence determinations for 510(k)s<sup>8</sup> and to  
127 establish device effectiveness for PMAs.<sup>9</sup> In addition, for PMAs, FDA must consider, in  
128 consultation with the applicant, the least burdensome appropriate means of evaluating device  
129 effectiveness.<sup>10</sup> The original least burdensome provisions also included the requirement that the  
130 FDA shall consider whether the extent of data that otherwise would be required for approval of  
131 the PMA with respect to effectiveness can be reduced through reliance on postmarket controls.<sup>11</sup>  
132

133 Congress expanded the least burdensome provisions of the FD&C Act through the Food and  
134 Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA) (Public Law 112-144) and the 21st  
135 Century Cures Act (Cures Act) (Public Law 114-255).<sup>12</sup> For example, section 515(c)(5)(C) of the  
136 FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e(c)(5)(C)), as added by the Cures Act, requires FDA to “consider  
137 the role of postmarket information in determining the least burdensome means of demonstrating  
138 a reasonable assurance of device safety and effectiveness” for PMAs. The least burdensome  
139 provisions do not, however, alter the applicable regulatory standards for marketing  
140 authorizations.<sup>13</sup> FDA describes the guiding principles and approach for the consistent  
141 application of least burdensome principles throughout the medical device total product lifecycle  
142 in the Draft Guidance “The Least Burdensome Provisions: Concept and Principles.”<sup>14</sup>  
143

144 The Agency generally provides marketing authorization for a device when it meets the  
145 applicable standards, including that its benefits outweigh its risks. For example, section 513(a)(2)  
146 of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(2)) states that safety and effectiveness of a device under a  
147 PMA are to be determined in part by “weighing any probable benefits to health from the use of  
148 the device against any probable risk of injury or illness from such use.”<sup>15</sup> The extent of

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<sup>8</sup> See section 513(i)(1)(D) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(i)(1)(D)).

<sup>9</sup> See section 513(a)(3)(D)(ii) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(3)(D)(ii)).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> See section 513(a)(3)(C) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(3)(C)).

<sup>12</sup> See the additional least burdensome provisions of the FD&C Act, sections 513(i)(1)(D)(i) – (iii), 513(a)(3)(D)(iii) – (iv), and 515(c)(5)(A) – (D) (21 U.S.C. §§ 360c(i)(1)(D)(ii)-(iii), 360c(a)(3)(D)(iii)-(iv), and 360e(c)(5)(A) - (D)).

<sup>13</sup> See sections 513(a)(3)(D)(iv), 513(i)(1)(D)(iii), and 515(c)(5)(D) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C.

§§ 360c(a)(3)(D)(iv), 360c(i)(1)(D)(iii), and 360e(c)(5)(D)).

<sup>14</sup> Available at

<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM588914.pdf>. When final, this guidance will represent FDA’s current thinking on the least burdensome provisions of the FD&C Act.

<sup>15</sup> Further, FDA regulation in 21 CFR 860.7(d)(1) states that there is a reasonable assurance that a device is safe “when it can be determined, based upon valid scientific evidence, that the probable benefits to health from use of the device for its intended uses and conditions of use, when accompanied by adequate directions and warnings against unsafe use, outweigh any probable risks.” For further information about device effectiveness, see section 513(a)(3) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(a)(3)) (states that effectiveness is to be determined based on well-controlled investigations or other valid scientific evidence from which “it can fairly and responsibly be concluded by qualified experts that the device will have the effect it purports or is represented to have under the conditions of use prescribed, recommended, or suggested in the labeling of the device”) and 21 CFR 860.7(e)(1) (states that there is a reasonable assurance that a device is effective “when it can be determined, based upon valid scientific evidence, that in a significant portion of the target population, the use of the device for its intended uses and conditions of use, when accompanied by adequate directions for use and warnings against unsafe use, will provide clinically significant results”).

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149 uncertainty of the benefits and risks of a device is a factor we consider when making the benefit-  
150 risk determination that is part of the evaluation of a device in a variety of contexts, including for  
151 PMA approvals, De Novo classifications, 510(k) clearances, HDE approvals, and IDE approvals.  
152 For example, FDA’s guidance on “Factors to Consider in Making Benefit-Risk Determinations  
153 in Medical Device Premarket Approval and *De Novo* Classifications”<sup>16</sup> includes consideration of  
154 patient preference and uncertainty in the process of making such determinations. To better  
155 articulate FDA’s policy on its decision-making in various contexts across the total product  
156 lifecycle, including with respect to different types of submissions for devices, FDA has  
157 published several guidances that demonstrate a flexible, patient-centric, benefit-risk approach,  
158 including the consideration of patient preferences and uncertainty.<sup>17</sup> FDA’s approach is tailored  
159 to the type and intended use of the device and the type of decision we are making. For example,  
160 as a general matter, high-risk and innovative moderate-risk devices will typically need clinical  
161 evidence to show reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness, including that the benefits of  
162 the device outweigh its risks.<sup>18</sup> However, non-clinical performance data, such as bench studies,  
163 studies in animals,<sup>19</sup> and/or computational modeling studies can also provide essential  
164 information on the safety and effectiveness of a device (including its principles of operation, as

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<sup>16</sup><https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM517504.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Factors to Consider When Making Benefit-Risk Determinations for Medical Device Investigational Device Exemptions (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM451440.pdf>); FDA’s Draft Guidance, Benefit-Risk Factors to Consider When Determining Substantial Equivalence in Premarket Notifications [510(k)] with Different Technological Characteristics (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM404773.pdf>) (When final, this guidance will represent FDA’s current thinking on the Benefit-Risk Factors to Consider When Determining Substantial Equivalence in Premarket Notifications [510(k)] with Different Technological Characteristics); Investigational Device Exemptions (IDEs) for Early Feasibility Medical Device Clinical Studies, Including Certain First in Human (FIH) Studies (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM279103.pdf>); Factors to Consider Regarding Benefit-Risk in Medical Device Product Availability, Compliance, and Enforcement Decisions (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/medicaldevices/deviceregulationandguidance/guidancedocuments/ucm506679.pdf>); Qualification of Medical Device Development Tools (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM374432.pdf>); and Patient Preference Information – Voluntary Submission, Review in Premarket Approval Applications, Humanitarian Device Exemption Applications, and *De Novo* Requests, and Inclusion in Decision Summaries and Device Labeling (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM446680.pdf>).

<sup>18</sup> Most low-risk devices are exempt from FDA review before marketing, although manufacturers are still subject to certain requirements. Manufacturers of many moderate-risk devices may obtain marketing authorization by demonstrating that their devices are substantially equivalent to a legally marketed “predicate” device (e.g., a device already cleared by FDA), which can often be achieved through non-clinical testing.

<sup>19</sup> FDA supports the principles of the “3Rs,” to reduce, refine, and replace animal use in testing when feasible. We encourage sponsors to consult with us if they wish to use a non-animal testing method they believe is suitable, adequate, validated, and feasible. We will consider if such an alternative method could be assessed for equivalency to an animal test method.

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165 well as potential failure or malfunction modes). That information can inform the design and  
166 extent of premarket clinical evidence generation.

167  
168 In the HDE provisions in section 520(m) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360j(m)), first enacted  
169 in the Safe Medical Devices Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-629),<sup>20</sup> Congress incorporated greater  
170 uncertainty compared to PMAs. In the HDE provisions in section 520(m) of the FD&C Act,  
171 Congress provided that FDA may grant an exemption from the requirement to demonstrate a  
172 reasonable assurance of effectiveness for devices that meet certain criteria. Therefore, when  
173 compared to a PMA or De Novo request, both of which require a demonstration of reasonable  
174 assurance of safety and effectiveness,<sup>21</sup> there is generally likely to be greater uncertainty  
175 surrounding the benefit-risk profile based on the evidence submitted in an HDE application. This  
176 exemption for humanitarian use devices implicitly acknowledges the challenges in generating  
177 sufficient clinical evidence to demonstrate a reasonable assurance of effectiveness when the  
178 patient population is very small.

179  
180 In addition, Congress has required the application of particular controls, including profit  
181 limitations and the approval of an institutional review board before a device approved under an  
182 HDE can be used at a facility to treat or diagnose patients. However, some of these controls may  
183 have tempered interest in utilization of the HDE pathway by medical device sponsors, and  
184 Congress has scaled back some of the limitations.<sup>22</sup>

185  
186 In 2015, following pilots conducted over four years, FDA established the Expedited Access  
187 Pathway (EAP) Program as a voluntary program for certain medical devices (e.g., devices that  
188 represent breakthrough technologies that provide a clinically meaningful advantage over existing  
189 legally marketed technologies) that address an unmet need in the treatment or diagnosis of life-  
190 threatening or irreversibly debilitating diseases or conditions.<sup>23</sup> Under this EAP program, an  
191 eligible device subject to a PMA could be approved with greater uncertainty about the product's  
192 benefits and risks, provided that, among other requirements, the data still support a reasonable  
193 assurance of safety and effectiveness, including that the probable benefits of the device  
194 outweighed its risks for a patient population with unmet medical needs. For devices subject to  
195 PMA, the Agency has the authority to impose, when warranted, postmarket requirements,

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<sup>20</sup> The Safe Medical Devices Act was enacted on November 28, 1990, and section 520(m) was further amended by FDAMA (Public Law 105-115), the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 (FDAAA) (Public Law 110-85), FDASIA (Public Law 112-144), the Cures Act (Public Law 114-255), and the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017 (FDARA) (Public Law 115-52).

<sup>21</sup> The statutory standards for approval of a PMA include a showing of reasonable assurance that the device is safe and effective. See section 515(d) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e(d)). The De Novo classification process is appropriate for devices that would otherwise be subject to PMA but for which general controls or general and special controls provide a reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness. See section 513(f)(2) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c(f)(2)).

<sup>22</sup> See the Safe Medical Devices Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-629) section 14, which added section 520(m) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360j(m)), and section 303 of FDAAA (Public Law 110-85), section 613 of FDASIA (Public Law 112-144), section 3052 of the Cures Act (Public Law 114-255), and section 502 of FDARA (Public Law 115-52), which further amended section 520(m) of the FD&C Act.

<sup>23</sup> The Breakthrough Devices Program, which FDA established under section 515B of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e-3) as added by the Cures Act and amended by FDARA, supersedes the Expedited Access Pathway Program.



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196 including post-approval studies and postmarket surveillance, as a condition of approval, which  
197 could be used to address this greater uncertainty.<sup>24</sup> In the Breakthrough Device provisions of the  
198 FD&C Act, as added by the Cures Act and amended by the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017  
199 (FDARA), Congress codified and expanded this program to include 510(k) devices.<sup>25</sup> Similar to  
200 the least burdensome provisions, the Breakthrough Device provisions make clear that they do not  
201 alter the standards for substantial equivalence, premarket approval, or granting of a De Novo  
202 request.<sup>26</sup>

203  
204 FDA considers the totality of evidence regarding the extent of probable benefits and extent of  
205 probable risks of a device, including the extent of uncertainty in the benefit-risk information.  
206 FDA also considers the appropriateness of risk mitigations and the collection of postmarket data  
207 to address the uncertainty in the benefit-risk information. FDA’s decisions operate in the context  
208 of a broader healthcare system, where there is inherent uncertainty in the provision of health  
209 care, including uncertainty about how the general benefit-risk profile of a given medical product  
210 or procedure will translate to an individual patient’s health outcome, differences in regional and  
211 local medical practice, and continually evolving standard of care.

212  
213 This guidance recognizes that, to meet FDA’s mission to promote the public health in light of  
214 inherent uncertainties involved in the provision of medical care, it is important to acknowledge  
215 and appropriately address uncertainty in benefit-risk determinations supporting certain FDA  
216 premarket decisions, based on the factors outlined below and the specific context. This includes  
217 considering the applicable patient population’s willingness to accept more uncertainty in a  
218 device’s benefits and risks, particularly when there are no acceptable alternatives available.  
219 Furthermore, the continuous, robust generation of evidence throughout the premarket and  
220 postmarket setting as part of a learning health care system (which itself has inherent uncertainty  
221 in the generation of clinical evidence, e.g., due to limited sample size compared to the intended  
222 patient population and duration of clinical trials) is important to continuously refine our  
223 understanding of how medical devices are used and perform, and corresponding patient  
224 outcomes, within the broader healthcare system, which can inform FDA’s regulatory decision-  
225 making regarding medical devices.

### **III. Scope**

227 FDA has published several guidance documents on factors to consider in benefit-risk  
228 determinations for a variety of regulatory circumstances, including specific application types for

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<sup>24</sup> See sections 513(a)(3)(C), 515(e)(5)(C), 515(d)(1)(B)(ii), and 515B(e)(2)(C) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 360c(a)(3)(C), 360e(c)(5)(C), 360e(d)(1)(B)(ii), and 360e-3(e)(2)(C)); 21 CFR 814.82.

<sup>25</sup> See section 515B of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e-3), as created by section 3051 of the Cures Act (Public Law 114-255) and amended by section 901 of FDARA (Public Law 115-52). See also FDA’s Draft Guidance, Breakthrough Devices Program (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM581664.pdf>) (When finalized, this guidance will supersede “Expedited Access for Premarket Approval and *De Novo* Medical Devices Intended for Unmet Medical Need for Life Threatening or Irreversibly Debilitating Diseases or Conditions,” and will represent FDA’s current thinking on Breakthrough Devices).

<sup>26</sup> See section 515B(g) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e-3(g)).

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229 medical devices.<sup>27</sup> The principles in this guidance apply to FDA’s consideration of uncertainty in  
230 benefit-risk determinations for PMAs, De Novo requests, and HDE applications.<sup>28</sup> This guidance  
231 enhances transparency and consistency in the premarket review process by describing several  
232 factors that FDA considers in assessing the appropriate uncertainty about a device’s benefits and  
233 risks when reviewing these types of premarket submissions. Further, this guidance provides  
234 illustrative examples based on current practice of how the principles for considering uncertainty  
235 could be applied in the context of clinical evidence and when greater uncertainty could be  
236 appropriate in the PMA context, such as PMAs for Breakthrough Devices and PMAs for devices  
237 intended for small patient populations. However, these examples are not intended to imply that  
238 FDA’s consideration of uncertainty in premarket benefit-risk determinations is limited to these  
239 scenarios.

240  
241 The policies in the guidance further FDA’s mission to promote the public health by fostering  
242 medical device innovation and facilitating timely patient access to high quality, safe and  
243 effective medical devices. In addition, the benefit-risk based framework described in this  
244 guidance aims to assure greater transparency, predictability, consistency, and efficiency, using  
245 least burdensome principles.

## 246 **IV. Consideration of Uncertainty in Making Benefit-Risk** 247 **Determinations to Support Certain Premarket Decisions**

248 Generally, in premarket decision-making for devices, there exists some uncertainty around  
249 benefits and risks. There can be uncertainty around the type, magnitude, duration, frequency, and  
250 other aspects of a device’s benefits and risks to patients. The statutory standard for medical  
251 devices, including for certain marketing authorizations, reflects this reality by requiring devices  
252 to have a “reasonable” assurance, rather than an absolute assurance, of safety and effectiveness.<sup>29</sup>  
253

254 The appropriate uncertainty regarding a device’s benefits and risks depends on the type of  
255 decision and its context. As a result, the appropriate uncertainty in a benefit-risk determination to

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<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., Factors to Consider When Making Benefit-Risk Determinations for Medical Device Investigational Device Exemptions (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/ucm451440.pdf>); and Factors to Consider When Making Benefit-Risk Determinations in Medical Device Premarket Approval and De Novo Classifications (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM517504.pdf>).

<sup>28</sup> FDA expects to apply benefit-risk determinations in a limited set of 510(k) clearance decisions. See FDA’s Draft Guidance, Benefit-Risk Factors to Consider When Determining Substantial Equivalence in Premarket Notifications [510(k)] with Different Technological Characteristics (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM404773.pdf>) (When final, this guidance will represent FDA’s current thinking on the Benefit-Risk Factors to Consider When Determining Substantial Equivalence in Premarket Notifications [510(k)] with Different Technological Characteristics.).

<sup>29</sup> The “reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness” standard can be found in section 513 of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360c) and 21 CFR 860.7. We note that the standard for HDEs is different, but they too use language that accepts uncertainty.

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256 support a device premarket decision would depend on the circumstances, including the totality of  
257 information about the device. In determining the appropriate uncertainty in benefit-risk  
258 determinations, FDA considers several factors, as appropriate to the circumstances, including:  
259

- 260 • The extent of the probable benefits of the device, including the type, magnitude,  
261 probability, duration, and frequency of those benefits;  
262
- 263 • The extent of the probable risks of the device, including the severity, type, number,  
264 rates, probability, and duration of those risks;  
265
- 266 • The extent of uncertainty regarding the benefit-risk profile of alternative treatments or  
267 diagnostics (e.g., the strength of the evidence supporting the alternative treatment or  
268 diagnostic);  
269
- 270 • Patients' perspective on appropriate uncertainty about the probable benefits and risks  
271 of the device, if available;<sup>30</sup>  
272
- 273 • The extent of the public health need (e.g., seriousness of the illness; benefit-risk  
274 profile of other available therapeutics or diagnostics, if any, including the current  
275 standard of care; the portion of the target population for whom there would be a  
276 positive benefit-risk profile);  
277
- 278 • The feasibility of generating extensive clinical evidence premarket based on  
279 appropriate considerations, e.g., taking into account the rarity or prevalence of the  
280 disease or condition;  
281
- 282 • The ability to reduce or resolve remaining uncertainty of a device's benefit-risk  
283 profile postmarket (e.g., consideration of FDA's authority to require postmarket data  
284 collection and the likelihood that the necessary postmarket data collection will be  
285 completed within appropriate timeframes);  
286
- 287 • The likely effectiveness of postmarket mitigations, such as labeling, and other tools to  
288 help provide a reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness of the device, as  
289 applicable;  
290
- 291 • The type of decision being made (e.g., there is generally likely to be more uncertainty  
292 surrounding a device's benefit-risk profile based on the evidence submitted in an  
293 HDE application, as compared to a PMA, because the standards for approval are  
294 different); and

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<sup>30</sup> See Patient Preference Information - Voluntary Submission, Review in Premarket Approval Applications, Humanitarian Device Exemption Applications, and De Novo Requests, and Inclusion in Decision Summaries and Device Labeling (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM446680.pdf>).

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- The probable benefits of earlier patient access to the device.

298 FDA's consideration of these factors is intended to be pragmatic, context-dependent (considered

299 in the context of the relevant non-clinical and/or clinical information about the device, e.g.,

300 information about the device's mechanism of action and modes of failure), and consistent with

301 FDA's statutory and regulatory authorities and requirements.

302

303 When considering a De Novo request, FDA expects that the risks associated with the device

304 would play a large role in its analysis of uncertainty, recognizing that the FDA may be able to

305 accept greater uncertainty as to probable benefits either due to the nature of the device (e.g., the

306 device presents minimal risks) or with the imposition of special controls (e.g., the device

307 presents higher risks but special controls mitigate those risks).

308

309 In some cases, resolving or reducing the extent of uncertainty postmarket may not be warranted.

310 For example, the HDE pathway accepts greater uncertainty premarket because the FD&C Act

311 does not require a demonstration of a reasonable assurance of effectiveness; further, the FD&C

312 Act does not require data collection on device effectiveness postmarket.<sup>31</sup> Other cases may

313 include, but are not limited to, cases where the extent of uncertainty is small, risks to patients are

314 minimal, or where postmarket data collection is not feasible and other postmarket controls help

315 to address uncertainty in the benefit-risk issues related to premarket authorization. In any case,

316 the applicable marketing authorization standards under the FD&C Act and FDA regulations must  
317 be met.

## **V. Application: Breakthrough Devices and Devices for Small Populations, Subject to PMA**

320 As noted above, two circumstances where greater uncertainty could be appropriate in the PMA

321 context are Breakthrough Devices subject to PMA and devices intended for small patient

322 populations subject to PMA. In this section, the guidance describes in more detail how FDA

323 intends to apply the policies in this guidance to these two circumstances, and then gives

324 examples providing simplistic illustrations of how the concepts in the guidance could be

325 reflected in premarket study design and postmarket data collection. In any case, the decision as

326 to whether or not such a device meets the statutory standard of reasonable assurance of safety

327 and effectiveness for its intended use would be based on the totality of the valid scientific

328 evidence, including clinical studies and non-clinical testing.<sup>32</sup>

329

### **A. Breakthrough Devices Subject to PMA**

330 For many Breakthrough Devices<sup>33</sup> that are subject to a PMA, in determining that the statutory

331 standards for approval have been met, including that the device's probable benefits outweigh its

332 probable risks, FDA may accept greater uncertainty regarding the device's probable benefits and

---

<sup>31</sup> See section 520(m) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360j(m)). Note that devices approved through the HDE pathway are subject to certain profit and use restrictions. *See id.*

<sup>32</sup> See sections 513(a) and 515(d) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 360c(a) and 360e(d)) and 21 CFR 860.7.

<sup>33</sup> The criteria for breakthrough devices are specified in 515B(b) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e-3(b)).

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333 risks, when appropriate, because of the greater probable public health benefits of earlier patient  
334 access. Further, it may be appropriate to collect additional data in the postmarket setting, rather  
335 than premarket, to address the greater uncertainty about the device’s probable benefits and risks,  
336 provided that the statutory standards for premarket approval are met (“premarket-postmarket  
337 data shift”). This may depend, in part, on the magnitude of the probable public health benefit  
338 (e.g., a greater data shift could be appropriate if the probable magnitude of the benefit is high)  
339 and the likelihood that the data can and will be collected in a timely manner postmarket (e.g., a  
340 large data shift may not be appropriate if postmarket data collection is not likely to occur in a  
341 timely manner or at all).<sup>34</sup> For example, as a general matter, patient enrollment in device  
342 postmarket studies assessing approved indications has proven challenging, because patients do  
343 not need to participate in a clinical study to gain access to the technology. However, if there is a  
344 high likelihood that appropriate, complete data will be collected postmarket in a timely fashion,  
345 FDA may accept greater uncertainty with respect to its premarket benefit-risk determination if  
346 appropriate under the circumstances. For Breakthrough Devices subject to PMA, FDA may also  
347 decide to utilize one or more of the postmarket controls described below.

348  
349 FDA, working with the sponsor, intends to determine the appropriate uncertainty and the  
350 appropriate postmarket controls based on the specific circumstances and the factors outlined in  
351 section IV. For example, if FDA determines that greater uncertainty is appropriate but that  
352 certain postmarket controls are necessary, a sponsor may take that approach, or provide  
353 additional data in the premarket setting that will reduce uncertainty, likely resulting in fewer  
354 postmarket controls. FDA recognizes that there may be different ways for sponsors to  
355 demonstrate reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness and encourages sponsors to  
356 approach FDA early to discuss potential development programs.

357  
358 Breakthrough Devices, by their nature, generally have the potential to address unmet needs in  
359 serious conditions, and patients generally may be more willing to accept greater uncertainty in  
360 benefits and risks with respect to such products.<sup>35</sup> In addition, for devices subject to PMAs, FDA  
361 has the authority to establish postmarket controls, including postmarket data collection.<sup>36</sup>  
362 Accordingly, for PMAs for Breakthrough Devices, FDA may accept greater uncertainty if  
363 appropriate. In any case, the appropriate uncertainty for a given device will depend on the  
364 specifics of the situation. In addition, the postmarket controls described below could apply to  
365 non-Breakthrough Devices subject to PMA, depending on the circumstances.

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<sup>34</sup> See section 515B(e)(2)(C) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e-3(e)(2)(C)).

<sup>35</sup> See Breakthrough Devices Program; Draft Guidance for Industry and FDA Staff (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/UCM581664.pdf>).

<sup>36</sup> See sections 513(a)(3)(C), 515(c)(5)(C), 515(d)(1)(B)(ii), and 515B(e)(2)(C) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 360c(a)(3)(C), 360e(c)(5)(C), 360e(d)(1)(B)(ii), and 360e-3(e)(2)(C)); 21 CFR 814.82. Note also that if FDA finds that a Class II or Class III device is intended to be implanted for more than a year or is a life-sustaining or life-supporting device used outside a user facility, would be reasonably likely to have serious adverse health consequences if the device failed, or is expected to have significant use in pediatric populations, FDA may require postmarket surveillance by order under section 522 of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360l). See also Postmarket Surveillance Under Section 522 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/medicaldevices/deviceregulationandguidance/guidancedocuments/ucm268141.pdf>).



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366 **(1) Timely Postmarket Data Collection**

367 It is critical that data collected in the postmarket setting is reliable, high quality, and collected in  
368 a timely manner. Therefore, when FDA believes postmarket data collection is appropriate, such  
369 as part of a premarket-postmarket data shift, FDA intends to include timely submission of data  
370 from postmarket studies as a condition of approval. FDA already requires postmarket studies as a  
371 condition of approval to provide information on the continued reasonable assurance of safety and  
372 effectiveness of many approved medical devices. These postmarket studies are listed on the  
373 Agency’s website.<sup>37</sup> FDA has authority to withdraw the approval of a PMA if conditions of  
374 approval, including the collection of postmarket data, are not met.<sup>38</sup> FDA intends to work with  
375 the sponsor to reach agreement on appropriate postmarket data collection.

376  
377 However, challenges to timely and appropriate postmarket data collection have hampered the  
378 ability of FDA and sponsors to rely on postmarket data collection in some circumstances. For  
379 example, as previously noted, patients may have less incentive to enroll in postmarket studies  
380 when they can access the device without participating in a clinical study. Where there is a well-  
381 established postmarket data collection mechanism, such as a registry, the FDA and the sponsor  
382 could have more confidence that the requisite postmarket data will be generated as planned. In  
383 such cases, when appropriate, the Agency would consider relying more on postmarket data  
384 collection. FDA encourages interested sponsors to explore the use of “real-world data”<sup>39</sup> sources  
385 so that there is more confidence in generating timely postmarket data and also to ensure that the  
386 sources that sponsors plan to use are sufficiently reliable.

387  
388 For Breakthrough Devices, FDA generally intends to require, as a condition of approval, the  
389 collection of postmarket data within a specific, appropriate timeframe. Timely postmarket data  
390 collection and submission to FDA is critical to provide patients with an assurance that the device  
391 remains reasonably safe and effective. Therefore, the Agency intends to enforce the specific  
392 timeframe on the collection of postmarket data that is included as a condition of approval under  
393 section 515(d)(1)(B)(ii) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e(d)(1)(B)(ii)). Section 515B(e)(2)(C)  
394 of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 360e-3(e)(2)(C)) authorizes, when scientifically appropriate, the  
395 utilization of “timely” postmarket data collection to facilitate expedited and efficient  
396 development and review of Breakthrough Devices. The Agency intends to work with sponsors to  
397 determine an appropriate and reasonable timeframe for the particular device in situations where  
398 postmarket data collection is considered to be appropriate and the least burdensome approach to  
399 allow for marketing authorization.

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<sup>37</sup> Available at [https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfpma/pma\\_pas.cfm](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfpma/pma_pas.cfm).

<sup>38</sup> See 21 CFR 814.46(a). Additionally, failure to comply with post approval requirements under 21 CFR 814.82(a)(2) may cause the device to be misbranded under section 502(t)(2) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 352(t)(2)) and constitute a prohibited act under section 301(q)(1)(B) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. § 331(q)(1)(B)), which could result in seizure, injunction, or other enforcement action.

<sup>39</sup> FDA defines Real-World Data (RWD) as data relating to patient health status and/or delivery of health care routinely collected from a variety of sources. RWD sources include registries. See Use of Real-World Evidence to Support Regulatory Decision-Making for Medical Devices (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/medicaldevices/deviceregulationandguidance/guidancedocuments/ucm513027.pdf>).

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#### 400                   **(2) Transparency**

401 In addition to including timely completion and submission of postmarket evidence for a device  
402 as a condition of approval, FDA can also include as a condition of approval that the device  
403 labeling include certain information, as appropriate.<sup>40</sup> Where postmarket data collection is  
404 required as a condition of approval to address greater uncertainty in the device’s probable  
405 benefits and risks, FDA intends to consider whether it would be appropriate (e.g., whether it  
406 would be helpful to healthcare providers) to include as a condition of approval that the device  
407 labeling describe the postmarket data collection and its purpose.

408  
409 Where applicable, FDA also intends to include such information in the Summary of Safety and  
410 Effectiveness Data (SSED) and to flag postmarket studies that are a condition of approval for the  
411 device on our website.<sup>41</sup> Sponsors are encouraged to work with FDA to appropriately  
412 characterize postmarket data collection and its purpose and other circumstances associated with  
413 their applications. When the additional postmarket data are provided, and FDA determines that  
414 the data are sufficient to assure the continued reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness of  
415 the device, if applicable, FDA intends to make appropriate changes to the SSED and to inform  
416 the sponsor that the sponsor may make appropriate changes to the device’s labeling to reflect the  
417 new information.

#### 418                   **(3) Accountability**

419 In circumstances where FDA has required postmarket data as a condition of approval, the  
420 sponsor generates and submits the requisite postmarket data, and FDA has questions regarding  
421 whether the evidence continues to support a reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness of  
422 the device, the Agency intends to hold an advisory committee meeting.

423  
424 Generally, FDA intends to schedule the meeting in advance – for a time soon after the timeframe  
425 for submitting the postmarket evidence under the conditions of approval – and then cancel the  
426 meeting if it is unnecessary. When the Agency holds an advisory committee meeting, we intend  
427 to take into consideration the recommendations of the advisory committee in determining next  
428 steps, which could include issuing a withdrawal order or, if warranted by the data and agreed  
429 upon by the PMA holder, certain restrictions on the sale and distribution of the device or  
430 narrowing the device’s indications for use.

431  
432 FDA also intends to take appropriate administrative or enforcement action if a sponsor does not  
433 generate and submit the requisite postmarket data within the specified timeframe.<sup>42</sup>

434

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<sup>40</sup> See 21 CFR 814.82.

<sup>41</sup> FDA maintains a list of postapproval studies that are required as a condition of approval since 2005 for a PMA, Product Development Protocol, or HDE. See [https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfpma/pma\\_pas.cfm](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfpma/pma_pas.cfm).

<sup>42</sup> For further discussion of administrative and enforcement actions in such contexts, see Balancing Premarket and Postmarket Data Collection for Devices Subject to Premarket Approval (available at <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/medicaldevices/deviceregulationandguidance/guidancedocuments/ucm393994.pdf>).

435 **B. Devices for Small Patient Populations Subject to PMA**

436 The FDA believes that the approach described above could be applied to some devices intended  
437 to treat or diagnose a small patient population, where it is generally infeasible or highly resource  
438 or time intensive, because of the rarity of the disease or condition, to generate extensive clinical  
439 evidence premarket, and where patients are unlikely to have alternative therapeutics or  
440 diagnostics available. This approach could be applied when the device is not eligible for the  
441 Breakthrough Device Program (e.g., does not treat or diagnose a life-threatening or irreversibly  
442 debilitating disease or condition) or the HDE pathway (e.g., more than 8,000 individuals are  
443 affected annually). This would give the sponsors of eligible devices options for how they could  
444 meet the reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness standard where greater uncertainty  
445 may be appropriate under the circumstances (e.g., smaller premarket data collection with larger  
446 postmarket data collection and other postmarket controls, greater premarket data collection with  
447 smaller postmarket data collection and no or fewer other postmarket controls, or even greater  
448 premarket data collection with no or little postmarket data collection and other postmarket  
449 controls). While there is not a specific number of patients that would be considered a “small  
450 patient population,” this approach could be used for patients with a rare disease or condition or  
451 for patients within a clinically meaningful subset of a broader population.

452 **C. Examples**

453 The following hypothetical examples are solely intended to illustrate what the impact on the  
454 clinical trial size could be under different scenarios of uncertainty, taking into account the factors  
455 described in Section IV and the relevant non-clinical and/or clinical information about the  
456 device. However, the use of a particular fact pattern or a particular value of a clinical trial design  
457 parameter (such as p-value cutoff, one-sided significance level, level of confidence, or  
458 confidence interval) is not intended to convey either FDA policy or a determination by FDA that  
459 such a fact pattern or the application of such a statistical decision threshold is acceptable in a  
460 given situation, and should not be used in isolation to inform the size of a clinical trial and its  
461 statistical analysis plan. Moreover, statistical measures, such as p-values, are not context-  
462 independent measures of the extent of uncertainty regarding a particular device’s clinically  
463 significant benefits and risks. Although the examples below illustrate how uncertainty may be  
464 reflected in the confidence level or one-sided significance level for a clinical study, we note that  
465 uncertainty may be reflected in other ways, when appropriate, based on the circumstances, e.g.,  
466 use of surrogate endpoints.

467  
468 Finally, as noted above, the decision as to whether or not a device provides a reasonable  
469 assurance of safety and effectiveness is based on the totality of the valid scientific evidence,  
470 including clinical studies and non-clinical testing. The appropriate extent of uncertainty of  
471 benefits and risks in a given case will depend on consideration of the factors set forth in Section  
472 IV (e.g., the disease or condition at issue, the availability of alternative products, and risk  
473 mitigations) and other relevant information concerning the device. We anticipate that the greatest  
474 extent of uncertainty discussed in the examples below would only be appropriate under rare  
475 circumstances and, in any case, the sponsor must show, among other things, that the totality of



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476 the valid scientific evidence provides a reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness of the  
477 device.<sup>43</sup>

#### **(1) Breakthrough Devices – PMA**

##### **a. Breakthrough Treatment Device**

480 Consider a Breakthrough Device intended to treat a currently treatment-resistant condition.  
481 Suppose FDA considers the benefit-risk factors of the device for this indication and the relevant  
482 non-clinical and/or clinical information, and determines that a performance goal of 70% of the  
483 treated patients experiencing treatment success is acceptable. Assume the proposed premarket  
484 clinical study for this case is a single arm study. If the lower confidence limit of the success rate  
485 estimate is greater than 70%, the endpoint would be met. The following three cases illustrate  
486 how there could be differences in sample sizes for the premarket clinical study where a  
487 “conventional,” modest, and high extent of uncertainty – that is reflected in the one-sided  
488 significance level for the study – is appropriate under the circumstances, with implementation of  
489 appropriate postmarket controls, including postmarket data collection.

490

##### *Case 1: Conventional Uncertainty*

492

493 In this case, based on the considerations in Section IV and other relevant information, FDA  
494 determines that the one-sided significance level should be 2.5%. If the observed success rate is  
495 74%, we would expect a study with a sample size of **535** patients to be 97.5% confident that the  
496 proportion of successful patients is above 70%<sup>†</sup>.

497

##### *Case 2: Modest Uncertainty, Modest Postmarket Data Collection*

499

500 Based on the relevant considerations, including the feasibility of postmarket data collection,  
501 FDA instead determines that a modest extent of uncertainty is appropriate, provided that there is  
502 a modest postmarket data collection in light of that uncertainty. For this case, assume that the  
503 underlying facts are such that the one-sided significance level could be 5%. With the same  
504 observed success rate of 74%, the sponsor would need only a sample size of **385** patients to be  
505 95% confident that the success rate is above 70%<sup>†</sup>. If the sponsor chooses to conduct this study  
506 and the premarket evidence meets the performance goal, FDA would require a modest  
507 postmarket study as a condition of approval and flag the postmarket study on our website.

508

##### *Case 3: High Uncertainty, Substantial Postmarket Data Collection*

510

511 Suppose FDA instead determines that, based on the relevant considerations, including that the  
512 sponsor has a reliable and appropriate mechanism (e.g., registry, electronic health records) to  
513 complete timely postmarket data collection, an even higher extent of uncertainty is reasonable  
514 under the circumstances, provided that there is an even more substantial postmarket data  
515 collection in light of that uncertainty. To illustrate how this might impact the premarket data  
516 collection, assume that the underlying facts are such that the one-sided significance level could  
517 be 20%. With the same observed success rate of 74%, the sponsor would only need a sample size

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<sup>43</sup> See sections 513(a) and 515(d) of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 360c(a) and 360e(d)) and 21 CFR 860.7.

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518 of **125** patients to be 80% confident that the success rate is greater than 70%<sup>†</sup>. If the sponsor  
519 chooses to conduct this study and the premarket evidence meets the performance goal, FDA  
520 would require robust postmarket data collection as a condition of approval, using a registry or  
521 other appropriate means to help ensure the postmarket commitment is completed. If appropriate,  
522 FDA would also require, as a condition of approval, that the device labeling describe the  
523 postmarket data collection and its purpose. Also as appropriate, FDA would include such  
524 information in the SSED and flag postmarket studies that are a condition of approval for the  
525 device on our website.

526  
527  
528

*Summary: One-sided significance levels and differences in sample size of premarket study*

Scenario	One-sided significance level	Sample size <sup>†</sup>	Postmarket data collection and other measures in light of the greater uncertainty
Case 1: Conventional Uncertainty	2.5%	535	Not applicable
Case 2: Modest Uncertainty, Modest Postmarket Data Collection	5%	385	Modest postmarket data collection as a condition of approval  Flag postmarket data collection on FDA’s website
Case 3: High Uncertainty, Substantial Postmarket Data Collection	20%	125	Robust postmarket data collection using a registry (or other appropriate mechanism) as a condition of approval  If appropriate, inclusion of information about the postmarket data collection and its purpose in labeling as a condition of approval and in the SSED  Flag postmarket data collection on FDA’s website

529  
530

<sup>†</sup> Based on Clopper-Pearson binomial confidence interval

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#### 531 **b. Breakthrough IVD Device**

532 Consider a Breakthrough Device that is an in vitro diagnostic (IVD) laboratory test to be  
533 performed in central laboratories with patient specimens that require an invasive procedure for  
534 the diagnosis of a target condition. The test has two outputs (positive, negative) and the clinical  
535 performance of the binary qualitative test is described by a pair of clinical sensitivity and  
536 specificity, a pair of positive and negative likelihood ratios, and a pair of positive and negative  
537 predictive values for a particular prevalence of the target condition in the intended population.  
538 Suppose FDA considers the benefit-risk factors of the IVD test and the relevant non-clinical  
539 and/or clinical information, and determines that the clinical sensitivity should be  $\geq 95\%$  and  
540 clinical specificity should be  $\geq 97\%$ . The following two cases illustrate how there could be  
541 differences in sample sizes for the premarket clinical study where “conventional” uncertainty and  
542 greater uncertainty – that is reflected in the confidence level for the pair of sensitivity and  
543 specificity for the study – is appropriate under the circumstances, with implementation of  
544 appropriate postmarket controls, including postmarket data collection.

#### 545 546 *Case 1: Conventional Uncertainty*

547  
548 In this case, based on the considerations in Section IV and other relevant information, FDA  
549 determines that the confidence interval for the clinical performance of the IVD test should be  
550 95% with a lower bound of the one-sided 97.5% confidence interval for the clinical sensitivity  
551  $\geq 89\%$  and a lower bound of the one-sided 97.5% confidence interval for the clinical specificity  
552  $\geq 95\%$ . As mentioned above, if the estimate of clinical sensitivity is 95%, a clinical study would  
553 be expected to include 120 subjects with the target condition for estimation of the clinical  
554 sensitivity because the two-sided 95% confidence interval for (114/120) is (89.5%; 97.7%). For a  
555 prevalence of 20% of the target condition in the intended use population, a premarket study  
556 would need 600 subjects (120 subjects with the target condition and 480 subjects without the  
557 target condition). This study size would also be acceptable for the estimation of clinical  
558 specificity because the two-sided 95% confidence interval for (466/480) is (95.1%; 98.3%).<sup>44</sup> So,  
559 the premarket study of 600 subjects would provides information about the clinical performance  
560 of the IVD test, demonstrating clinical sensitivity of 95% and not less than 89% (with confidence  
561 97.5%); clinical specificity of 97% and not less than 95% (with confidence 97.5%) and the  
562 overall confidence of 95% ( $=0.975 \cdot 0.975$ ) for the pair of clinical sensitivity and specificity.

#### 563 564 *Case 2: Greater Uncertainty for Breakthrough IVD Device, Modest Postmarket Data Collection*

565  
566 If, based on the considerations in Section IV and other relevant information (e.g., the new IVD  
567 laboratory test offers significant advantages over existing approved or cleared alternatives, such  
568 as, the new IVD test results can be obtained significantly faster for a condition with time-  
569 sensitive treatment and patient specimens used by the new test do not require any invasive  
570 procedures), FDA instead determines that greater uncertainty is appropriate, provided that there

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<sup>44</sup> Based on the score method binomial confidence intervals. The score method is advantageous in that it has better statistical properties (see reference Altman D.A., Machin D., Bryant T.N., Gardner M.J. Statistics with Confidence. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. British Medical Journal, 2000 and CLSI EP12-A2 document). Score confidence bounds tend to yield narrower confidence intervals than Clopper-Pearson confidence intervals.

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571 is a modest postmarket data collection in light of that uncertainty. For this case, assume that the  
572 underlying facts are such that the appropriate overall level of confidence could be 90% (level of  
573 confidence for the lower bound of clinical sensitivity and specificity is 95%). If the estimate of  
574 clinical sensitivity is 95.0%, it is expected that a premarket study would include 80 subjects with  
575 the target condition for the estimation of clinical sensitivity because the two-sided 90%  
576 confidence interval for (76/80) would be (89.3%; 97.7%). For a condition with a prevalence of  
577 20%, the premarket study would only need to include 400 subjects (80 subjects with the target  
578 condition and 320 subjects without the target condition). If the clinical specificity is 97%, the  
579 two-sided confidence interval for (311/320) would be (95.2%; 98.4%). Thus, a study with 400  
580 subjects would provide information about the clinical performance of the IVD test with a clinical  
581 sensitivity of 95% and not less than 89% (with confidence of 95%); a clinical specificity of 97%  
582 and not less than 95% (with confidence of 95%) and an overall confidence of 90% ( $=0.95 \cdot 0.95$ )  
583 for the pair of clinical sensitivity and specificity.

584  
585

#### *Summary: Confidence levels and differences in sample size of premarket study*

Scenario	Confidence level for both sensitivity and specificity	Number of subjects with target condition present	Study size for prevalence=20%	Postmarket data collection in light of the greater uncertainty
Case 1: Conventional Uncertainty	95%	120	600	Not applicable
Case 2: Greater Uncertainty, Modest Postmarket Data Collection	90%	80	400	Modest postmarket data collection as a condition of approval  Flag postmarket data collection on FDA's website

586

587

### **(2) Devices for Small Patient Populations – PMA**

588 Consider a device intended to treat a disease that has an incidence of 10,000 new cases annually.  
589 The disease is relatively rare, but the patient population is not small enough for the device to  
590 qualify for an HDE. The device does not qualify for designation as a Breakthrough Device,  
591 because the disease is not life-threatening or irreversibly debilitating. However, the indicated  
592 disease is serious, and there are no alternative treatments available. Taking into account the lack  
593 of existing treatment options, the device's potential benefits to the patient population, the rarity  
594 of the disease, and other factors, as well as the relevant non-clinical and/or clinical information,  
595 as discussed in Case 2 and Case 3 below, a greater extent of uncertainty may be appropriate,  
596 provided that there is appropriate postmarket data collection in light of that uncertainty and other  
597 appropriate postmarket controls.  
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599 Suppose FDA considers the benefit-risk factors of the device for this indication and the relevant  
600 non-clinical and/or clinical information, and determines that a performance goal of 60% of the  
601 treated patients experiencing treatment success is acceptable. Assume the proposed premarket  
602 clinical study for this case is a single arm study. If the lower confidence limit of the success rate  
603 estimate is greater than 60%, the endpoint would be met. The following three cases illustrate  
604 how there could be differences in sample sizes for the premarket clinical study where a  
605 “conventional,” modest, and high extent of uncertainty – that is reflected in the one-sided  
606 significance level for the study – is appropriate under the circumstances, with implementation of  
607 appropriate postmarket controls, including postmarket data collection.  
608

#### *Case 1: Conventional Uncertainty*

610  
611 In this case, based on the considerations in Section IV and other relevant information, FDA  
612 determines that the one-sided significance level should be 2.5%. If the observed success rate is  
613 66%, the sponsor would need a sample size of 274 patients to be 97.5% confident that the  
614 proportion of successful patients is greater than 60%<sup>†</sup>.  
615

#### *Case 2: Modest Uncertainty, Modest Postmarket Data Collection*

616  
617  
618 Based on the relevant considerations (e.g., where among other things, patient recruitment would  
619 be challenging and a conventional premarket study appears infeasible), FDA instead determines  
620 that a modest extent of uncertainty is appropriate, provided that there is a modest postmarket data  
621 collection in light of that uncertainty. For this case, assume that the underlying facts are such that  
622 the one-sided significance level could be 10%. With the same observed success rate of 66%, the  
623 sponsor would need only a sample size of **128** patients to be 90% confident that the success rate  
624 is above 60%<sup>†</sup>. If the sponsor chooses to conduct this study and the premarket evidence meets  
625 the performance goal, the FDA would require a relatively modest postmarket study as a  
626 condition of approval and flag the postmarket study on our website.  
627

#### *Case 3: High Uncertainty, Substantial Postmarket Data Collection*

628  
629  
630 Suppose FDA instead determines that, based on the relevant considerations, including that the  
631 sponsor has a reliable and appropriate mechanism (e.g., registry, electronic health records) to  
632 complete timely postmarket data collection, an even higher extent of uncertainty is appropriate  
633 under the circumstances, provided that there is an even more substantial postmarket data  
634 collection in light of that uncertainty. To illustrate how this might impact the premarket clinical  
635 study, assume that the underlying facts are such that the one-sided significance level could be  
636 20%. With the same observed success rate of 66%, the sponsor would only need a sample size of  
637 **65** patients to be 80% confident that the success rate is above 60%<sup>†</sup>. If the sponsor chooses to  
638 conduct this study and the premarket evidence meets the performance goal, FDA would require,  
639 as a condition of approval, a relatively robust postmarket data collection, using a registry or other  
640 appropriate means to help ensure the postmarket commitment is completed. If appropriate, FDA  
641 would also require, as a condition of approval, that the device labeling describe the postmarket  
642 data collection and its purpose. Also as appropriate, FDA would include such information in the  
643 SSED and flag postmarket studies that are a condition of approval for the device on our website.

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*Summary: One-sided significance levels and differences in sample size of premarket study*

Scenario	One-sided significance level	Sample size <sup>†</sup>	Postmarket data collection and other measures in light of the greater uncertainty
Case 1: Conventional Uncertainty	2.5%	274	Not applicable
Case 2: Modest Uncertainty, Modest Postmarket Data Collection	10%	128	Modest postmarket data collection as a condition of approval  Flag postmarket data collection on FDA’s website
Case 3: High Uncertainty, Substantial Postmarket Data Collection	20%	65	Robust postmarket data collection using a registry (or other appropriate mechanism) as a condition of approval  If appropriate, inclusion of information about the postmarket data collection and its purpose in labeling as a condition of approval and in the SSED  Flag postmarket data collection on FDA’s website

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<sup>†</sup> Based on Clopper-Pearson binomial confidence interval