April 6, 2020

The MMS will continue to monitor developments related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the response by state and federal agencies. For current information, including updates from the NEJM, visit the dedicated page on the MMS website: massmed.org/covid-19.

As a reminder, physicians may continue to email questions to the MMS for assistance. For information on developments related to the COVID-19 response and resources available from the state and federal agencies, send questions to dph@mms.org. For assistance with practice management and sustainability, telemedicine, and payer relations, send questions to pprc@mms.org.

Public Health

DPH revises COVID-19 guidance

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has revised its Testing of Persons with Suspect COVID-19 Guidance. DPH also released new Comprehensive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidance, based upon the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, to clarify the PPE that health care personnel use in clinical care areas. DPH is adopting a universal facemask use policy for all health care personnel and recommends that a facemask, eye protection, isolation gowns, and gloves be used when caring for an individual who is presumed or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19. View the new guidance here.
In addition, DPH recently released and updated the following COVID-19 isolation, quarantine, and clearance documents that provide information and clarify the actions, restrictions, and criteria required by these important public health practices.

- [Information sheet: How to Self-quarantine and Self-isolate](#)
- [Revised Guidance on Discontinuation of Home Isolation](#)
- [Information and Guidance for Persons in Quarantine due to COVID-19](#)
- [Information and Guidance for Persons in Isolation due to COVID-19](#)
- [Revised Guidance for Allowing Asymptomatic Health Care Personnel and Emergency Medical Technicians to Work Following a Known Exposure to COVID-19](#)

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**MA DPH weekly informational calls on COVID-19 for MMS members**

The Medical Society requested and was granted two opportunities last month for our member physicians to engage the Department of Public Health (DPH) on informational calls regarding COVID-19. These calls have been valuable to members and DPH has now agreed to conduct weekly calls with MMS members.

The next call will take place on **Thursday, April 9 at 3:30 p.m.** and subsequent Thursdays to follow at the same time.

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**Practice Management**

**Updated: MAHP FAQs on telemedicine, reimbursement**

In response to your frequently asked questions about telemedicine coverage and reimbursement, the Massachusetts Medical Society sought answers directly from the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans. See links below for the most recent updates.
Information has been updated as of April 3, 2020, and the FAQ for MAHP plans has been updated with additional answers.

- Please click here for updated answers to FAQ from MAHP plans (4/3/20).
- The MAHP Provider Communications Chart has been updated. Please click here to view this updated document (4/3/20).
- The Plan Specific Coverage Chart has been updated to include a column with diagnosis codes for Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. Please click here to view this updated document (4/3/20).

For questions about telemedicine or financial sustainability, please contact pprc@mms.org.

ICD-10-CM official coding guidelines for COVID-19 April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the final guidelines for the new diagnosis code U07.1, COVID-19, effective April 1 to September 30, 2020. To learn more, click here.

New video available on Medicare coverage and payment of virtual services

CMS released a video providing answers to common questions about the Medicare telehealth services benefit. CMS is expanding this benefit on a temporary and emergency basis under the 1135 waiver authority and Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. Click here to view.
COVID-19 emergency declaration blanket waivers for health care providers

CMS has issued broad waivers to assist in the national COVID-19 response. These waivers impact all provider types and generally remove the regulatory burdens that could restrict access to care. The blanket waivers include Hospice, Long-Term Care Facilities and Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) and/or Nursing Facilities (NFs), Home Health Agencies (HHAs), Hospitals, Psychiatric Hospitals, and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs), including Cancer Centers and Long-Term Care Hospitals (LTCHs). Click here to learn more.

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Personal Wellness & Well-being

Virtual self-care support groups

Physician Health Services will host virtual self-care support groups from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday through April 30. Interested physicians should email phs@mms.org for more information and the Zoom invite.

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More Educational Resources

Virtual panel: “Confronting Xenophobia and Supporting Our Asian Community During COVID-19”

With increasing attacks against Asians and Asian-Americans, the MGH Radiology Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, the MGH Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the MGH Office for Equity and Inclusion will be conducting an expert virtual panel and discussion entitled “Confronting Xenophobia and Supporting Our Asian Community During COVID-19” on Thursday, April 9 from 12-1 p.m. EST. This virtual panel and discussion will provide a historical, national, and local perspective on xenophobia in the context of COVID-19. All are welcome.
What: Virtual panel and discussion on "Confronting Xenophobia and Supporting Our Asian Community During COVID-19."
When: Thursday, April 9 from 12-1 p.m. EST.
Who: Clinicians/Researchers/Trainees/Staff.
How: Please click here to participate in this online event.

Contact Anand Narayan with additional questions.

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