March 17, 2020

Events and developments related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to unfold quickly. In order to provide physicians, other health care providers, and patients with a central resource for current information about the status of the pandemic here in Massachusetts, we have introduced a dedicated e-newsletter, Planning and Preparedness.

Our goal is to provide MMS members and others with timely, authoritative information that will help physicians to provide effective care to their patients, while planning for their own safety and the safety of their respective teams.

Through Planning and Preparedness, the MMS will plan to issue regular updates with breaking news on the public health, regulatory, payer relations and practice management fronts.

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**Public Health**

**COVID-19 updates and resources available on MMS website**

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.

If you have questions, we will bring them to the appropriate stakeholder for an answer. Please send questions to president@mms.org.
**Practice Management**

**MMS and MHA send letter to Division of Insurance**

The Massachusetts Medical Society and the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association together authored a letter to the Massachusetts Division of Insurance to seek adjustments to certain insurance requirements during the COVID-19 response. The letter called for clarity related to the DOI bulletin (2020-02) designed to guide insurers around changes related to COVID-19. Read more »

**Division of Insurance issues bulletin on telemedicine, COVID-19 testing**

The Massachusetts Division of Insurance, in response to the emergency order issued March 15 by Governor Charlie Baker, has issued a bulletin to commercial insurers, Blue Cross Blue Shield and HMOs. The bulletin provides a broader definition of telehealth and guidance on how to meet the DOI’s expectations for coverage of medically necessary telehealth services related to testing for and treatment of COVID-19. Read more »

**Board of Registration in Medicine and telemedicine**

The Board of Registration in Medicine, at the strong urging of the MMS, adopted an emergency policy to clarify that it shall not require a face-to-face encounter between the physician and the patient prior to health care delivery via telemedicine. This important clarification—especially in light of broad expansions of telehealth coverage by MassHealth and private insurers—should give physicians confidence in expanding telehealth for clinically appropriate medical services. Read more »

**Government Guidelines**
Gov. Baker Executive Order will allow telemed services across state lines

Gov. Baker announced Tuesday an additional Executive Order allowing for the provision of telemedicine to patients across state lines. The Medical Society will provide additional details as they become available.