



PLANNING and PREPAREDNESS

RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

RESOURCES FOR PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS



MASSACHUSETTS
MEDICAL SOCIETY

March 18, 2020

Massachusetts Medical Society leading the way

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@massmed.org.

Public Health

Working closely with the Mass. Department of Public Health

On behalf of our patients, our members, and the entire medical community, your medical society is working closely with the Department of Public Health to provide the clinical expertise needed and to ensure the voice of our physicians is being heard at this critical time. Yesterday, Tuesday, March 17, the medical society provided an opportunity for our member physicians to engage with the DPH on an informational call regarding COVID-19. More than 1,300 members participated. This call included Dr. Monica Bharel, DPH Commissioner; Dr. Lawrence Madoff, Medical Director of the DPH Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences; and Dr. Catherine Brown, State Epidemiologist. Key physician concerns regarding testing for COVID-19 and PPE shortages were addressed. Additional opportunities to engage with DPH are being planned. We will follow up shortly with a curated list of answers to questions posed by our physicians during the call and subsequently.

Updates on visitor restrictions from Mass. Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

Updated guidance on policies and procedures for restricting resident visitors in nursing homes and rest homes and personal protective equipment recommendation updates during the COVID-19 outbreak. [Read more »](#)

Compounding over-the-counter hand sanitizer

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy has authorized Massachusetts pharmacies and pharmacists to compound and sell hand sanitizer over the counter (“OTC”). Pharmacies are directed that the compounded OTC hand sanitizer may only be sold to end-users and not to other retail establishments. [Read more »](#)

Practice Management

Prescribing during remote/telemedicine practice FAQs

In light of changes made around telemedicine, several questions have been raised regarding prescribing guidelines. Please [click here](#) for a review of those asked most frequently:

- Can I prescribe medication when caring for a patient via telemedicine?
- If I am practicing telemedicine and I cannot hand my patient a paper prescription, how do I go about prescribing a federally controlled substance?
- If I do not have an electronic prescribing platform for federally controlled substances, can I call the prescription into the pharmacy?
- If I am practicing telemedicine and I cannot hand my patient a paper prescription, how do I go about prescribing a non-federally controlled substance (known as Schedule VI in MA)?
- What else should I consider when prescribing electronically or by phone?

- Will this change in 2021?

Government Guidelines

Limited waiver of some HIPAA sanctions

Following President Trump's declaration of a nationwide emergency over the Coronavirus, or COVID-19, Department of Health and Human Service Secretary Alex Azar issued a limited waiver of certain HIPAA sanctions to improve data sharing and patient care during the pandemic. [Read more »](#)

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