



PLANNING and PREPAREDNESS

RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

RESOURCES FOR PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS



MASSACHUSETTS
MEDICAL SOCIETY

March 20, 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 the [MMS Department of Health Policy and Public Health](#).

Public Health

Bureau of Substance Addiction Services issues guidance for Opioid Treatment Programs

DPH's Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) provided guidance to support Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) with providing necessary medication for patients with opioid use disorder. During this State of Emergency, OTPs will have flexibility pertaining to Take Home doses of Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD). In order to take these medications home, patients must have a lockable take-home container and written instructions on keeping their medication secure. BSAS also received a blanket exception from SAMHSA on behalf of OTPs to provide up to 28 days of Take Home medication for stable patients or 14 days of Take Home medication for patients who are less stable but who the OTP believes can safely manage such quantities of medication at home. Take Home medication decisions are at the discretion of the OTP's medical director and clinical team. This guidance is offered to minimize the need for

close personal contact and further states that curbside dosing, telehealth services, and home delivery of medication may be exercised as appropriate. [Read more »](#)

Hospital management of coronavirus complications

Harvard Medical School will offer a series of daily webinars featuring HMS faculty addressing care delivery during the coronavirus pandemic. The series will run Monday, March 23 – Thursday, March 26; 1:00 p.m. EDT. [Read more »](#)

Practice Management

Division of Insurance prescription drug coverage update

Medicare, MassHealth, and commercial payers have begun to relax their prescription drug coverage requirements during this public health emergency. Below is a high-level review of the policies with details linked. Additional guidance is forthcoming from the Division of Insurance. Check back for more details.

Medicare Part D

CMS has given guidance to Part D sponsors. Part D sponsors may relax their “refill-too-soon” edits. They may also allow an affected enrollee to obtain the maximum extended-day supply available under their plan, if requested and available. Reimbursement for prescriptions, out-of-network pharmacies, home and mail delivery of Part D drugs and prior authorization can be [found here](#). Each sponsor plan will have further details. [Read more »](#)

MassHealth

Effective for dates of service beginning March 14, 2020, pharmacies may dispense up to a 90-day supply of a prescription drug if requested by a MassHealth member or that member's prescriber as long as sufficient quantity remains on the prescription to support the quantity being filled. This policy does not apply to drugs that require Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) reporting, behavioral health medications, antibiotics, IV medications and certain other drugs designated by MassHealth (e.g., drugs for which quantity limits have been individually established for clinical reasons).

MassHealth will also allow early refills of existing prescriptions for drugs as long as at least one refill remains on the prescription. If a pharmacy receives a denial for an early refill, the pharmacy should place a "13" in the Submission Clarification field (NCPDP field 420-DK) to override the denial. For additional requirements for prescribing, please check the MassHealth All Provider Bulletin 289. [Read more »](#)

Commercial Plans/Medicare Advantage Plans

Based on an overview of commercial health plan policies, each plan is making arrangements for 30-day refills and 90-day refills. [Read more »](#)

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