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April 1, 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](https://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](#).

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## Public Health

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### MMS, Betsy Lehman Center, and BORiM introduce COVID-19 resource

We are pleased to share “COVID-19 Information for Massachusetts Medical Office Practices,” a new publication co-produced by the Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety, the Massachusetts Medical Society, and the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine. This resource synthesizes current COVID-19 recommendations, guidance, and tools from state and federal authorities that are of particular relevance to the medical office setting. Its purpose is to support you in making informed decisions about adapting your practices over the course of this public health crisis to keep your patients and staff, yourself, and the community safe. It includes information about:

- Preparing for modified office practice
- Managing urgent on-site patient visits

- Supporting the emotional needs of patients, clinicians, and staff

This publication is also available on the Betsy Lehman Center's website and will be updated regularly. [Read more »](#)

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## Protocol for testing patients with suspected COVID-19

As both State and Commercial Laboratories' testing capacity increases, DPH is issuing a reminder and an update to all health care providers on the protocol for testing patients with suspected COVID-19.

First, DPH encourages health care providers to provide tests to all patients that fall under Categories 1-8 as detailed in the PUI guidance issued by DPH. [Read more »](#)

Additionally, DPH would like to remind health care providers that they can send collected specimens in Categories 1-6 of the PUI guidance to the SPHL, and specimens in ALL categories 1-8 to the Broad Institute. Broad has significant testing capacity and is typically turning around test results in 1 day. In order to submit specimens to The Broad, please follow the submission process detailed here. [Read more »](#)

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## MGH and BIDMC: Combined Grand Rounds, April 2

This week's Medical Grand Rounds' COVID-19 series will feature Palliative Care experts and the growing role of that discipline in the response to the pandemic. Speakers include Vicki Jackson, MD, Emily Rubin, MD, Juliet Jacobsen, MD, from Mass General; Mary Buss, MD, PhD, and the Rev. Kathleen Rimer from BIDMC; and Isaac Chua, MD, from Dana-Farber and Brigham & Women's Hospital. [Learn more »](#)

Event date: April 2, 2020

Livestream time: 8 a.m.

Please note: This event will be videotaped and available for later viewing on MGH's website.

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## Practice Management

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### Telemedicine visit how-to's (video)

Before you start your telemedicine visit, the MMS Committee on Sustainability of Private Practice member Dr. Katherine Atkinson shares her quick tips on how to conduct a telemedicine visit. [Watch here »](#)

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### Telemedicine visit checklist for physicians: Preparing for the visit

As part of the MMS Telehealth Initiative, we are creating resources to support you with your transition to telemedicine. [Click here](#) to see a sample checklist that you can use while you are preparing for your visit.

The Telehealth Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Physicians Foundation, the American Medical Association, the Florida Medical Association, and the Texas Medical Association. The initiative's vision is to "support physicians nationwide in implementing telehealth to ensure that all practices are operating efficiently and facilitating positive experiences for both physicians and patients."

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### New Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services policies

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a number of new policies to help physicians and hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The policies include Medicare coverage for telephone services, significant additions to the list of covered telehealth services (such as emergency visits), and greater clarity on the use of

remote patient monitoring for acute conditions like the novel coronavirus. A [CMS fact sheet](#) and [press release](#) provide an overview of the new policies.

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## Government Guidelines

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### DEA issues guidance on managing patients with opioid use disorder

*From the American Medical Association:*

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) late yesterday issued guidance to DEA-registered physicians providing new flexibility for physicians managing patients with opioid use disorder. The new guidance permits physicians and other health professionals with a waiver allowing them to prescribe buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder to issue these prescriptions to new and existing patients based on an evaluation via telephone. The new policy is effective from March 31 for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. This guidance removes a considerable barrier for many patients during the national emergency and, importantly, allows them to stay at home. [Read more »](#)

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## Personal Wellness & Well-being

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### 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](mailto:phs@mms.org) for more information and the Zoom invite.

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### Self-care for front-line responders

To help front line responders, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Thrive Global and CAA are putting together a first responders care series. [Click here](#) to view tips

on self-care, stress management, mental wellbeing, and the importance of connections. If you have concerns or questions about your practice, contact [pprc@mms.org](mailto:pprc@mms.org) .

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## Media Inquiry

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Are you in a non-traditional home office? Share a photo with the Globe

The Boston Globe is collecting images of people's makeshift home workspaces that they've put together to deal with this crisis. Would you be willing to take a photo of your home workspace and write a sentence or two about the challenges you've encountered working from home? The photos would be part of a Globe package that includes professionals from many fields - tech, music, engineering, even have a ballet dancer and a Red Sox player (he built a batting cage in his barn). [Read more »](#)

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## MMS MediaWatch

Did you know the MMS puts out each morning a collection of relevant health care-related media coverage with a focus on Massachusetts-based news? MMS MediaWatch arrives in inboxes each morning at 7:30 a.m. If you'd like to receive it, you can [sign up here](#) .

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