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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

Patient advocacy group shares resource to help residents maintain access to medications

Many Massachusetts residents are concerned about accessing the medicines they need during the pandemic due to shortages and disruptions to regular care. The Medical Society's partner organization Health Care for All, a patient advocacy group, created a helpful [resource](#) as a guide to support people in understanding their rights and how to effectively maintain access to their prescription medications. Additionally, the resource explains insurance coverage requirements for residents with the following types of coverage: MassHealth, Health Safety Net, Medicare, and private insurance. The resource also includes tips on how to prepare your medicine during an emergency, as well as

general information on the COVID-19 emergency. The resource, *Accessing Prescription Drugs During the COVID-19 Health Crisis*, is also available in [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#). Please feel free to share widely with your patients.

Practice Management

Paycheck Protection Program update

As part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Congress created the Small Business Administration [Paycheck Protection Program](#) (PPP). Due to the national financial distress, the program could reach its top limit and run out of funding by the end of this week.

More than 1.3 million Paycheck Protection Program loans have been approved, with a total value of [more than \\$296 billion](#), through Wednesday afternoon. As of April 15, 2020, Congress is working to increase funding for the program by another \$250 billion and the Federal Reserve announced it would back another \$250 billion in loans. The Massachusetts Medical Society recommends that interested physicians continue to pursue local lenders so they are in a good position when new funding is released. MMS will continue sharing information when the additional funding is approved.

Government Guidelines

Massachusetts Health Connector: Open enrollment extended through May 25, 2020

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Massachusetts Health Connector announced an extended enrollment period for uninsured Massachusetts residents through May 25, 2020. The Health Connector is working to ensure that Massachusetts residents losing their jobs and job-based health coverage can swiftly and easily make their way into health coverage through the Health Connector. In Massachusetts, we are especially fortunate to have the unique ConnectorCare program, which connects qualifying Massachusetts

residents with affordable health coverage with low or \$0 premiums and low co-pays and no deductibles.

The Health Connector has created a [new webpage](#) that includes all the information someone would need to get into coverage after having lost employment/employment-based coverage – it even includes a detailed FAQ for people trying to understand their different coverage options (e.g., COBRA, Health Connector, etc.). Additionally, the Health Connector has created shopping and resource [guides](#) with information on insurance options for the unemployed, which are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese.

Physician Wellness

National Academy of Medicine shares wellness resources for clinicians

In the face of the unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying global public health emergency, the National Academy of Medicine shared some [strategies](#) to support the health and wellbeing of clinicians during the COVID-19 outbreak. NAM's [Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience](#) compiled a list of strategies and resources. [Click here](#) to learn more. Additionally, the [MMS Task Force on Physician Burnout](#) is committed to supporting physicians' wellness and wellbeing.

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