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April 7, 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.

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

Massachusetts /Region 1 Partnership for Regional Disaster Health Response launches website

The Massachusetts /Region 1 Partnership for Regional Disaster Health Response (MA/Region 1 RDHRS) recently launched the MA/Region 1 RDHRS website, www.rdhhs.org, which includes a webpage dedicated to COVID-19 tools and guidance available for [download](#). The resources are intended for use by hospitals, public health departments and other health professionals responding to COVID-19. The MA/Region 1 RDHRS aims to optimize clinical surge capacity and provide operational expertise to support health care disaster response.

MA DPH weekly informational calls on COVID-19 for MMS members

The Medical Society was granted two opportunities last month for our member physicians to engage the Department of Public Health (DPH) on informational calls regarding COVID-19. These calls have been valuable to members and DPH has now agreed to conduct weekly calls with MMS members.

The next call will take place on **Thursday, April 9 at 3:30 p.m.** and subsequent Thursdays to follow at the same time.

Practice Management

Accelerated or advanced payments to providers

We have been monitoring the CMS expansion of the Accelerated and Advance Payment Program for financial hardship relief for Medicare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have recently learned from the MAC-NGS that all practices need to include in their applications (1) the amount of payment requested, and (2) when applying as a group, be sure to submit your group billing NPI on the application.

For further instructions and to learn more:

- [The Accelerated or Advanced Payments to Providers Instruction](#)
- [NGS Accelerated Payment Process webinars](#)
- [Accelerated/Advance Payment Request Form](#)
- FACT SHEET: [Expansion of the Accelerated and Advance Payments Program for Providers and Suppliers During COVID-19 Emergency](#)

For specific questions call the COVID-19 Accelerated/Advance Payment Hotline: National Government Services (NGS) - Jurisdiction 6 & Jurisdiction K: Telephone Number: 1-888-802-3898 Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CT.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act waives coinsurance and deductibles for additional COVID-19 services

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act waives cost-sharing under Medicare Part B (coinsurance and deductible amounts) for Medicare patients for COVID-19 testing-related services. These services are medical visits for the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) evaluation and management categories described below when an outpatient provider, physician, or other providers and suppliers that bill Medicare for Part B services orders or administers COVID-19 lab test U0001, U0002, or 87635.

Cost-sharing does not apply for COVID-19 testing-related services, which are medical visits furnished between March 18, 2020 and the end of the Public Health Emergency (PHE); that result in an order for a COVID-19 test; are related to furnishing or administering such a test or to the evaluation of an individual for purposes of determining the need for such a test; are in any of the following categories of HCPCS evaluation and management codes:

- Office and other outpatient services
- Hospital observation services
- Emergency department services
- Nursing facility services
- Domiciliary, rest home, or custodial care services
- Home services
- Online digital evaluation and management services

[Learn more »](#)

Introducing the telehealth implementation playbook

The AMA Telehealth Implementation Playbook was designed to support physicians and care teams adopting telehealth services and empower patients and the broader community to experience the benefits of virtual care. [Click here to download.](#)

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) is actively working in collaboration with the Physicians Foundation (PF), American Medical Association (AMA), Florida Medical Association (FMA), and Texas Medical Association (TMA) to support physicians interested in implementing telehealth in their practices through the Telehealth Initiative.

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