August 17, 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 NEJM, visit the dedicated page on the MMS website: massmed.org/covid-19.

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**Public Health**

Seven-step guide on self-measured blood pressure monitoring

There has been a rapid increase in the use of telehealth services by many health systems, organizations, and medical practices since the COVID-19 pandemic began. By using self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) monitoring, physicians and other health professionals can help patients with hypertension achieve and maintain their blood pressure goals, whether care is delivered in-person or using telehealth. [Download the guide »](#)

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**Practice Management**

Video: Implementing team-based care effectively within telemedicine

The American Medical Association (AMA) spoke with health experts about implementing team-based care within telemedicine and its importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Click here](#) to watch.
MassHealth offers payment for COVID-19 specimen collection and testing

To facilitate the testing of MassHealth members suspected of having COVID-19, and in recognition of the unique costs incurred by providers collecting specimens, MassHealth implemented provider flexibilities to allow separate billing and reimbursement for COVID-19 specimen collection and testing services. Read more »

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts to issue more than $100 million in premium relief to insured customers and members

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts announced that it will return $101 million in premium refunds and anticipated rebates to its customers and members as a result of lower than anticipated health care costs during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The refunds supplement the $116 million Blue Cross invested to support its members, customers, clinical partners, and the community throughout the pandemic, bringing the company's COVID-related financial commitments to more than $217 million.

Credits will be applied in September and reflected on the next invoice for fully insured employer groups and members (including under-65 direct pay and Medex members) and will total 15% of their May 2020 medical premium. Before the end of the year, Medicare Advantage members will receive a one-month "premium holiday" during which they will not be charged their monthly premium.

Application deadline for Phase 2 General Distribution funding is August 28, 2020

On July 20, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a public notice about new reporting requirements for certain providers who accepted one or more payments exceeding $10,000 in the aggregate funding from the Provider Relief Fund (PRF). The public notice advised recipients that additional details about data elements would be provided by August 17, 2020; however, the Health Resources and Services
Administration (HRS) is continuing to refine its data elements, delaying the release of new information until after August 17, 2020. Providers will still be given PRF reporting instructions and a data collection template with the data elements necessary for relief applications before the new reporting system is available, which is currently scheduled for October 1, 2020. Providers should continue to check the HHS website for updates.

UnitedHealthcare COVID-19 treatment and cost share guidance

UnitedHealthcare is waiving member cost sharing for the treatment of COVID-19 until October 22, 2020, for Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, and Individual and Group Market fully insured health plans. Implementation for self-funded customers may vary. If a member receives treatment under a COVID-19 admission or diagnosis code between February 4, 2020, and October 22, 2020, UnitedHealthcare will waive cost sharing (copays, coinsurance, and deductibles) for the following:

- Office visits
- Urgent care visits
- Emergency department visits
- Observation stays
- Inpatient hospital episodes
- Acute inpatient rehab
- Long-term acute care
- Skilled nursing facilities

If a member receives treatment under a confirmed positive diagnosis of COVID-19 or COVID-19 admission between February 4, 2020, and October 22, 2020, providers will need to use code U07.1. For a full list of associated codes and sequencing codes for COVID-19-related visits, see the ICD-10-CM Official Coding and Reporting Guidelines.

For members with a confirmed positive diagnosis of COVID-19, cost sharing (copays, coinsurance, and deductibles) is waived for COVID-19 office visits including telehealth visits, initial office visits, post-inpatient transitional visits, and other visits where COVID-19 is on the claim as a diagnosis. Office visits for conditions not related to COVID-19 are not waived for cost sharing, such as an existing condition or newly diagnosed conditions not related to COVID-19.
DOI and CHIA meeting for providers: testing, telehealth, and prior authorization

The Division of Insurance (DOI) and the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) hosts regular meetings to offer providers an opportunity to raise questions and concerns related to Governor Baker's emergency order commercial insurance provisions.

The next meeting will focus on testing, telehealth, and prior authorization and will be recorded for later viewing.

- Date: Thursday, August 27
- Time: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. EDT
- [Meeting URL](#)
- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501

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860 Winter Street, Waltham Woods Corporate Center, Waltham, MA 02451-1411
781-893-4610 | 781-893-3800 | Member Information Hotline: 800-322-2303 x7311

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