August 31, 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.

Public Health

Registration open: "COVID-19 and School Reopening" forum

This virtual forum will provide an opportunity for physicians of all specialties to hear from experts and ask questions. Forum sponsors include the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians, the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Physicians.

- Date: Wednesday, September 9
- Time: 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Register today »

AMA video: A look at the challenges ahead as kids head back to school
The American Medical Association (AMA) talks to pediatricians about the impact of COVID-19 on children, including the challenges with kids going back to school.

- [Part 1 »](#)
- [Part 2 »](#)

---

**Government Guidelines**

**MMS & MHA seek extension of prior authorization waiver**

On Thursday, August 27, The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) and the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association (MHA) wrote to the commissioner of the Massachusetts Division of Insurance (DOI), Gary Anderson, to request an extension of all the provisions in Bulletin 2020-21 until at least December 31, 2020 (current expiration date is Sept. 30, 2020), so health care providers can remain fully devoted to patient care and patients can access care quickly and without administrative delays. Bulletin 2021-21 waives prior authorization for any scheduled surgeries and behavioral health or non-behavioral health admissions at acute care and mental health hospitals. It also seeks Carrier resources to assist hospitals with discharge planning, and among other expectations, that Carriers explore ways to streamline coding and billing policies to reduce the administrative complexity of coding for claims. [Read more »](#)

---

**Practice Management**

**Blue Cross Blue Shield MA resources on billing E/M services**

To help educate and inform practices on E/M billing, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBS MA) is implementing Change Healthcare’s Coding Advisor solution (Coding Advisor) starting in September. This is an educational program to support a practice.

**What’s Coding Advisor and what will my practice receive?**
Coding Advisor will review the use of billing for certain services for all providers submitting claims to Blue Cross. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Chiropractic services
- Complex services
- E/M codes
- Psychotherapy assessments
- Modifier 25 billing

Coding Advisor will contact qualifying providers on behalf of Blue Cross with a series of communications which may include:

- Mailed letters with reports to review claim activity
- Educational phone calls from Coding Advisor’s professional coders
- Claim status messaging through the Change Healthcare Clearinghouse (when applicable)

Through this program, Coding Advisor will monitor billing practices and will send updated reports periodically. They may contact a practice to identify coding discrepancies and to provide customized coding education. If you have questions, please call Coding Advisor Customer Support at (844) 592-7009, Option 3.

---

**HHS extends provider relief fund deadlines; Physicians have until Sept. 13 to apply**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is again extending the deadline for physicians to apply for the Provider Relief Fund for both Medicare and Medicaid providers. Physicians now have until September 13, 2020, to apply. This deadline applies to the targeted distribution for Medicaid providers as well as Medicare providers who missed the previous deadline to apply for funding from the second $20 billion tranche of the $50 billion general distribution.

For further assistance with your application, please use the UnitedHealthcare Provider Relief hotline number: (866) 569-3522.  [Read more »](#)
BMC HealthNet Plan reimbursement for specimen collection

In addition to the laboratory analysis, BMC HealthNet will reimburse the following providers for specimen collection billing either G2023 or G2024:

- Independent clinical laboratories
- Physicians
- Acute outpatient hospitals
- Community health centers
- Family planning agencies
- Rapid testing sites (drive-thru testing site)

BMC HealthNet Plan will also reimburse eligible providers an additional payment when billing modifier “CG” along with G2023 or G2024. The CG modifier can only be applied when, in addition to collecting the specimen, the provider:

1. Has a qualified ordering clinician present at the specimen collection site available to order medically necessary COVID-19 tests.
2. Ensures that the test results (and any initial follow-up counseling, as appropriate) are provided to the member, either directly or through the member's ordering clinician.

For Senior Care Options (SCO) members:

- In accordance with Medicare, BMC HealthNet Plan will reimburse the following providers:
  - Independent labs: bill with code G2023 or G2024.
  - Physicians and non-physician practitioners: bill with code 99211 for services furnished incident to their professional services for both new and established patients.
  - Outpatient hospitals: bill with code C9803 to bill for a clinic visit dedicated to or including specimen collection.

For more information, click here.
United Health Care policy, protocol, and program delays

In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, United Health Care is delaying the implementation of the following programs, policies, protocols, and site of service reviews. Read more »

Seminar: Clinical best practices and the tele-physical exam

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is hosting a seminar as part of its Telemedicine Hack Curriculum, which aims to accelerate telemedicine implementation for ambulatory providers.

- Date: Wednesday, September 2
- Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET
- Register here »

Follow us on:

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn | Instagram

© 2020 Massachusetts Medical Society. All rights reserved.
860 Winter Street, Waltham Woods Corporate Center, Waltham, MA 02451-1411
781-893-4610 | 781-893-3800 | Member Information Hotline: 800-322-2303 x7311

To ensure delivery of all Massachusetts Medical Society communications, please add vitalsignsthisweek@mms.org to your email address book or Safe Sender List. If you are still having problems receiving our communications, see our white-listing page for more details.

| Unsubscribe |