December 28, 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

CDC: Vaccination considerations for persons with underlying medical conditions

Adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from SARS-CoV-2. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to people with underlying medical conditions provided they have not had a severe allergic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine.

Read more

Epidemiologists answer questions about COVID-19 and mutations

Epidemiologists Ilse Levin, DO, MPH, and Harris Pastides, PhD, MPH, discuss some of the lingering questions around COVID-19, including what we know about the disease
and its mutations, transmissions from holiday gatherings, the possibility of creating a "bubble" that works, and when we can expect some normalcy.

**AMA resources about COVID-19 transmission for patients**

The American Medical Association (AMA) published two new resources on what patients need to know regarding COVID-19 transmission and wearing face masks:

- COVID-19 transmission: Patient-facing information (PDF)
- What patients need to know about wearing face masks (PDF)

**COVID-19 vaccines: Update on allergic reactions, contraindications, and precautions**

During this Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) call, clinicians will review the recommendations for COVID-19 vaccine use in certain populations. Attendees will learn more about the recent reports of anaphylaxis following vaccination, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's updated clinical considerations around contraindications and precautions to vaccination.

- Date: Wednesday, December 30, 2020
- Time: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET
- Webinar ID: 161 287 7602
- Passcode: 483914

**Practice Management**
Medicare FFS claims: 2% payment adjustment (sequestration) suspended through March

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act suspended the payment adjustment percentage of 2% applied to all Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) claims from May 1 through December 31, 2020. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, signed into law on December 27, extends the suspension period to March 31, 2021.

Steps to prepare your practice for COVID-19 vaccination

Unsure how to ready your practice for COVID-19 vaccination? The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) encourages you to follow these first steps:

- Identify the lead person at your practice for COVID-19 vaccination planning and implementation.
- Register with the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS). You can confirm registration at miishelpdesk@mass.gov.
- Once MIIS is completed, submit an electronically signed Mass. COVID-19 Vaccination Program (MCVP) enrollment form. You can confirm that your facility has signed and electronically submitted the MCVP enrollment form by contacting the DPH Vaccine Unit at dph-vaccine-management@massmail.state.ma.us.
- For FAQ about the enrollment form, click here.

The MMS is aware that hospitals, health centers, and some of the larger multispecialty group practices received the first round of the vaccine. The DPH anticipates that the next cohort will include private practicing non-affiliated COVID-facing primary care practices and their staff.

For details about the MCVP Guidance for Healthcare Providers and Organizations, click here.