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

Public Health

FDA authorizes first COVID-19 and flu combination test for use with home-collected samples

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the first diagnostic test for at-home collection of patient samples to detect both COVID-19 and influenza A and B. The FDA authorized Quest Diagnostics RC COVID-19 +Flu RT-PCR test for prescription use with the Quest Diagnostics Self-Collection Kit for COVID-19 +Flu by individuals who are suspected of respiratory viral infection consistent with COVID-19 when home collection is determined to be appropriate by an individual’s healthcare provider.

Read more

December 11 deadline: Bulk purchase with online marketplace PPE.Exchange
As a strategy to help members secure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE), the Massachusetts Medical Society has partnered with the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association (MHA) and the online PPE marketplace, PPE.Exchange.

This second bulk purchase through PPE.Exchange offers BYD NIOSH-approved N95 respirators and 3-Ply surgical masks – ASTM Level 3. Organizations may purchase one or both items.

**BYD Care N95 Particulate Respirator**  
Item Number: DE2322  
Size: One size  
Price*: Approx. $3 per mask or Approx. $2,888/case.  
Minimum Order Quantity: 1 case (1pc/bag; 20pcs/box; 960pcs/case)

**BYD Care Single-Use Surgical Mask**  
Item Number: FE2311X  
Size: Adult (one size)  
Price*: Approx. $0.20 per mask or Approx. $400/case  
Minimum Order Quantity: 1 case (10pcs/bag; 50pcs/box; 2000pcs/case)

*Exact pricing for each item to be determined following the pre-order period. All organizations will be notified of final pricing before orders are finalized.

**How it Works**

- Please complete this [pre-order form](#) by **Friday, December 11** and select the quantity of each item desired.
- **Monday, December 14**: You will receive an email with information about final costs and a link to securely pay for your purchase.
- **Thursday, December 17**: The order closes and all payments must be complete. Orders will then be fulfilled by PPE.Exchange within three weeks. Orders will be shipped directly to the purchaser’s location.

If you need help with the purchasing process, please attend our tutorial on **Thursday, December 10 at 3:00 p.m.** To pre-register for the webinar, [click here](#).
AMA President Dr. Bailey discusses COVID-19 vaccine development in new video

In this new COVID-19 update, American Medical Association (AMA) President Susan R. Bailey, MD, recaps her discussion with Peter Marks, MD, PhD, Director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), about the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) process and physician confidence in a COVID-19 vaccine.

Watch now

APHA, National Academy of Medicine webinar: COVID-19 conversations

Join the National Academy of Medicine and the American Public Health Association (APHA) for the 16th COVID-19 Conversations webinar, which will discuss the next steps for ensuring that COVID-19 vaccines reach the public—including overcoming vaccine hesitancy, ensuring a robust supply chain, and communicating clearly and consistently.

The webinar will feature experts including:

- Paul Offit, Director, Vaccine Education Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Katie Greene, Visiting Policy Associate, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy
- Julie Swann, Department Head, Edward P. Fitts Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, North Carolina State University
- Noel Brewer, Professor, Department of Health Behavior, University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health
The panel discussion will be followed by a Q&A session with the webinar audience. This webinar has also been approved for 1.5 continuing education credits for CPH, CME, CNE, or CHES.

- Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020
- Time: 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. EST

Register

Practice Management

The future of state telehealth policy

The National Governors Association has released a white paper examining state policies around telehealth. This paper summarizes the types of telehealth policy flexibilities provided by states and the federal government during the COVID-19 pandemic and longer-term considerations for Governors regarding the impact of such policies on care delivery and payment.

Read more

Medicare Part B payment for COVID-19 vaccines and certain monoclonal antibodies

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released a set of toolkits for providers, states, and insurers to help the health care system deliver these products once available. These resources are designed to increase the number of providers that can administer the products and ensure adequate reimbursement from Medicare while making it clear to private insurers and Medicaid programs of their responsibility to cover these products at no charge to beneficiaries.

Read more
Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA: Vaccines and pharmaceutical treatment for COVID-19

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts follows federal and state-mandated requirements for COVID-19 treatment coverage. The article below clarifies when vaccines and pharmaceutical treatments for COVID-19 are covered.

Read more

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