December 9, 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

December 14 forum: “COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts”

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) will host an informational forum, “COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts,” featuring Dr. Eric Rubin, editor-in-chief of the New England Journal of Medicine and NEJM Group, and Dr. Paul Biddinger, Medical Director for Emergency Preparedness at Massachusetts General Brigham, who serves as the chair of Governor Baker’s Advisory Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination. The program will also include a question-and-answer session moderated by MMS president Dr. David Rosman. Medical experts, including Dr. Simone Wildes, chair of the MMS Committee on Diversity and vice-chair of the MMS Committee on Public Health, and Dr. Asif Merchant, chair of the MMS Committee on Geriatric Medicine, will join the panel.

The program is free. However, advance registration is required.

- Date: Monday, December 14, 2020
Massachusetts updates quarantine recommendations and return to work guidance

Massachusetts has updated its quarantine and return-to-work recommendations to align with new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The quarantine recommendations are based on recent CDC data showing that shortened quarantine periods result in only a small chance that someone may develop COVID-19 after leaving quarantine. In addition, the return-to-work guidance clarifies that certain sectors may continue to work during their quarantine period only when (1) it's necessary to preserve critical societal functions, and (2) workers are asymptomatic and have not tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

Vaccine information for health care professionals

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new resources about the COVID-19 vaccine that involve planning, allocation, distribution, administration, storage & handling, and patient education.

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 assistance 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](#).

For any questions on orders, or how PPE.Exchange works, please contact Jennifer Day at [jday@mms.org](mailto:jday@mms.org) or MHA’s Kim Stevenson at [kstevenson@mhalink.org](mailto:kstevenson@mhalink.org).
December 10 webinar: Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee

On December 10, the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research’s Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee will discuss the Emergency Use Authorization of Pfizer/BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine.

- Date: Thursday, December 10, 2020
- Time: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET

Attend online

February 1 deadline: MIPS extreme and uncontrollable circumstances exception application

To further support clinicians during the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) extended the 2020 Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Exception application deadline to February 1. For the 2020 performance year, because of the emergency, MIPS eligible clinicians, groups, and virtual groups can submit an application to reweigh one or more performance categories to 0%. If you have concerns about the effect of the COVID-19 emergency on your performance data, including cost measures, apply and cite COVID-19 as the reason for your application.

Read more

Request reimbursement for COVID-19 testing and treatment of uninsured
Health care providers who (1) have conducted COVID-19 testing, (2) provided treatment for uninsured individuals with a COVID-19 primary diagnosis on or after February 4, 2020, or (3) provided COVID-19 vaccine administration to uninsured individuals once available, can electronically request claims reimbursement generally at Medicare rates. Steps include enrolling as a provider participant, checking patient eligibility, submitting patient information, submitting claims electronically, and receiving payment via direct deposit.

Wellness and Well-being

January 7 webinar: “Staying Healthy, Fit, and Connected During the Pandemic”

This free webinar, hosted by the New England Rural Health Association (NERHA), is designed to help rural audiences enduring medical and social isolation stay healthy. Learning objectives include:

- Understand the basis of wellness, specifically during times of isolation and restrictions
- Recognize signs of stress in ourselves and others
- Review safe and sustainable strategies to improve self-care, enhance wellness, and manage stress

Event details:

- Date: Thursday, January 7, 2021
- Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET

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