February 1, 2021

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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**Practice Management**

**Vaccine reimbursement for uninsured**

Massachusetts has one of the best rates of health insurance coverage in the U.S. – a full 97 percent of individuals have some form of public or commercial coverage – but for the remainder, some providers have expressed uncertainty about whom to bill for COVID-19 vaccinations. Patients receiving a vaccine do not have to pay for it, but they are encouraged to bring their insurance card to wherever they are getting the shot so the provider can bill the appropriate insurer. Last week, the state reminded providers that if they give the vaccine to an uninsured individual, they can visit the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to fill out a reimbursement form.

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**CMS, HHS, CDC COVID-19 resource update**
As COVID-19 vaccines begin rolling out across the country the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is taking action to protect the health and safety of our nation’s patients and providers and publishing updates on the latest COVID-19 resources from Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and CMS.

With information coming from many sources, CMS has compiled resources and materials to help you share important and relevant information on the COVID-19 vaccine with the people that you serve. You can find these and more resources on the COVID-19 Partner Resources page, the HHS COVID Education Campaign page, and on the CDC Resources for Health Care Providers page. In addition, CMS released a COVID-19 Provider Toolkit to ensure health care providers have the necessary tools to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care COVID-19 update

- **Cost-sharing:** Harvard Pilgrim is waiving member cost share for viral testing and is covering COVID-19 treatment in full through March 31, 2021 for fully-insured commercial and Medicare Advantage members in all states.
- **Coding guidance:** Harvard Pilgrim recently updated its COVID-19 Testing, Treatment and Vaccine Coding Grid to include additional codes for COVID-19 vaccines and to provide guidance on the use of the U07.1 COVID-19 diagnosis code and certain Z codes with regard to cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatment being waived for members.
- **COVID-19 vaccines:** The provider resource page includes information on cost-sharing for vaccines, referral/authorization for vaccines, provider reimbursement and vaccine coding guidance.
- **Monoclonal antibody treatment:** Harvard Pilgrim covers medically necessary monoclonal antibody treatment without prior authorization for the treatment of
mild to moderate COVID-19 in adult and pediatric patients with positive COVID-19 test results who are at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 and/or hospitalization (for dates of service beginning Nov. 9, 2020). For commercial members, submit claims to Harvard Pilgrim; for Medicare Advantage members, submit claims to Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs).

FDA updated COVID-19 FAQs, under the vaccine section

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) added a new frequently asked question (FAQ), “Can the FDA help me get a COVID-19 vaccine,” to its COVID-19 FAQs, under the vaccine section. The answer is no. The FDA’s authority includes authorizing or approving COVID-19 vaccines for use in the United States. The FDA is not responsible for vaccine distribution. It is recommended that you go to the CDC website to find your state and local health departments that are responsible for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. If you are contacted directly by someone who says they are from the FDA about a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, it is a scam.