

If you're not already a subscriber, [sign up](#) to receive *Planning and Preparedness*.



July 22, 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

“Stop the Spread” testing continuing in 8 communities

Free COVID-19 testing sites are open in eight communities as part of the Commonwealth’s “Stop the Spread” initiative. The sites will remain open until August 14 in communities that (1) exceed state averages in total COVID-19 cases and positive test rate, and (2) have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. Residents of Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, and New Bedford are urged to take advantage of these new testing sites, even if they are asymptomatic. Though these sites are based in the communities above, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth. Visit mass.gov/stopthespread to find out more.

FDA COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Along with other federal, state, and local agencies across the country, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continues the critical work to protect public health during the COVID-19 pandemic. FAQ pages are available on the following topics:

- [Hand sanitizers and COVID-19](#)
 - [Diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2](#)
 - [Medical gloves](#)
 - [Surgical mask and gown shortage](#)
 - [Ventilators](#)
 - [Food safety and COVID-19](#)
 - [Face masks and surgical masks](#)
-

Educational Programs & Resources

Digital spread of pandemic misinformation and lies

In this video edition of the American Medical Association's *Journal of Ethics* "Ethics Talk," journal editor-in-chief Dr. Audiey Kao talks with Dr. Vish Viswanath, professor of health communication in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, about the digital spread of health misinformation and falsehoods during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Part 1: <https://youtu.be/TVEO4ebgTD4>
 - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/JpBiDxIYWJA>
-

Practice Management

Application extension: Provider Relief Funds for Medicaid and CHIP physicians and organizations

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) extended the deadline for eligible Medicaid and CHIP physicians and organizations to [submit information](#) and apply for funding from the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund to August 3, 2020 (originally July 20).

HHS is distributing approximately \$15 billion to eligible physicians who have not previously received a payment from the Provider Relief Fund. The payment amount will be at least 2 percent of reported gross revenue from patient care, and the final amount will be determined based on submitted data, including the number of Medicaid patients served. HHS created a [fact sheet](#) to explain the application process and answer frequently asked questions.

Tufts Health Plan update

The following telehealth/telemedicine policy was implemented for all Tufts Health Plan products to prevent members from needing to leave their homes to receive care. This policy applies to all diagnoses and is not specific to a COVID-19 diagnosis.

- Beginning for dates of service after July 20, 2020, pre-COVID-19 coverage and cost share will apply for out-of-network (OON) telemedicine. Until then, the policies in this section will apply. In-network telehealth guidelines will remain in place until further notice.
 - Tufts Health Plan will compensate in-network providers at 100 percent of their contracted rate for services rendered in person, as specified in provider agreements, until further notice. The telehealth reduction will not apply.

The following applies to all Tufts Health Plan products, except for Tufts Health Freedom Plan:

- Tufts Health Plan is waiving all referral requirements for in-network care, effective until further notice.
- If a member's plan requires a referral or authorization to receive OON services, Tufts Health Plan is waiving such requirements for OON services related to the following, regardless of member's plan type, effective until July 20, 2020:
 - COVID-19
 - Inpatient care
 - Post-acute care, including inpatient rehab, skilled nursing facilities, long-term acute care (LTAC), and/or home care following an inpatient admission
 - Primary care or outpatient behavioral health services

- Tufts Health Plan is waiving the referral requirement for the above services related or unrelated to a COVID-19 diagnosis.
- The in-network cost share will be applied at the authorized level of benefits for all OON services listed above unless it is for a service that Tufts Health Plan is waiving cost share, effective until July 20, 2020.

To learn more, [click here](#).

Tomorrow: DOI & CHIA meeting for providers on testing and telehealth

The Division of Insurance (DOI) and the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) hosts regular meetings to offer providers an opportunity to raise questions and concerns related to Governor Baker's emergency order commercial insurance provisions.

The next meeting will focus on testing and telehealth and will be recorded for later viewing.

- Date: Thursday, July 23
 - Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT
 - [Meeting URL](#)
 - Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
 - Passcode: 501
-

COVID-19 Medicare Part B advanced payment, repayment and recoupment process webinars

If you requested and received accelerated or advanced payments from Medicare due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, this learning session is for you. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) expanded the accelerated and advance payment program for financial hardship relief during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Accelerated or advanced payments need to be repaid to the Medicare Trust Fund. During this webinar, National Government Services (NGS) will review the repayment and recoupment process.

- Date: Thursday, August 13
- Time: 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. EDT
- [Register](#)

MMS In The Media

Dr. Rosman addresses racism and public health, speaks on PPE supply

MMS President Dr. David Rosman made two recent media appearances related to the pandemic. Last week, Dr. Rosman joined Boston City Councilor Michelle Wu and Allegheny County Councilwoman Olivia "Liv" Bennett on The Appeal's "[The Briefing](#)" program to discuss how racism threatens public health and the next steps for our health care system. On July 21, Dr. Rosman appeared on [WHDH-TV 7News](#) to discuss the need for an adequate supply of personal protective equipment in Massachusetts, especially in the event of a resurgence of virus cases.

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.

[Subscribe by Email](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage Your Profile](#) | [Forward to a Friend](#) | [Advertise](#)