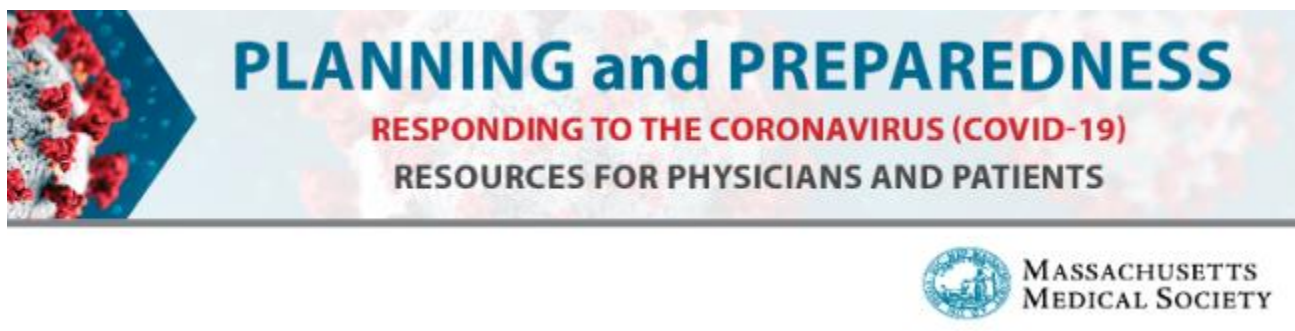


If you're not already a subscriber, [sign up](#) to receive *Planning and Preparedness*.



May 18, 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 the NEJM, visit the dedicated page on the MMS website: massmed.org/covid-19.

Government Guidelines

Baker Administration releases EOHHS reopening approach and new guidance for health care providers

Today, May 18, 2020, the Baker Administration released its Phase I plan for reopening Massachusetts, including a specific approach regarding the [first phase of expanding medical practice](#) (summarized [here](#)), and new [guidance for non-acute care hospital health care providers](#). The Medical Society was pleased to participate in the Reopening Provider Advisory Group that contributed to this guidance.

With the [modification](#) of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's elective invasive procedures order, health care providers who attest (form available [here](#)) that they meet clinical, capacity, safety standards, and governance requirements may resume providing high-priority preventative care, such as pediatric care, immunizations, and chronic disease management for high-risk patients, and urgent procedures or services that cannot be delivered remotely and would lead to high risk or significant worsening of the patient's condition if deferred. In this phase, providers will continue to maximize

telehealth and provide services virtually whenever possible and are expected to use their clinical judgment to determine if a procedure or service should be done in person in the immediate future.

Contingent on sufficient statewide hospital capacity being available, hospitals and hospital-licensed and Federally Qualified Health Centers may begin this reopening starting on May 18, and all other providers may begin on May 25.

The Governor's prior declaration of a state of emergency is still in place: the accompanying Executive Orders related to matters such as telemedicine and patient cost-sharing remain effective, but continue to be subject to change. The MMS will continue to advocate for their continuation, and will communicate relevant updates. If you have questions about this information, please contact pprc@mms.org.

Massachusetts Medical Society supports HEROES Act

Last week, Massachusetts Medical Society President Dr. Maryanne C. Bombaugh released a [statement in support of the HEROES Act](#), a \$3 trillion relief package introduced by congressional Democrats. The bill has several beneficial provisions for physicians, like increased funding for physicians, student loan debt relief, expanding patient access to care, bolstering the supply and availability of personal protective equipment, testing and contract tracing, better demographic data, and funding for at-risk populations. The legislation passed the Democrat-controlled House on Friday night, but further negotiations are needed before there is a compromise package that can pass the Republican-controlled Senate. The Massachusetts Medical Society government relations staff continue to engage with legislators to advocate for provisions that support physicians.

MMS Programs and Events

MMS Annual Education Program: COVID-19: *What do we know and how does that help?*

Please join the MMS and your colleagues on Saturday, May 30, 2020 at 10 a.m. for an exceptional opportunity to learn from, and engage with, Eric J. Rubin, MD, PhD, Editor-in-Chief, *The New England Journal of Medicine*. The program will be moderated by Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, Chief of Infectious Diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Following Dr. Rubin's presentation, participants will be invited to ask questions. To register, please [click here](#).

Accreditation Statement

The Massachusetts Medical Society is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

AMA Credit Designation Statement

The Massachusetts Medical Society designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.0AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Practice Management

SBA and Treasury release Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness application

The Small Business Administration (SBA), in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, released the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness application. The form and instructions inform borrowers how to apply for forgiveness of their PPP loans, consistent with the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The SBA will also issue guidance soon to assist borrowers as they complete their applications and inform lenders about their responsibilities. The form and instructions include several measures to reduce compliance burdens and simplify the process for borrowers, including:

- Options for borrowers to calculate payroll costs using an “alternative payroll covered period” that aligns with borrowers’ regular payroll cycles.

- Flexibility to include eligible payroll and non-payroll expenses paid or incurred during the eight-week period after receiving their PPP loan.
- Step-by-step instructions on how to perform the calculations required by the CARES Act to confirm eligibility for loan forgiveness.
- Borrower-friendly implementation of statutory exemptions from loan forgiveness reduction based on rehiring by June 30.
- Addition of a new exemption from the loan forgiveness reduction for borrowers who have made a good-faith, written offer to rehire workers that was declined.

[Click here](#) to download the Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness application & instructions.

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) billing

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued an [updated FAQ](#) around the new regulatory waivers and rule changes to deliver expanded care to seniors and provide flexibility to the health care system. This includes payment for specimen collection for purposes of COVID-19 testing, diagnostic laboratory services, ambulance services, hospital services, expansion of virtual communication services, Medicare telehealth, home infusion services, skilled nursing facility services, drugs and vaccines under Part B, and general billing guidelines.

Physician Wellness

Mindfulness and Compassion in Uncertain Times: Care for the Caregiver with Ron Siegel (*Two-part interactive meeting on May 21 and 28*)

Profound changes in health care, PPE shortages, changing treatment guidelines, patients dying alone, sick colleagues and family members, long hours at work or home—no wonder so many health care workers feel overwhelmed and exhausted. How can you

manage the intensity, especially when in the thick of it? How can you care for yourself when you get home?

This two-part online program will be held on Thursday, May 21, and Thursday, May 28, from 1:00 p.m.—2:30 p.m. EDT. [When you register, you will be signed up for both parts.](#)

There is a small registration fee of \$50 for this program. This program is limited to no more than 200 people.

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](#)