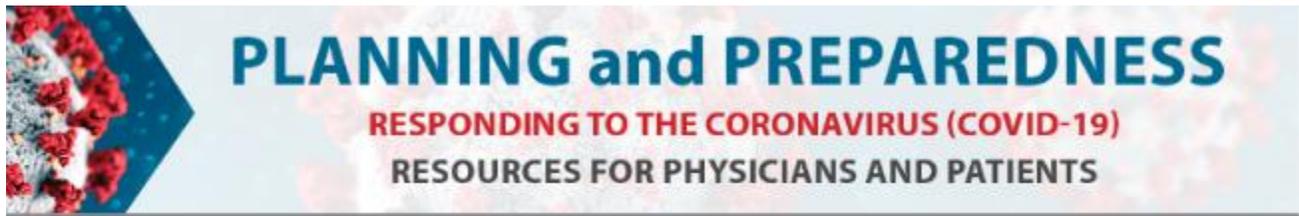


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May 6, 2020

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.

Public Health

Commonwealth of MA and Partners In Health launch Community Tracing Collaborative

Please help slow the spread of COVID-19 by spreading the word about the [Community Tracing Collaborative](#). Let patients, friends, and colleagues know to “*Answer the Call*” if they are contacted by someone from the Collaborative.

When someone tests positive for COVID-19, the Collaborative’s contact tracers will reach out by phone to that person and their close contacts to slow the spread of the virus. Contact tracers make sure individuals receive the medical attention and support they need during isolation and quarantine. The caller ID will show the call is coming from “MA COVID Team.” Information shared during the call is strictly confidential and is treated as private medical information.

Practice Management

CMS flexibilities to fight COVID-19 for physicians and other clinicians

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new temporary regulatory waivers and rules to equip the American health care system with maximum flexibility to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The goals of these actions are:

- Expand the health care system workforce by removing barriers for physicians, nurses, and other clinicians to be readily hired from the community and from out-of-state.
- Ensure that local hospitals and health systems have the capacity to handle a potential surge of COVID-19 patients through temporary expansion sites (also known as CMS Hospital Without Walls).
- Increase telehealth access so patients can reach physicians and other health care providers.
- Expand testing at home or in community-based settings.
- Give temporary reporting and audit relief so providers, health care facilities, Medicare Advantage and Part D plans, and states can focus on delivering care to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries affected by COVID-19.

CMS provided additional information, which can be accessed using the links below.

- [Physicians and Other Clinicians: CMS Flexibilities to Fight COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers for Health Care Providers](#)
- [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) on Medicare Fee-for-Service \(FFS\) Billing](#)
- [COVID-19 Regulations & Waivers to Enable Health System Expansion](#)

Prioritizing the rest of health care in a public health crisis

During a pandemic, attention shifts toward containing the spread of disease and treating those who become seriously ill and away from the health needs of other patients. The American Medical Association (AMA) released new guidance for prioritizing health care, based on the AMA Code of Medical Ethics, which offers insight into thinking about what is ethically required to safely make a broader range of health care services available.

The challenge is prioritizing services and identifying the conditions that enable the delivery of care while minimizing exposure risks. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Updates: Special coding advice during the COVID-19 public health emergency

New Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) codes have been created that streamline the novel coronavirus testing currently available.

Category I/Pathology and Laboratory

- Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): [Long descriptors](#)
- Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): [Medium descriptors](#)
- Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): [Short descriptors](#)

Coding advice and testing guides

- [Quick reference flow chart for CPT reporting for COVID-19 testing](#)
- [Coding scenarios and how to apply best coding practices](#)

For additional information, [click here](#).

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