November 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

CDC: Characteristics of hospitalized COVID-19 patients discharged and experiencing same-hospital readmission

Evidence suggests that potential health complications after COVID-19 illness might require ongoing clinical care. After discharge from an initial COVID-19 hospitalization, 9% of patients were readmitted to the same hospital within two months of discharge. Multiple readmissions occurred in 1.6% of patients. Risk factors for readmission included age over 65 years, presence of certain chronic conditions, hospitalization within the three months preceding the first COVID-19 hospitalization, and discharge to a skilled nursing facility or with home health care. Read the CDC report »

DPH releases additional guidance for regional hospital COVID-19 response planning
The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) released additional guidance instructing hospitals to convene regional preparedness meetings and coordinate their COVID-19 response. This new framework will operate within the current Phase III reopening structure. The planning meetings will promote identification and analysis of, and communication about, the capacity challenges that may impact hospitals' ability to meet the health needs of the population on an equitable basis. The regional groups will report regularly to the state and meet with greater frequency based upon the severity of COVID-19 in each region.

The Massachusetts Medical Society is in talks with the state to learn how non-hospital-based providers, such as those in ambulatory medicine, behavioral health, and post-acute care, can engage with hospital groups and be informed about relevant developments.

What was your PPE experience earlier this year?

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), in collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Disaster Medicine and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Humanitarian Supply Chain Lab, are seeking your participation in this brief survey to aid in the development of a state-level cache of personal protective equipment (PPE) that will support Massachusetts health care organizations. Responses are due November 16.

The survey team is trying to better understand the challenges you faced in procuring PPE during the first wave of COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts and how this has shaped your preparations for a potential second wave. They are looking for responses from all care settings.

Practice Management

COVID-19's financial impact on physician practices

Watch Dr. Christopher Garofalo, chair of the Massachusetts Medical Society's Committee on the Sustainability of Private Practice, join the American Medical
Association (AMA) to discuss the financial impact of COVID-19 on physician practices. Click here to watch the segment.

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Tufts telehealth update for in-network providers

**Effective for dates of service on or after January 1, 2021**

Member copays and other applicable cost share will be applied to all non-COVID-19 telehealth services, except for primary care and behavioral health telemedicine services for Rhode Island Commercial members. Member copays and other applicable cost share will continue to be waived for COVID-19-related, in-network, medically-necessary services. A COVID-19 diagnosis must be submitted on the claim for the waived cost share to remain applicable.

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

The Centers for Medicare and 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. If you requested and received accelerated or advanced payments from Medicare due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, this open forum is for you. During this session, your questions will be answered by subject matter experts.

- Date: Tuesday, November 10
- Time: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. ET
- Register »

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DOI and CHIA meeting for providers: telehealth, prior authorization, provider directory regulations
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 COVID-19 commercial insurance provisions. The next meeting will focus on telehealth, prior authorization, and provider directory regulations, and will be recorded for later viewing. The DOI and CHIA, along with the Massachusetts Medical Society and the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association, sponsor these calls.

- Date: Thursday, November 19
- Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ET
- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501
- Meeting URL »