October 14, 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

Using existing resources to help those who use drugs or have substance use disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic

To improve the provision of care during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) organized a call to help clinicians better understand the concerns of people who use drugs or have substance use disorder. The call will feature speakers from the CDC, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM).

- Date: Thursday, October 22
- Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT
- [Learn more »](#)
HHS renews public health emergency declaration

Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar renewed the COVID-19 public health emergency, effective October 23, 2020, which means that all current Medicare telehealth waivers and other flexibilities are also extended. The renewed public health emergency declaration will terminate 90 days thereafter, on January 21, 2021, unless renewed again. Read more »

CMS announces new repayment terms for Medicare loans made to providers during COVID-19

New recoupment terms allow providers and suppliers one additional year to start loan payments

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced amended terms for payments issued under the Accelerated and Advance Payment (AAP) Program. This Medicare loan program allows CMS to make advance payments to providers that are typically used in emergencies. Under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act, repayment will now begin one year from the issuance date of each provider or supplier’s accelerated or advance payment.

After that first year, Medicare will automatically recoup 25 percent of Medicare payments otherwise owed to the provider or supplier for eleven months. At the end of the eleven-month period, recoupment will increase to 50 percent for another six months. If the provider or supplier is unable to repay the total amount of the AAP during this time period (a total of 29 months), CMS will issue letters requiring repayment of any outstanding balance, subject to an interest rate of four percent.

The letter also provides guidance on how to request an Extended Repayment Schedule (ERS) for providers and suppliers who are experiencing financial hardships. An ERS is a debt installment payment plan that allows a provider or supplier to pay debts over the
course of three years, or, up to five years in the case of extreme hardship. For more information:

- [Fact sheet »](#)
- [FAQ »](#)

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**New phase of Provider Relief Fund opens for applications**

Providers are encouraged to apply for the latest round of Provider Relief Fund (PRF) support. Applications will be considered regardless of whether your organization was previously eligible for, applied for, received, accepted, or rejected prior PRF payments. For this newest phase, funding will be allocated to providers based on assessed financial losses and changes in operating expenses caused by COVID-19. For more information about the Phase 3 General Distribution, please visit the [Provider Relief Fund webpage](#).

- [Apply here through November 6](#)
- [Register for the webcast on October 15 at 3:00 p.m. EDT to learn more](#)

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**DOI and CHIA meeting for providers: testing, telehealth, and prior authorization**

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, telehealth, and prior authorization, and will be recorded for later viewing. The DOI and CHIA, along with the Massachusetts Medical Society and the Massachusetts Hospital Association, sponsor these calls.

- **Date:** Thursday, October 29
- **Time:** 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EST
- **Meeting ID:** 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501
- Meeting URL »

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