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

“COVID-19 and School Reopening”: Video, slides, and summary available

On September 9, the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS), in collaboration with the Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP), the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Physicians, hosted a 90-minute virtual member forum on COVID-19 and school reopening. Dr. David Rosman, MMS president, and Dr. Michele Parker, MAFP president, served as moderators. Program speakers included:

- Jeffrey Riley, commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Dr. Lloyd Fisher, president, Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Dr. Elisa Choi, governor, Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Physicians
- Dr. Sandra Nelson, infectious disease specialist, Massachusetts General Hospital
• Dr. Larry Madoff, medical director, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

The program recording, along with the slide deck and summary, can be found here.

Upcoming virtual public hearing opportunity – COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force

On Wednesday, September 16, from 1–4 p.m., the legislatively-established state Health Equity Task Force will be holding a hearing to receive public testimony addressing health disparities relative to underserved or underrepresented populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force will use this testimony to help inform their recommendations for the legislature. Please e-mail Donna Fox (dfox@challiance.org) and Morgan McCallister (mmccallister@massleague.org) to sign up for oral testimony (limited to 3 minutes) with the subject line: "Health Equity Hearing Oral Testimony” or to submit written testimony (due by 5 p.m. on 9/16) with the subject line "Health Equity Hearing Written Testimony.” Please remember, any testimony you may wish to submit would be offered in your individual capacity.

Topics of interest for Task Force members include, but are not limited to: (1) improving safety for populations at increased risk for COVID-19; (2) removing barriers and increasing access to quality and equitable health care services and treatment; (3) increasing access to medical supplies; (4) increasing access to testing for COVID-19, including identifying ways to ensure that testing occurs in diverse geographic locations throughout the Commonwealth; (5) providing informational materials to underserved and underrepresented populations in multiple languages on available and affordable health care resources in the Commonwealth, including, but not limited to, prevention, testing, treatment, and recovery; (6) addressing any other factor the Task Force deems relevant to address health disparities for underserved or underrepresented populations based on culture, race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, geographic location and age in the Commonwealth during COVID-19 pandemic; and (7) studying the impact of disparities on populations not subject to this study.

For more information on the hearing, please click here.
Hunger and housing: Lessons from COVID-19

COVID-19 has exacerbated the effects of the social determinants of health, especially concerning housing and hunger. Food insecurity, and the ability to afford safe and stable housing, can lead to physical and mental health consequences that disproportionately affect marginalized populations. Megan Sandel, MD, MPH, Associate Director of the GROW Clinic at Boston Medical Center, Principal Investigator with Children’s Health Watch, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Boston University Schools of Medicine and Public Health, will present. Kathryn Brodowski, MD, MPH, Chair of the MMS Committee on Nutrition and Physical Activity, will moderate.

- Date: Wednesday, September 23
- Time: 7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. ET
- [Register today »](#)

AMA video: How high-risk pregnancies have become even more complicated

The American Medical Association (AMA) spoke to health experts about how high-risk pregnancies have become more complicated due to COVID-19. This episode is part of the AMA's Women in Medicine Month focused on women physicians and patients. [Watch here »](#)

Practice Management

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care update

As of October 1, Harvard Pilgrim will cover telemedicine in full (no copays, deductibles, or coinsurance) only for COVID-19 treatment. Telemedicine cost sharing will resume for other kinds of virtual visits (e.g., urgent care, routine care, and behavioral health),
according to the terms of the plan. This policy applies to commercial plans in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, as well as Medicare Supplement plans. Telemedicine services will stay covered in full through December 31 for members on Medicare Advantage plans.

UnitedHealthcare remote patient monitoring

UnitedHealthcare follows Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) guidelines and considers digitally stored data services or remote physiologic monitoring services reported with CPT® codes 99453, 99454, 99457, 99458, 99473, 99474, and 99091 eligible for reimbursement, according to the CMS Physician Fee Schedule.

- For Medicare Advantage, remote patient monitoring will be covered per Medicare guidelines.
- For Individual and Fully Insured Group Market health plans, remote patient monitoring will be covered according to the member’s benefit plan and UnitedHealthcare’s standard telehealth reimbursement policy.
- For Medicaid plans, UnitedHealthcare will follow each state’s Medicaid guidelines for CPT® codes 99453, 99454, 99457, 99458, 99473, 99474, and 99091. These codes are eligible for reimbursement.
- Member Coverage and Cost Share: UnitedHealthcare is continuing to extend its temporary cost share (copay, coinsurance, or deductible) waiver for telehealth services. Review the following cost share waiver information. Benefits will be adjudicated per the member’s health plan, if applicable.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

DOI and CHIA meeting on Thursday 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, September 17
- Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- **Meeting URL »**
- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501

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**CMS Lessons from the Front Lines: COVID-19**

"Lessons from the Front Lines" calls are a joint effort between Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Stephen Hahn, MD, and the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Physicians and other clinicians are invited to share their experiences, ideas, strategies, and insights related to their COVID-19 response. There is an opportunity to ask questions of presenters.

- Date: Friday, September 18
- Time: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Attendee dial-in: (833) 614-0820
- Passcode: 4446447
- **Web link »**
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