September 2, 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**

**September is Emergency Preparedness Month**

Governor Baker proclaimed September as "Emergency Preparedness Month" to encourage residents, families, and organizations to prepare for emergencies and disasters. September is also National Preparedness Month. The Commonwealth will kick off the annual observance by launching a public “Thank you” campaign on social media to recognize the incredible contributions and the tireless efforts of essential workers, including health and medical professionals. Visitors to www.Mass.Gov/EPmonth can see a video message from Governor Baker and find instructions on how to participate in the #EPisEssential campaign to thank essential workers and organizations.

This month, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) will also share information about emergency preparedness topics, including emergency planning, building an emergency kit, preparing for disasters, youth preparedness, ways to get involved in community preparedness, and guidance on how to prepare for emergencies during COVID-19.
Registration open: "COVID-19 and School Reopening" forum

This virtual forum will provide an opportunity for physicians of all specialties to hear from experts and ask questions. Forum sponsors include the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians, the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Physicians.

- Date: Wednesday, September 9
- Time: 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Register today »

Practice Management

Digital health directory update

The Consumer Technology Association and American Telemedicine Association developed a directory of digital health technologies that connects physicians and patients with health care solutions. This voluntary effort — developed specifically for the health care industry — is a response to an urgent federal government request amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Harvard Pilgrim: Flu vaccine critical for the upcoming season

With the flu season approaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more critical than ever to emphasize the importance of getting vaccinated to the member population.

Harvard Pilgrim supports annual influenza immunization efforts by covering flu vaccines at retail pharmacies for a $0 cost share for members age 19 years and older on our Commercial formularies (Premium, Value, and Core NH). Flu vaccines are covered as a Preventative Care Benefit for adults under the Affordable Care Act. For members ages 0 to 18 years, flu vaccines are provided by the state for in-office administration. Certain age
restrictions for specific flu vaccines may apply based on product labeling. Similar to the Commercial formularies, the Medicare Advantage formulary covers flu vaccines at retail pharmacies for a $0 cost share (billed under part B).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website provides valuable information about vaccination, infection control, prevention, treatment, and diagnosis of seasonal influenza on the Information for Health Professionals and Influenza ACIP Vaccine Recommendations pages. In addition, Harvard Pilgrim recommends that you and/or your office staff refer to the following resources to support physical distancing in your practice while you bring patients back:

- CDC guidance on immunizations during a pandemic
- AAP National Immunization Awareness Month link
- CDC print resources to post in your office
- Infectious Diseases Society of America COVID-19 poster

To learn more, click here.

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Tufts reminder: Influenza prevention

Providers play a vital role in supplying patients with the information needed to protect themselves against influenza and in helping a patient decide to receive the flu vaccine or any other scheduled vaccinations. The CDC recommends patients aged six months and older, including pregnant women, should receive a flu vaccine every year, with rare exceptions. Refer to these additional tools and resources to help motivate patients to receive vaccines.

**Code change for 2020-2021 flu season**

The American Academy of Professional Coders™ (AAPC) has provided one new influenza vaccine code for the 2020-2021 flu season: 90694 Influenza virus vaccine, quadrivalent (aIIV4), inactivated, adjuvanted, preservative-free, 0.5mL dosage, for intramuscular use CPT 90694 use is effective July 1, 2020 (AAPC, 2020).

Click here to read Tufts’ updated immunization policy.
Provider Relief Fund update

Applications are currently open for Phase 2 General Distribution funding for Medicaid, Medicaid managed care, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), dental providers, certain Medicare providers, and assisted living facilities.

All groups have until **September 13, 2020** to submit their TIN for validation and apply for funding from Phase 2 General Distribution. [Learn more »](#)

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Fallon Health COVID-19 FAQ for providers

Updated information from Fallon Health about telehealth, testing and treatment, and cost of share can be found [here](#).

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