September 21, 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

Last chance to register! 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.
- Register today »
Recovery from severe COVID-19: Leveraging the lessons of survival from sepsis

Patients with severe disease, which affects up to 20% of those hospitalized with COVID-19, develop viral sepsis and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). While there has been substantial focus on the potentially unique manifestations of infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), many of the acute manifestations and outcomes of severe COVID-19 are similar to those of sepsis caused by other pathogens.

Surviving severe COVID-19 means surviving viral sepsis. And while there is little published data on long-term outcomes of severe COVID-19, it is known that recovering from sepsis caused by other pathogens is a long and difficult process that includes, among other things, increased odds of cognitive impairment and functional limitations—even down to the inability to bathe, toilet, or dress independently.

A recent Viewpoint essay published in JAMA, “Recovery From Severe COVID-19: Leveraging the Lessons of Survival From Sepsis,” calls out the lessons physicians should take from sepsis cases generally to prevent overly intensive ICU practices and promote speedier recovery for COVID-19 patients. Read more »

Learn about a new PPE purchasing opportunity at Friday, September 25 webinar

We are pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) has teamed up with the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association (MHA) to bring personal protective equipment (PPE) purchasing opportunities to our members via the online marketplace PPE.Exchange.

Through this relationship, interested members can sign up and access the PPE.Exchange online platform of regional and national PPE suppliers. In the online marketplace of verified suppliers, users can search for PPE, schedule orders, compare prices, and complete transactions online.
The MHA is hosting a webinar on Friday, September 25 from noon to 1:00 p.m. to review the program and benefits available to your organization. You can register for the webinar here. If you have any questions about PPE.Exchange or the webinar, please contact MHA’s Kim Stevenson at kstevenson@mhalink.org or MMS Foundation Director Jennifer Day at jday@mms.org.

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**Practice Management**

**Drs. Chaoui & Garber to discuss EMR efficiency and burnout prevention this Tuesday, September 22**

Dr. Alain Chaoui, MMS past president, and Dr. Larry Garber, Medical Director for Informatics and Associate Medical Director of Research at Reliant Medical Group, will be among the featured panelists at Northeast Virtual Healthcare's Innovation Summit at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22.

The pair will discuss EMR usability and how a well-built EMR can improve physician practice. Panelists will discuss how they built a culture of partnership between EMR users and IT personnel to drive a quality EMR experience, increase EMR engagement, and help users focus on opportunities for EMR success in their organizations. Discussion topics include:

- Optimizing the EMR to prevent clinician burnout
- Developing a non-bureaucratic governance structure that allows for changes to be made quickly to the EMR
- Building a culture of sharing and continuing education to support mastery of the EMR, and training clinicians not only to successfully get data into the EMR, but also how to efficiently get data out of it
- Building a quality EMR – cutting through the hype and choosing a vendor that works for an organization, based on best practices and user feedback

For the agenda and registration, click here.
Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare COVID-19 testing update

Viral testing for current COVID-19 infection is covered when ordered by a physician or appropriately licensed health care professional actively treating you, or for Maine members, when in accordance with the State of Maine regulatory guidelines.

For fully insured commercial and Medicare Supplement members, antibody testing for previous COVID-19 infection is covered only when it is an FDA-authorized test, when ordered by a physician or appropriately licensed health care professional, and when medically necessary for your provider to help make decisions about treatment for an immediate medical condition.

For Medicare Advantage members, antibody testing is covered when documentation confirms all of the following:

- The test is being ordered by a treating physician or appropriately licensed care professional.
- The COVID-19 antibody test is necessary for the member’s medical treatment.
- The test is performed at least 21 days after the onset of symptoms for symptomatic members (timing is not applicable for members who have not exhibited COVID-19 symptoms).
- The test is being conducted by a CLIA Certified Laboratory Testing meeting the above criteria is covered in full with no copayment, deductible, or cost sharing through the COVID-19 emergency period.

Members should always use participating providers/laboratories for all COVID-19 testing. Testing for employment screening, public screening, student screening, and travel screening are not covered benefits, except for Maine members when in compliance with and required by the State of Maine regulatory guidelines. Read more »

COVID-19 telehealth services for Part B providers - webinar on Tuesday

National Government Services (NGS) is hosting a webinar to review the latest COVID-19 updates and how they apply to Medicare Part B, the temporary changes for telehealth
Tufts Health Plan COVID-19 updates for providers

This webinar series allows you to participate in interactive training sessions with Tufts Health Plan’s Provider Education Team. Registration is required to join this event.

- Date: Wednesday, September 23
- Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Register »

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 1
- Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Meeting URL »
- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501