If you’re not already a subscriber, sign up to receive Planning and Preparedness.

September 23, 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

Learn about a new PPE purchasing opportunity during a 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.

Government Guidelines

MMS testifies before state’s Health Equity Task Force

On Wednesday, September 16, the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) testified before the state’s legislatively-established Health Equity Task Force on addressing health disparities relative to underserved or underrepresented populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to oral testimony put forth by MMS president Dr. David Rosman, the organization submitted written testimony, which can be read by clicking here.

Seeking a waiver for electronic prescribing? Apply by October 1

Beginning January 1, 2021, all prescriptions issued in the Commonwealth for federally controlled substances must be issued from a federally compliant ePrescribing system. One of the exceptions to this electronic prescribing requirement is for those who have been granted a time-limited electronic prescribing waiver. To guarantee that an application for such a waiver is processed before January 1, 2021, applications must be submitted by October 1, 2020.

These waivers may be granted upon a finding that the applicant is demonstrably impeded by financial or technical limitations, that the temporary noncompliance will not jeopardize the health or safety of patients or the public, and that the applicant will institute compensating measures to ensure the security of prescriptions issued.

If you need an electronic prescribing waiver and believe that you qualify for one, you must email your completed waiver application to the Massachusetts Drug Control Program (DCP) no later than the close of business on October 1, 2020. Please consult the list of ePrescribing system vendors and helpful links regarding electronic prescribing. The waiver application form can be downloaded here and should be emailed to DCP at dcp.dph@mass.gov.
For more information regarding the electronic prescribing regulations, including exceptions from the requirement, please click here. Any questions may be emailed to the DCP email address above or to Casey Rojas of the MMS Government Relations team at crojas@mms.org.

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**Practice Management**

**Extension granted on local carrier administrative flexibilities**

In response to a joint letter from the Massachusetts Medical Society and the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association (MHA), the Division of Insurance (DOI) extended administrative flexibilities set to expire on September 30. Bulletin 2020-28 extends the provisions of Bulletin 2020-21 through the end of 2020. These provisions include, but are not limited to, (1) requiring carriers to forego prior authorization and concurrent review for scheduled surgeries and admissions, (2) restricting medical necessity denials for COVID-19 emergency and inpatient services, and (3) encouraging streamlined coding and billing policies to reduce administrative complexity.

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**Provider Relief Fund: Reporting, recordkeeping requirements**

Recipients that received one or more payments exceeding $10,000 in the aggregate from the provider Relief Fund (PRF) will be required to demonstrate compliance with the terms and conditions, including the use of funds for allowable purposes.

Detailed instructions regarding these reports have not yet been released. The reporting portal is expected to open by October 1.

Download the Final Reporting Data Elements - PDF for information on provider reporting guidelines that cover intent, the use of funds, and data elements requested.

- The final reporting data elements notice is to inform PRF recipients—who received one or more payments exceeding $10,000 in the aggregate—
about the information they need to report as part of the post-payment reporting process.

- The final reporting data elements document updates and supplements the July 20, 2020 Post-Payment Notice of Reporting Requirements notice: General and Targeted Distribution Post-Payment Notice of Reporting Requirement - PDF.

These final reporting requirements do not apply to:

- Nursing Home Infection Control distribution recipients
- Rural Health Clinic Testing distribution recipients
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Uninsured Program reimbursement recipients

Separate reporting requirements may be announced in the future. Key dates include:

- January 15, 2021: reporting system opens for providers
- February 15, 2021: first reporting deadline for all providers on the use of funds
- July 31, 2021: final reporting deadline for providers who did not fully expend PRF funds before December 31, 2020

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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 1
- Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- [Meeting URL »](#)
- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643