September 30, 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

Recording of webinar on PPE.Exchange now available

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) 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.

Last week, the MHA hosted a webinar on using the exchange. You can view 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.
Reminder: Submit comments on the 2021 proposed rule for the Quality Payment Program by October 5

On August 3, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released its proposed policies for the 2021 performance year of the Quality Payment Program via the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM).

CMS is seeking comment on a variety of proposals in the NPRM. **Comments are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT on Monday, October 5 through regulations.gov.**

Key proposals for the Quality Payment Program include:

- Increasing the complex patient bonus to a 10-point maximum for the 2020 performance year due to COVID-19
- Postponing the implementation of the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Value Pathways (MVPs) until 2022
- Introducing the Alternative Payment Model (APM) Performance Pathway (APP) for participants in MIPS APMs beginning in 2021
- Increasing the performance threshold to 50 points for the 2021 performance year (10 points less than the 60-point threshold finalized for 2021 in the CY 2020 PFS Rule)
- Decreasing the performance category weight for Quality to 40% and increasing Cost to 20%
- Removing the CMS web interface as collection and submission types for reporting MIPS quality measures beginning with the 2021 performance period
- Sunsetting the APM Scoring Standard and allowing MIPS eligible clinicians to participate in MIPS under an APM Entity beginning in 2021

To learn more about the PFS NPRM and the Quality Payment Program proposals, review the following resources:

- [Fact Sheet](#) – Offers an overview of the QPP proposed policies for 2021 and compares these policies to the current 2020 requirements
Webinar Recording – Details the QPP proposed policies for 2021, answers questions from webinar attendees, and shares information on how to comment

QPP COVID-19 Response Webpage – Shares information on the proposed complex patient bonus change and other flexibilities implemented in response to the public health emergency

To learn more about the Quality Payment Program, visit the Quality Payment Program website. Contact the Quality Payment Program at (866) 288-8292 or by email at: QPP@cms.hhs.gov.

Student loan payment deferral until 2021

President Trump issued an executive order extending the deferment of payments and the waiver of all interest on student loans held by the U.S. Department of Education through the end of the year. The deferral, initially implemented by the CARES Act passed in March, was set to expire in September. Learn more »

Ethics Talk: Who are you voting for, Doc? I'm voting for you

In this edition of the American Medical Association's “Ethics Talk,” host Dr. Audiey Kao talks with Dr. Alister Martin about the important role of health care professionals and organizations in helping patients get registered to vote. Dr. Martin is an emergency medicine physician and faculty at the Center for Social Justice and Health Equity at Massachusetts General Hospital and executive director of VotER, which helps patients get registered to vote. Watch now »

Home health eligibility and telehealth: Medicare requires audio & visual encounters

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) established policy requiring that telehealth for home health eligibility use both audio and visual technology. The Home
Care Alliance of Massachusetts notes that this policy does not align with current CMS flexibilities that allow physicians to conduct—and be paid for—telephone-only visits. (Audio-only encounters do not meet CMS's face-to-face requirement for home health eligibility.) However, home health agency staff may be able to help you establish an audio and visual connection with your patients so that eligibility requirements are met. Read 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 1
- Time: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EST
- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501
- Meeting URL »

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### PPE compliance and fatigue in first responder realms - October 2

Have questions about PPE compliance and fatigue? Are personnel getting lax with PPE? Is there a significant element of PPE compliance and fatigue?

Join the National Emerging Special Pathogen Training and Education Center (NETEC) for a town hall meeting to discuss the importance of PPE in the First Responder Environment and learn techniques to deal with PPE fatigue. Submit your questions during registration and they will be answered during the Town Hall session.
Tufts Health Plan COVID-19 updates for providers webinar

Participate in this interactive training session with Tufts Health Plan’s Provider Education Team.

- Date: Thursday, October 2
- Time: 1:00 p.m. EST
- Register today »

- Date: Tuesday, October 6
- Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. EST
- Register today »

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860 Winter Street, Waltham Woods Corporate Center, Waltham, MA 02451-1411
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