April 28, 2021

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.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning next week, the MMS will reduce the frequency of Planning & Preparedness. We will no longer publish on Mondays and move to Wednesdays only.

---

**Public Health**

**CDC's interim public health recommendations for fully vaccinated people**

Currently authorized vaccines in the United States are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19. Additionally, a [growing body of evidence](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/vaccination.html) suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection or transmit SARS-CoV-2 to others. How long vaccine protection lasts and how much vaccines protect against emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants are still under investigation. Until more is known and vaccination coverage increases, some prevention measures will continue to be necessary in some settings for all people, regardless of vaccination status. However, the benefits of reducing social isolation and relaxing some measures such as quarantine requirements may outweigh the residual risk of fully vaccinated people becoming ill with COVID-19 or transmitting SARS-CoV-2 to others. To read more, [click here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/vaccination.html).
CMS proposes to enhance medical workforce in rural and underserved communities to support COVID-19 recovery

On Tuesday, April 27, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a proposed rule (CMS-1752-P) for inpatient and long-term care hospitals that builds on the Biden Administration’s key priorities to close health care equity gaps and provide greater accessibility to care. Major provisions in the proposed rule would fund medical residency positions in hospitals in rural and underserved communities to address workforce shortages, and require hospitals to report COVID-19 vaccination rates among their workers to contain the spread of the virus. To read more, click here.

Accelerated and advanced payment nettings and offsets across organization affiliations

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has implemented a change to begin netting/offsetting provider money across affiliated providers within the same Tax Identification Number (TIN) and also across workloads within a single organization. The CMS change brings consistency to all Medicare contractors regarding netting across organization affiliations. To learn more, click here.

Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lifted the recommended pause on the use of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 Vaccine following a thorough safety review. The FDA added and
updated some questions about resuming the use of this vaccine to the Janssen COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions webpage.

April 29: DOI and MassHealth listening session on telehealth provisions

The Massachusetts Division of Insurance (DOI) and MassHealth are scheduling information sessions to discuss the implementation of telehealth provisions in Chapter 260 of the Acts of 2020 as enacted on January 1, 2021.

During these information sessions, DOI and MassHealth are interested in having conversations with physicians, consumers, insurance carriers, and other stakeholders to hear thoughts about guidance that the Division of Insurance and MassHealth might provide through the issuing of bulletins, regulations, or other communications to allow for the implementation of the noted provisions.

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) will be actively engaged in each of these sessions, advocating on behalf of the physician community. If you have specifics consistent with the identified topic areas listed below, please contact Leda Anderson at landerson@mms.org or Bissan Biary at bbiary@mms.org.

**DOI listening sessions schedule**

- Thursday, April 29, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.; This session has been added and is being especially offered by the DOI for physicians and other providers unable to attend previous daytime calls. Topics can include those previously covered and other issues as necessary: communicating coverage to patients; definition of primary care, behavioral health, chronic disease management; reimbursement and coding; appropriateness and utilization management.

To join the Zoom meetings, click here.

- **Meeting ID:** 290 289 5643
- **Passcode:** 501

Join via telephone:
• (646) 558-8656 (ET)
• (646) 518-9805 (ET)

Follow us on:

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn | Instagram

© 2021 Massachusetts Medical Society. All rights reserved.
860 Winter Street, Waltham Woods Corporate Center, Waltham, MA 02451-1411
781-893-4610 | 781-893-3800 | Member Information Hotline: 800-322-2303 x7311

To ensure delivery of all Massachusetts Medical Society communications, please add vitalsignsthisweek@mms.org to your email address book or Safe Sender List. If you are still having problems receiving our communications, see our white-listing page for more details.

| Unsubscribe |