February 22, 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.

Public Health

Expanded guidance for monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID-19

Several monoclonal antibody (mAb) treatment options have been authorized for emergency use (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for eligible people who are high risk for developing severe COVID-19 and who have not been admitted to the hospital. The therapeutics are administered by intravenous infusion. Treatment decisions are based on guidelines from the FDA EUAs and guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Physicians are asked to review the provider fact sheets for bamlanivimab, bamlanivimab and etesevimab, or casirivimab and imdevimab (REGEN-CoV2) for eligibility information.

Physicians may refer patients for treatment who meet the eligibility criteria to select facilities with infusion capability. Because of current capacity limitations, it is possible all interested and eligible patients may not be able to receive treatment within the window
of therapeutic opportunity for mAb therapy. Contact information for Massachusetts facilities offering mAb treatment is available here.

Practice Management

DOI and MassHealth listening sessions on telehealth provisions

The Massachusetts Division of Insurance (DOI) and MassHealth are scheduling information sessions (see schedule below) 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 interested parties 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

- Friday, February 26, 10 a.m. - 11:30; Planned topics: Carrier contracts with providers and telehealth technology

- Friday, March 12, 10 a.m. - 11:30; Planned topics: Definitions of primary care, chronic care, behavioral health care and “health care services appropriate to be provided through telehealth”

- Wednesday, March 31, 10 a.m. - 11:30; Planned topics: Reimbursement and billing
MassHealth to cover transportation for vaccine appointments

MassHealth has made changes to its non-emergency transportation policy to make it easier for covered individuals to get free transportation to and from COVID-19 vaccine appointments. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), through its Human Services Transportation (HST) brokers, will cover certain transportation services for the limited purpose of attending COVID-19 vaccine administration appointments for MassHealth members in Family Assistance, Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP), and MassHealth Limited, as well as for individuals who are Health Safety Net (HSN) patients. MassHealth will also allow these and other eligible individuals to directly request transportation services for this limited purpose. MassHealth All Provider Bulletin 310 and this FAQ document contain additional details on the new policy, and members can also visit the MassHealth webpage for more information on COVID-19 vaccines.

USDA, FDA underscore current information indicating no transmission of COVID-19 through food or food packaging

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to underscore that there is no credible evidence of food or food packaging associated with or
as a likely source of viral transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus causing COVID-19.

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**Toolkit for pregnant people and new parents**

[Click here](#) for resources and COVID-19 vaccine considerations to help pregnant, breastfeeding, and new parents patients caring for infants to protect their health and help people who serve these communities communicate with them.

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