March 10, 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.

Advocacy

COVID relief legislation passes Congress

Congress passed on Wednesday a $1.9T COVID-19 relief package, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The package includes several provisions important to physicians and aligned with Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) advocacy efforts. Click here for a summary of the provisions. The bill did not provide additional funding for the Provider Relief Fund or a moratorium on Medicare Sequester cuts, so MMS will continue to advocate for those provisions in future legislation.

Urge your members of Congress to stop Medicare sequester cuts

Congress temporarily halted the Medicare sequester cuts in past COVID-19 relief packages—but that suspension is set to expire on April 1, 2021 and the cuts will be re-imposed. H.R. 315, “the Medicare Sequestration COVID Moratorium Act,” was recently introduced and would address this issue. The bill would continue to halt Medicare
sequester cuts until the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. This will prevent further strain on physician practices and ensure that providers can stay focused on providing care to their patients. To garner support for the bill, the American Medical Association (AMA) has created a Call to Action, where physicians can easily contact their members of Congress and urge them to support the bill. If you would like to contact your members of Congress and urge them to support H.R. 315, click this link. To learn more, you can also view a letter the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) and other physician organizations sent to Congress supporting the bill.

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Practice Management

Friday: DOI and MassHealth listening session 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.

**Next session:**

- 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.” Specific questions are being proposed and MMS is actively engaged in preparing comments. MMS is working with the TMed Coalition, made up of 35 telemedicine stakeholders. If you are interested in a copy
of the specific questions for this session, please contact Yael Miller at ymiller@mms.org

To join the Zoom meeting, click here.

- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501

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

- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501