March 17, 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

Baker-Polito Administration announces vaccine timeline for all residents

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the timeline for all remaining residents to be eligible for a vaccine. The Administration also announced the weekly distribution of vaccine doses statewide for providers and a new $24.7 million investment in the Administration’s Vaccine Equity Initiative. The full timeline is available at mass.gov/COVIDVaccinePhases. The Administration has received assurances from the federal government that an increased vaccine supply will be available to states soon.

Massachusetts receives a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines from the federal government each week. Due to high demand and very limited supply, it may take several weeks to schedule an appointment or to be notified that an appointment is available at mass vaccination locations.
SBA extends deferment period for all COVID-19 EIDL and other disaster loans until 2022

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced extended deferment periods for all disaster loans, including the COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, until 2022. All SBA disaster loans made in calendar year 2020, including COVID-19 EIDL, will have a first payment due date extended from 12 months to 24 months from the date of the note. All SBA disaster loans made in calendar year 2021, including COVID-19 EIDL, will have a first payment due date extended from 12 months to 18 months from the date of the note.

v-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry

There is currently no evidence that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccination cause any problem with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. However, data are limited about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines for people who are pregnant. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established the v-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry to learn more about this issue.

The CDC is inviting people who received COVID-19 vaccination in the periconception period (within 30 days before last menstrual period) or during pregnancy to participate in the v-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry. Pregnant people who would like to participate must be enrolled in v-safe. If people enrolled in v-safe report that they were pregnant at the time of vaccination or after vaccination, the registry staff might contact them to learn more.

Thursday: DOI, CHIA, MMS, and MHA call on impact to practice
From **2 p.m. to 3 p.m., on Thursday**, March 18, the Massachusetts Medical Society will facilitate a discussion with the Division of Insurance (DOI), the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) and the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association (MHA). Participants may bring their questions and concerns about the effect of COVID-19 on practices, including prior authorizations, billing and coding.

To join the Zoom meeting, click here.

- Meeting ID: 290 289 5643
- Passcode: 501

Join via telephone:

- (646)-558-8656 US (ET)
- (646)-518-9805 US (ET)

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**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](https://www.mass.gov法规/法案/法案2020年Acts) 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**
- Wednesday, March 31, 10 a.m. - 11:30; Planned topics: Reimbursement and billing
- Wednesday, April 14, 10 a.m. - 11:30; Planned topics: Utilization review for telehealth and telehealth standards to be added to managed care accreditation reviews

To join the Zoom meetings, click here.

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