March 31, 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

Mass. Chapter of AAP president, daughter tout vaccine trial for children

Dr. LLoyd Fisher, a pediatrician practicing in Worcester and President of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and his daughter Caroline are lending their voices of support to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) "Trust the Facts, Get the Vax" campaign. In a new video, Dr. Fisher stresses the importance of testing COVID-19 vaccines on children and announced that Caroline is a participant in the trail. To see and share the video, click here.

Practice Management

MassHealth reimbursement for the administration of vaccines
MassHealth will align its rates for COVID-19 vaccine administration with those recently set by Medicare for the metropolitan Boston geographic area, effective April 1. To learn about the updated payment rates for COVID-19 vaccine administration, please visit MassHealth All Provider Bulletin 313.

This bulletin applies to members enrolled in MassHealth fee-for-service, the Primary Care Clinician (PCC) Plan, or a Primary Care Accountable Care Organization (ACO).

If you have questions about the information in the bulletin, please contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at (800) 841-2900, email your inquiry to providersupport@mahealth.net

Strategies for sharps disposal container use during supply shortages

A shortage in the supply of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-cleared sharps disposal containers may occur during the COVID-19 mass vaccination campaign or as a result of other causes. Health care facilities and COVID-19 vaccination sites must use sharps disposal containers that meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) bloodborne pathogens standard requirements to dispose of contaminated needles and other sharps. Use FDA-cleared containers whenever possible.

COVID-19 therapeutics: What the evidence show

Effective vaccines mean that the COVID-19 pandemic may be more controlled in the coming months, but the SARS-CoV-2 virus will likely remain a part of our everyday lives. That makes it important for physicians to have therapeutics in their toolbox to treat patients at all stages of disease progression—today, as well as in the future. Click here to read a summary on the treatments for mild COVID-19 and treatments for sicker patients.
DOI and MassHealth listening sessions on telehealth provisions (evening session added)

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 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, April 14, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30; Planned topics: Utilization review for telehealth and telehealth standards to be added to managed care accreditation reviews

- 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 (EDT)
- (646)-518-9805 (EDT)