April 6, 2022

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.

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National Public Health Week

A message from Dr. Allen

In observance of National Public Health Week, the physicians of the Massachusetts Medical Society thank our colleagues in public health for their dedicated service and leadership at the local, state, and national level.

The Medical Society has long enjoyed a valuable, strong, and close relationship with our partners in public health, and their support and collaboration has never been more critical than it has during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic the public health workforce has been unwavering and successful in providing guidance and actions to mitigate the devastating effects of the virus. This tireless work came on top of their leadership to assure clean water and air, provide vaccines against myriad pathogens, protect our children from addiction to nicotine, tackle a mental health crisis and the explosion of substance use, and address racial disparities in health.
We often take our public health infrastructure and public health servants for granted. National Public Health Week affords us the opportunity to reflect on how essential this work is to the health of our communities and to acknowledge the constant contributions of our colleagues in the field.

Carole

Carole E. Allen, MD, MBA, FAAP, President, Massachusetts Medical Society

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Public Health

Important reminder regarding treatments for COVID-19

Massachusetts has sufficient supply available to meet the needs of all residents who can benefit from these treatments. Treatments are available widely via retail pharmacies across the Commonwealth. Physicians and other providers are encouraged to use the resources below to locate available COVID-19 therapeutics and learn more about which patients are at high risk for severe illness.

- **Use the locator map** ([www.Mass.gov/CovidTreatmentMap](http://www.Mass.gov/CovidTreatmentMap)) to connect patients to locations with therapeutics near them.
- **COVID-19 treatments should be considered for all patients at higher risk** for severe disease. This includes nearly 40 percent of all Massachusetts residents who are eligible due to heart, lung, liver, or kidney disease, diabetes, pregnancy, dementia, cancer, disability, substance use disorder, mental health disorder, age over 65, overweight/obesity and immunocompromised. The full Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) list of high-risk conditions is [here](http://www.Mass.gov/CovidTreatmentMap).

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New COVID-19 Test to Treat initiative and locator tool

A new federal [Test to Treat](http://www.Mass.gov/CovidTreatmentMap) program gives people a fast and easy way to get lifesaving treatment for COVID-19. In this program, people can get tested at Test to Treat sites. If
they test positive and treatments are appropriate for them, they can get a prescription from a health care provider and have the prescription filled all in one location.

People can also bring test results obtained from a home testing kit to Test to Treat sites and get evaluated by a health care provider for treatment. These one-stop Test to Treat sites are available nationwide at hundreds of pharmacy-based clinics and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-supported federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).

In addition, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) launched a new COVID-19 Test to Treat Locator. People can use this web-based tool to find Test to Treat sites near them.

Oral antiviral pills from Merck (Lagevrio) and Pfizer (Paxlovid) are available at Test to Treat sites. The Test to Treat program does not change existing requirements for qualified health care providers to write the prescriptions for these medications. In addition, people can continue to get tested and treated by their own health care providers, who can prescribe these oral antivirals to eligible patients. Patients can pick up those prescriptions wherever oral antivirals are distributed. If these oral antivirals are inappropriate for patients, additional COVID-19 therapeutic options outside the Test to Treat program are available. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has developed and regularly updates Treatment Guidelines to help guide healthcare providers caring for patients with COVID-19.

To learn more, visit:

- HHS/ASPR's Test to Treat Website
- COVID-19 Test to Treat Fact Sheet
- Don't Delay: Test Soon and Treat Early (for patients)

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**Webinar with US Surgeon General Murthy Thursday**

US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy is calling for stories about personal experiences related to health misinformation to deepen our collective understanding of its sources and
impact. Please join this webinar, where staff in the Office of the Surgeon General will share information about the request for information and how to share your story!

Thursday April 7, 4:30 P.M. ET

Register here: www.bit.ly/RFIBriefing

To learn more about the request for information, visit www.surgeongeneral.gov/rfi.

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