February 2, 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.

Public Health

Mass. DPH updates clinical guidance document on therapeutic treatments for COVID-19

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has updated its clinical guidance document on therapeutic treatments for COVID-19. The Jan. 28, 2022 guidance replaces the one previously issued on Jan. 12, 2022. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to health care providers on the use of therapeutics to treat individuals with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 who do not require hospitalization and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death. The guidance has incorporated the following changes:

- Updated the treatment recommendations for COVID-19 therapeutics
- Remdesivir is now approved by FDA for use in mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in outpatients
- FDA has determined that bamlanivimab/etesivimab and casirivimab/imdevimab (REGEN-COV) are not currently authorized for use due to predominance of Omicron variant
Mass. DPH updates on state-supported COVID-19 therapeutics

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has updated information about therapeutic treatments offered at the state supported Gothams sites across the Commonwealth to help providers coordinate care for patients seeking treatment for mild-moderate COVID-19 infection. Gothams treatment locations in Athol, Everett, Holyoke, Fall River, Lowell, Pittsfield, and Plymouth care for patients 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday through Sunday. Gothams has the availability to dispense same-day oral antivirals (PAXLOVID and molnupiravir).

Gothams can also administer sotrovimab and at most sites has same-day appointments. For clinical guidance, please review DPH’s COVID-19 treatment guidelines that were updated Jan. 28 and provide greater flexibility for clinical-decision making as well as expand the eligible patient groups recommended for antivirals. To prescribe Paxlovid and molnupiravir or refer for sotrovimab, please use this form.

Providers referring a patient for sotrovimab infusion only can opt to directly email the following information to the desired Gothams site’s email address:

1. Patient's Name:
2. Patient's Phone Number(s):
3. Referring Provider's Name:
4. Provider's Phone Number:
5. Date of Symptom Onset:
6. Date of Positive Test:
7. How they meet criteria/pertinent medical history:
Upcoming COCA call: Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children

Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) is a rare but severe condition associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been actively involved in MIS-C surveillance and research, and development of MIS-C resources to support the public health and health care community. During this Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) call, presenters will discuss CDC’s surveillance of MIS-C, updated MIS-C resources for health care providers, research that informed those resources, and data related to COVID-19 vaccination and MIS-C.

Date: Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022
Time: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET

Webinar Link: https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1606170121
Passcode: 731625
Dial In: 1-669-254-5252

Practice Management

FDA takes key action by approving second COVID-19 vaccine

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Jan. 31 approved a second COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine has been known as the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. The approved vaccine will be marketed as Spikevax for the prevention of COVID-19 in individuals 18 years of age and older. Spikevax has the same formulation as the EUA Moderna COVID-19 vaccine and is administered as a primary series of two doses, one month apart. Spikevax can be used interchangeably with the EUA Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to provide the COVID-19 vaccination series. To learn more, click here.
Ivermectin products not approved by FDA to prevent or treat COVID-19

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not authorized or approved using ivermectin to prevent or treat COVID-19 in humans and has cautioned about the potential risks of using ivermectin for COVID-19. Recently rates of ivermectin prescriptions dispensed from retail pharmacies have increased, as has use of ivermectin-containing veterinary products available over the counter. Poison control centers have experienced a rise in calls reporting ivermectin misuses and overdoses and reports of more people experiencing adverse effects. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel has determined that there are currently insufficient data to recommend using ivermectin to treat COVID-19.

Clinicians should educate patients about the risks of using ivermectin without an indication, as well as about the risks of ingesting ivermectin products that are meant solely for external use or veterinary use. Clinicians are strongly encouraged to educate patients to use proven COVID-19 prevention measures, especially getting vaccinated and boosted as soon as eligible, and use FDA-authorized treatment. To learn more, please visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Health Advisory on Reports of Severe Illness Associated with Use of Products Containing Ivermectin to Prevent or Treat COVID-19, and the FDA’s Why You Should Not Use Ivermectin to Treat or Prevent COVID-19.

How to talk with parents and caregivers about COVID-19 vaccination

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) has vaccination tips for pediatricians, family medicine practitioners, nurses, and other vaccine providers. Parents and caregivers consider healthcare providers to be their most trusted source of information when it comes helping them understand the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and assuring them that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective for their children. Visit How to Answer
Parents’ and Caregivers’ Questions about COVID-19 Vaccines for more information and resources.

AHA: Workforce issues remain at the forefront of pandemic-related challenges for hospitals

Our nation’s hospital and health system workers have been on the front lines of this crisis since the outset, caring for millions of patients, including over 4 million inpatients with COVID-19. During this time, hospitals have continued to face a range of financial and operational pressures, with workforce-related challenges among those most critical.

Though managing workforce pressures were a challenge for hospitals even before the pandemic, these challenges have only grown more acute. The incredible toll that hospital workers have endured in caring for patients during the pandemic has undoubtedly led to burnout among other issues which have contributed to exacerbating the shortage of hospital workers. In fact, this shortage has become so critical that some states and the federal government have deployed military and national guard resources to help mitigate staffing challenges at hospitals. To read more, click here.

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