



## **CMS Faith and Community Partnerships Update**

March 16, 2020

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The information below and earlier CMS actions in response to the COVID-19 virus, are part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19 click here <https://protect2.fireeye.com/url?k=885b3b90-d40e3283-885b0aaf-0cc47adb5650-303462014a78c474&u=http://www.coronavirus.gov/>. For information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).

### **COVID-19 Emergency Declaration**

On Friday, the Trump Administration announced aggressive actions and regulatory flexibilities to help healthcare providers and states respond to and contain the spread of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is taking several actions following President Trump's declaration of a national emergency due to COVID-19.

A press release outlining CMS announcement can be found here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-takes-action-nationwide-aggressively-respond-coronavirus-national-emergency>

A fact sheet outlining these actions can be found here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid19-emergency-declaration-health-care-providers-fact-sheet.pdf>

### **COVID-19 Nursing Home Visitor Guidance**

On Friday, as part of the broader Trump Administration announcement, CMS announced critical new measures designed to keep America's nursing home residents safe from the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The measures take the form of a [memorandum](#) and is based on the [newest recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). It directs nursing homes to significantly restrict visitors and nonessential personnel, as well as restrict communal activities inside nursing homes. The new measures are CMS's latest action to protect America's seniors, who are at highest risk for complications from COVID-19. While visitor restrictions may be difficult for residents and families, it is an important temporary measure for their protection.

You can find the press release here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-announces-new-measures-protect-nursing-home-residents-covid-19>

And the Memo Nursing Home Guidance QSO-20-14 –NH here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/3-13-2020-nursing-home-guidance-covid-19.pdf>

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website Created**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is working to keep our Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, health care professionals, and stakeholders updated on the latest information regarding coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The CDC has released [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), a new website to share CDC updates on COVID-19. Americans should be prepared for the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak in their community. The website provides ways in which the community can take measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in different settings.

CDC is aggressively responding to the global outbreak of COVID-19 and community spread in the United States. CDC's [community approach](#) is focused on slowing the transmission of COVID-19, reducing illness and death, while minimizing social and economic impacts.

The White House Coronavirus Task Force today recommended 30-day mitigation strategies for Seattle-King, Pierce, and Snohomish County, Washington, and Santa Clara County, California due to widespread transmission of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). These mitigation activities are designed to address the effects of COVID-19 on areas that are experiencing community spread.

[Read the Seattle-King and Pierce County Community Mitigation Strategy](#)

[Read the Santa Clara County Community Mitigation Strategy](#)

These resources are in response to the COVID-19 virus and part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work CMS is doing in response to COVID-19, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).

For more information on COVID-19 visit:

[Coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

[USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov)

### **Prevent the Spread of COVID-19: Five Things to Know About Properly Washing Your Hands Video**

On March 8 the U.S. Surgeon General, Jerome Adams, released a video explaining the five key steps you should take to ensure you are washing your hands correctly. Washing your hands is one of the best ways to help stop the spread of COVID-19. You can watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnJ1wvllcbs&amp;t=1s>.

## **COVID-19 FAQs for State Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Agencies**

On March 12, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) posted Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to the Medicaid.gov website to aid state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) agencies in their response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. CMS is taking this action in its continuing efforts to protect the health and safety of providers and patients, including those who are covered by Medicaid and CHIP. A press release with further information can be found here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-publishes-first-set-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions-fags-state-medicaid-and-childrens-health>.

The COVID-19 FAQs for State Medicaid and CHIP agencies can be found here: <https://protect2.fireeye.com/url?k=bd191d4e-e14c145d-bd192c71-0cc47adb5650-7855d15d81019fa3&u=https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/disaster-response-toolkit/covid19/index.html>

## **Coronavirus and Keeping Safe: What You Need to Know**

Please help the White House Coronavirus Task Force spread the word on keeping Workplaces, Homes, Schools, or Commercial Establishments Safe.

Please distribute these documents widely as we work together on this important issue.

### [Workplace, School and Home Guidance](#)

### [A Framework for Mitigation](#)

All updated information can be found at [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

## **CMS Issues Guidance to help Medicare Advantage and Part D Plans Respond to COVID-19**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is taking further action to ensure patients have access to the critical healthcare services they need in the wake of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. In the memorandum issued today, CMS outlines the flexibilities MA and Part D plans have to waive certain requirements that help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

These flexibilities include:

- Waiving cost-sharing for COVID-19 tests
- Waiving cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatments in doctor's offices or emergency rooms and services delivered via telehealth
- Removing prior authorizations requirements
- Waiving prescription refill limits
- Relaxing restrictions on home or mail delivery of prescription drugs
- Expanding access to certain telehealth services

To view, CMS's memorandum for MA and Part D plans, visit: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/hpms-memo-covid-information-plans.pdf>

## **CMS Sends More Detailed Guidance to Providers about COVID-19**

On March 10, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is supplementing its guidance to home health agencies and dialysis facilities to protect the health and safety of our nation's patients and providers in response to the

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The memoranda were developed from frequently asked questions the agency has received about interacting with patients amid COVID-19. The guidance offers clear, actionable information to healthcare workers on the screening, treatment and transfer procedures to follow when interacting with patients.

To view, CMS's guidance for home health providers, visit: <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and/guidance-infection-control-and-prevention-concerning-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-home-health>

To view, CMS's guidance for dialysis facilities providers, visit: <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and/guidance-infection-control-and-prevention-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-dialysis-facilities>

### **CMS Issues Key Protective Mask Guidance for Healthcare Workers**

On March 10, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) took additional action to ensure America's healthcare workers are prepared to fight the spread of Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). Specifically, CMS sent a [memorandum](#) to State Survey Agencies (SAs), which are responsible for inspecting nursing homes and other healthcare facilities serving Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. The memo clarifies the application of CMS policies in light of recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidance expanding the types of facemasks healthcare workers may use in situations involving COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. These are proactive steps to take as part of the White House Task Force's efforts to ensure a maximum supply of facemasks and respirators are available to enable healthcare providers to safely treat patients without exposing themselves or others to COVID-19.

Additionally, the FDA [approved a CDC request for an emergency use authorization \(EUA\)](#) to allow healthcare workers to use certain industrial respirators during the COVID-19 outbreak in healthcare settings. The FDA concluded that respirators approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), but not currently meeting the FDA's requirements, may be effective in preventing healthcare workers from airborne exposure to serious or life-threatening disease, including COVID-19. This FDA approval allows healthcare personnel to use the NIOSH-approved respirators not currently regulated by the FDA. As a result, in addition to N95 respirator masks, healthcare personnel have other masks at their disposal in order to safely treat patients without exposing themselves or others to COVID-19.

This guidance, and earlier CMS actions in response to the COVID-19 virus, are part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19 click here [Coronavirus.gov](#). For information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).

### **CMS Launches Groundbreaking Model to Lower Out of Pocket Expenses for Insulin**

On March 11, under President Trump's Leadership, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the Part D Senior Savings Model, a voluntary model that enabled participating Part D enhanced plans to lower Medicare beneficiaries' out-of-pocket costs for insulin to a maximum \$35 copay per thirty-day supply throughout the benefit year. Beneficiaries who take insulin and enroll in a plan participating in the model should save an average of \$446 in annual out-of-pocket costs for insulin, or over 66 percent, relative to their average cost-sharing for insulin today.

A fact sheet about the Part D Senior Savings Model can be viewed at: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/part-d-senior-savings-model>. More information on the Part D Senior Savings Model, including the Requests for Applications, can be viewed at: <https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/part-d-savings-model>.

*To be added to the CMS Faith and Community Partnerships Update, please email Lisa Carr at [Lisa.Carr@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Lisa.Carr@cms.hhs.gov). All of the information above is cleared government material and can be shared without attribution.*