



## CMS Snapshot

### August 27-September 3, 2020

Delivered to you by the Partner Relations Group in the Office of Communications

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, August 27 through 2pm Thursday, September 3, 2020.

#### News Releases

\*August 27- [HHS Releases \\$1.5 Billion to States, Tribes to Combat Opioid Crisis](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is distributing the first-year funds of its two-year State Opioid Response (SOR) and Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) grant programs. The two programs ultimately will award nearly \$3 billion over two years to help states and tribes provide community-level resources for people in need of prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

\*August 27- [Trump Administration Will Deploy 150 Million Rapid Tests in 2020](#). Today, as part of an historic initiative led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defense (DOD), the Administration awarded a contract for \$760 million to Abbott for delivery of 150 million rapid, Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Point of Care (POC) SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests to expand strategic, evidence-based testing in the United States. Testing will be potentially deployed to schools and to assist with serving other special needs populations.

\*August 27- [CMS Offers Comprehensive Support for Louisiana and Texas with Hurricane Laura](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today announced efforts underway to support Louisiana and Texas in response to Hurricane Laura. On August 26, 2020, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar declared public health emergencies (PHEs) in these states, retroactive to August 22, 2020 for the state of Louisiana and to August 23, 2020 for the state of Texas. CMS is working to ensure hospitals and other facilities can continue operations and provide access to care despite the effects of Hurricane Laura.

\*August 28- [HHS Deputy Secretary Hargan Statement on Appointment of Acting CIO](#). On Friday, August 28, Jose Arrieta, the Department of Health and Human Services' Chief Information Officer (CIO), officially resigned as CIO, after serving the department since 2019 and following more than 15 years in federal service. Effective at close of business on Friday, Perryn Ashmore, currently Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer, will begin serving as Acting CIO.

\*August 28- [CMS Approves New Essential Health Benefit Benchmarks for Michigan, New Mexico and Oregon](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved changes to the essential health benefit (EHB) benchmark plan for Michigan, New Mexico and Oregon starting with the 2022 plan year to improve access to services for people suffering from opioid use disorder (OUD) and other healthcare services. Today's actions support the Trump Administration's efforts in fighting our nation's opioid epidemic by providing consumers access to much needed prevention and treatment services.

\*August 28- [CMS Offers Comprehensive Support for California due to Wildfires](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today announced efforts underway to support California in response to wildfires across the state. On August 26, 2020, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency (PHE) in California, retroactive to August 14, 2020. CMS is working to ensure hospitals and other facilities can continue operations and provide access to care despite the effects of the wildfires.

\*August 28- [CMS Issues 2020 Federally-Facilitated Exchange Navigator Awards](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded \$10 million in Navigator grants to 30 returning organizations, matching the annual level of funding that was awarded over the last two years. Each year, CMS awards Navigator Cooperative Agreement grants to organizations that serve as Navigators in Federally-facilitated Exchange (FFE) states. Navigators offer assistance to consumers shopping for and enrolling in health coverage on the Federal Health Insurance Exchange.

\*August 31- [HHS Extends Coverage For COVID-19 Screening Tests at Congregate Facilities during the Pandemic](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Assistant Secretary for Health, extended coverage under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) to licensed health-care practitioners prescribing or administering point-of-care COVID-19 tests, using anterior nares specimen collection or self-collection, for screening in congregate facilities across the Nation.

\*August 31- [CMS Acts to Spur Innovation for America's Seniors](#). Today, under President Trump's leadership, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a proposed rule that unleashes innovative technology so Medicare beneficiaries have access to the latest, most cutting-edge devices. Today's action represents a step forward that will help demolish the existing bureaucratic barriers that have created a "valley of death" for innovative products, resulting in lag times and lack of access for America's seniors.

\*September 1- [Federal Communications Commission, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Team Up for Rural Health Initiative](#).

WASHINGTON, September 1, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together on

the Rural Telehealth Initiative, a joint effort to collaborate and share information to address health disparities, resolve service provider challenges, and promote broadband services and technology to rural areas in America. This action delivers on President Trump's recently signed Executive Order on Improving Rural Health and Telehealth Access. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of telehealth in delivering quality healthcare to rural Americans.

\*September 1- [CMS Administrator Announces Proposal to Spur Innovation for America's Seniors, Participates in Roundtable Discussion Among Health Industry Leaders in Minneapolis.](#)

On Monday, Seema Verma, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), convened a roundtable discussion with Minnesota-area health care leaders to discuss ways to further increase the use of medical and health care innovation. The same day, under President Trump's leadership, CMS issued a [proposed rule](#) that unleashes innovative technology so Medicare beneficiaries have access to the latest, most cutting-edge devices. This [announcement](#) represents a step forward that will help demolish the existing bureaucratic barriers that have created a "valley of death" for innovative products, resulting in lag times and lack of access for America's seniors.

\*September 1- [Trump Administration Announces Provider Relief Fund Application for Assisted Living Facilities.](#) Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), is announcing assisted living facilities (ALFs) may now apply for funding under the Provider Relief Fund Phase 2 General Distribution allocation. This announcement bolsters the Trump administration's commitment to support health care providers in addressing both the economic harm and additional expenses caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This funding was made possible through the bipartisan CARES Act and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act.

\*September 2- [CMS Advancing Seniors' Access to Cutting-edge Therapies and Technology in Medicare Hospital Rule.](#) Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Medicare Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) and Long Term Acute Care Hospital (LTCH) final rule, which includes important provisions designed to ensure access to potentially life-saving diagnostics and therapies for hospitalized Medicare beneficiaries. The changes will affect approximately 3,200 acute care hospitals and approximately 360 Long-Term Care Hospitals (LTCHs). CMS estimates that total Medicare spending on acute care inpatient hospital services will increase by about \$3.5 billion in FY 2021, or 2.7 percent.

\*September 3- [CMS Care Compare Empowers Patients when Making Important Health Care Decisions.](#) Today, under the leadership of President Trump, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched [Care Compare](#), a streamlined redesign of eight existing CMS healthcare compare tools available on [Medicare.gov](#). Care Compare provides a single user-friendly interface that patients and caregivers can use to make informed decisions about healthcare based on cost, quality of care, volume of services, and other data. With just one

click, patients can find information that is easy to understand about doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care services instead of searching through multiple tools.

\*September 3- [HHS Release Rural Action Plan](#). On Monday, August 3, President Trump signed an executive order requesting that the Department of Health and Human Services produce a report on existing and upcoming efforts to improve rural healthcare. Today, HHS released the Rural Action Plan, the first HHS-wide assessment of rural healthcare efforts in more than 18 years and the product of HHS's Rural Task Force, a group of experts and leaders across the department first put together by Secretary Azar in 2019.

## Fact Sheet

\*August 31- [Proposed Medicare Coverage of Innovative Technology \(CMS-3372-P\)](#). On October 3, 2019, President Trump issued the *Executive Order on Protecting and Improving Medicare for Our Nation's Seniors (EO 13890)*. Based on the EO 13890 and CMS' continued focus on bringing new and innovative technologies to beneficiaries sooner, we are proposing a new Medicare coverage pathway, Medicare Coverage of Innovative Technology (MCIT), for FDA-designated breakthrough medical devices.

\*September 2- [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2021 Medicare Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System \(IPPS\) and Long Term Acute Care Hospital \(LTCH\) Final Rule \(CMS-1735-F\)](#). On September 2, 2020, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule for acute care and long term care hospitals that ensures access to potentially life-saving diagnostics and therapies by unleashing innovation in medical technology and removing barriers to competition. The final rule will update Medicare payment policies for hospitals under the Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) and the Long-Term Care Hospital (LTCH) Prospective Payment System (PPS) for fiscal year 2021.

## Blog

\*August 27- [When can I enroll in a 2021 Marketplace plan?](#) Here are some important Open Enrollment dates for 2021 coverage to mark on your calendar.

\*August 28- [How Common Sense and Hard Work Saved Taxpayers Hundreds of Millions on HHS IT Contracts](#). Imagine you manage a business that needs some particular equipment or service—say you run a number of ice cream stores and need to purchase ice cream cones. Of course, you want to get those supplies as cheaply as possible. You would naturally try to buy all the cones you need from the same place, using your big purchase as leverage so you get the best deal possible, rather than having each store buy its own cones. That's just commonsense, and it saves money.

\*August 31- [Spotlight on Naloxone Co-Prescribing](#). As we recognize International Overdose Awareness Day, HHS is calling attention to the co-prescription of naloxone, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medication that can save a person's life when administered during an opioid overdose. Naloxone is available in three formulations – nasal spray, injectable, and auto-injector – and at least one form of naloxone is covered by most health insurance plans, including Medicaid and Medicare.

\*September 2- [Signs of ovarian cancer: Know how to spot symptoms early](#). All women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but the greatest number of ovarian cancers happen in women 60 years or older. For women in the United States, ovarian cancer causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system, and it is the fifth leading cause of cancer death.

\*September 2- [An improved way to find & compare health care providers](#). It's more important than ever to be able to compare location, quality, and price information for health care providers. That's why we've launched Care Compare on Medicare.gov to make it easier to find and understand information about doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care services.

*CMS has developed a [Virtual Toolkit](#) to help you stay informed on CMS and HHS materials available on the COVID-19. Please share these materials, bookmark the page, and check back often for the most up-to-date information. For more information, please email [partnership@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:partnership@cms.hhs.gov)*