



CMS Snapshot

November 12-19, 2020

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

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, November 12 through 2pm Thursday, November 19, 2020.

News Releases

*November 12- [Trump Administration Partners with Chain and Independent Community Pharmacies to Increase Access to Future COVID-19 Vaccines](#). To maximize access to COVID-19 vaccines for all Americans, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced the U.S. government's partnerships with large chain pharmacies and networks that represent independent pharmacies and regional chains. Through the partnership with pharmacy chains, this program covers approximately 60 percent of pharmacies throughout the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

*November 13- [HHS OCR Provides Technical Assistance to Ensure New Jersey Department of Children and Families Protect Parents with Disabilities from Discrimination](#). Today, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announces that it has provided technical assistance to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) to ensure that parents with disabilities are protected from discrimination in DCF's Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP) programs.

*November 16- [Trump Administration Announces Medicare Fee-For-Service Estimated Improper Payments Decline by \\$15 Billion Since 2016](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced today that the Medicare Fee- For-Service (FFS) improper payment rate has continued to decline, reinforcing the Trump Administration and CMS' commitment to strengthening Medicare and protecting taxpayer dollars. This translates to less fraud, waste and abuse that can increase the fiscal burden on the nation's healthcare system.

*November 16- [HHS Secretary Azar Statement on Moderna Vaccine Announcement](#). On Monday, the National Institutes of Health announced that an independent data and safety monitoring board's interim review of data from Moderna's investigational COVID-19 vaccine suggests that the vaccine is safe and effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 in adults. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

*November 17- [CMS Releases Nursing Home COVID-19 Training Data with Urgent Call to Action.](#)

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is publicly recognizing the 1,092 nursing homes at which 50% or more of their staff have completed CMS training designed to help staff combat the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in nursing homes. CMS applauds these facilities for taking this critical step to equip their staff with the latest information regarding infection control, vaccine distribution, and other topics.

*November 17- [HHS Seeks Public Input on Leveraging Novel Technologies for Chronic Disease Management for Aging Underserved Populations.](#)

In an effort to improve access to emerging technologies and healthcare services, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), in partnership with federal agencies, has issued a Request for Information (RFI) to better inform the direction of Federal efforts. OASH and partners also seek to identify opportunities to strengthen the U.S. healthcare system through public-private partnerships for data sharing, comprehensive analytics, and other potential mechanisms.

*November 17- [HHS Launches First-of-its-Kind Regulatory Clean-Up Initiative Utilizing AI.](#) The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a final rule as part of a new department-wide regulatory clean-up initiative, the first of its kind utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) technologies, which will provide a foundation for future innovation across federal agencies.

*November 17- [Secretary Alex Azar Statement on FDA Authorization of First COVID-19 Test for Home Self-Tests.](#) On Tuesday, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the first COVID-19 diagnostic at-home test, the Lucira COVID-19 All-In-One Test Kit, a molecular test that provides results in 30 minutes or less and is authorized for use by prescription only. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

*November 18- [CMS Releases Updates to the Medicaid and CHIP Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System \(T-MSIS\) Data.](#) Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), updated certain research-ready Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System (T-MSIS) data files, which provides for a more robust and evolving collection of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) data. T-MSIS data is the most current and complete Medicaid and CHIP data resource available and builds upon years of CMS' work toward strengthening data availability for these coverage programs that serve more than 75 million low-income Americans.

*November 18- [CMS Urging Nursing Homes to Follow Established COVID Guidelines This Holiday Season.](#) Today, in advance of the approaching holiday season, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is urging nursing home staff, residents and visitors to follow established guidelines for visitation and adherence to the core principles of infection prevention. These guidelines include remaining six feet apart from individuals, wearing a face covering, and limiting the number of visitors in the nursing home at any one time. Adherence to

these principles is critical in preventing the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in America's nursing homes.

*November 19- [HHS Launches Pilot Program of Fast Molecular POC Test for COVID-19](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has launched a pilot program with five states to use portable, cartridge-based COVID-19 molecular test kits that provide rapid results. The pilot program will assess how to best integrate diagnostic technology developed by Cue Health, Inc., into strategies for disease surveillance and infection control in institutions such as nursing homes.

*November 19- [OCR Settles Twelfth Investigation in HIPAA Right of Access Initiative](#). The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announces its twelfth settlement of an enforcement action in its HIPAA Right of Access Initiative. OCR announced this initiative as an enforcement priority in 2019 to support individuals' right to timely access to their health records at a reasonable cost under the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

*November 19- [HHS Office for Civil Rights Reaches Landmark Agreement with Massachusetts Department of Children and Families to Address Discrimination Against Parents with Disabilities](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced today that they have reached a landmark agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Fact Sheets

*November 12- [Federal Health Insurance Exchange Weekly Enrollment Snapshot: Week 1](#). Week 1, November 1-November 7, 2020. In week one of the 2021 Open Enrollment period, 818,365 people selected plans using the HealthCare.gov platform. As in past years, enrollment weeks are measured Sunday through Saturday.

*November 16- [2020 Estimated Improper Payment Rates for Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Programs](#). The Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 requires CMS to periodically review programs it administers, identify programs that may be susceptible to significant improper payments, estimate the amount of improper payments, and report on the improper payment estimates and the Agency's actions to reduce improper payments in the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) annual Agency Financial Report (AFR).

*November 18- [Fact Sheet: Medicaid and CHIP T-MSIS Analytic Files Data Release](#). Given the primary role that Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) serve as the backbone of our nation's safety net health care system, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has made significant investments in these programs' information technology and data analytic infrastructure to improve access to high-quality, timely Medicaid and CHIP data.

*November 19- [Federal Health Insurance Exchange Weekly Enrollment Snapshot: Week Two](#). Week Two, November 8-November 14, 2020. In Week Two of the 2021 Open Enrollment period, 803,741 people selected plans using the HealthCare.gov platform. As in past years, enrollment weeks are measured Sunday through Saturday.

Blogs

*November 13- [4 things to consider when comparing Medicare plans](#). Comparing Medicare health and prescription drug plans can be complicated. Keep in mind these 4 things to make your plan choice easier with the [Medicare Plan Finder](#).

*November 16- [How We Reimagined HHS](#). On October 1, 2020, I had the honor of graduating the last of the ten ReImagine HHS Initiatives into permanent homes across HHS. These Initiatives that are now institutionalized within the Department are the forerunners for future projects that will keep HHS ahead of the curve in an ever-evolving health and human services environment.

*November 18- [A COPD screening is more important now than ever](#). Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a group of diseases that cause breathing problems, like emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthma. In the United States, tobacco smoke is a key factor in the development and progression of COPD. Having COPD significantly increases your [risk of severe illness from coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

*November 19- [Less than one month remains for 2021 health coverage that starts Jan 1](#).

Important: 2021 Open Enrollment ends Tuesday, December 15, 2020! You have less than one month to enroll in or change Marketplace health insurance for coverage that starts January 1, 2021. If you miss the deadline, you can only enroll in or change your health plan for 2021 if you qualify for a [Special Enrollment Period](#).

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