



CMS Snapshot

April 16-23, 2020

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

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, April 16 through 2pm Thursday, April 23, 2020.

News Releases

*April 17- [Secretary Azar Statement on New Partnership to Develop National Strategy for COVID-19 Therapies and Vaccines](#). On Friday, the National Institutes of Health and the Foundation for NIH announced plans underway to launch a public-private partnership, known as the [Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines \(ACTIV\) partnership](#), with more than a dozen biopharmaceutical companies, HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and the European Medicines Agency, to develop a national strategy for a coordinated research response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*April 19- [Trump Administration Announces New Nursing Homes COVID-19 Transparency Effort](#). Today, under the leadership of President Trump, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced [new regulatory requirements](#) that will require nursing homes to inform residents, their families and representatives of COVID-19 cases in their facilities. In addition, as part of President Trump's Opening Up America, CMS will now require nursing homes to report cases of COVID-19 directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

*April 19- [CMS Issues Recommendations to Re-Open Health Care Systems in Areas with Low Incidence of COVID-19](#). As the United States continues to face the unprecedented public health emergency from the COVID-19 pandemic, the tide is turning and some areas throughout the country are seeing a decline in cases. As states and localities begin to stabilize, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is issuing guidance on providing essential non-COVID-19 care to patients without symptoms of COVID-19 in regions with low and stable incidence of COVID-19. This is part of Phase 1 in the Trump Administration's Guidelines for Opening Up America Again.

*April 20- [Oracle Donates Therapeutic Learning System to HHS to Gather Crowd-Sourced Data on COVID-19](#). The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is announcing an ongoing

partnership with Oracle, including Oracle's donation to HHS of the Therapeutic Learning System, an online platform designed to collect real-time medical data related to COVID-19.

*April 20- [SAMHSA Moves Quickly to Begin Releasing \\$110 Million in Emergency Grant Funding to Provide Americans with Substance Use Treatment and Mental Health Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has expedited its process to today release emergency grants to strengthen access to treatments for substance use disorders and serious mental illnesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*April 20- [Trump Administration Champions Reporting of COVID-19 Clinical Trial Data through Quality Payment Program, Announces New Clinical Trials Improvement Activity](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is encouraging clinicians who participate in the Quality Payment Program (QPP), such as physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and others, to contribute to scientific research and evidence to fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Clinicians may now earn credit in the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), a performance-based track of QPP that incentivizes quality and value, for participation in a clinical trial and reporting clinical information by attesting to the new *COVID-19 Clinical Trials* improvement activity.

*April 21- [CMS News Alert April 21, 2020](#). Here is a summary of recent Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) actions taken in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), as 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 www.coronavirus.gov. For information specific to CMS, please visit the [CMS News Room](#) and [Current Emergencies Website](#). CMS updates these resources on an ongoing basis throughout the day; the information below is current as of April 21, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.

*April 21- [HHS Announces Nearly \\$1 Billion in CARES Act Grants to Support Older Adults and People with Disabilities in the Community During the COVID-19 Emergency](#). Today, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is announcing \$955 million in grants from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to help meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities as communities implement measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The grants will fund home-delivered meals; care services in the home; respite care and other support to families and caregivers; information about and referral to supports; and more.

*April 21- [Statements from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on Interoperability Flexibilities amid the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#). Today, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), in conjunction with the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced a policy of enforcement discretion to allow compliance flexibilities regarding the implementation of the [interoperability final rules](#) announced on March 9th in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) public health emergency. ONC,

CMS, and OIG will continue to monitor the implementation landscape to determine if further action is needed.

*April 21- [Secretary Azar Statement on Confirmation of Rear Admiral Weahkee as IHS Director](#). On Tuesday, the Senate confirmed, by voice vote, Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee to serve as Director of the Indian Health Service for four years. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

*April 21- [CMS Issues Guidance Allowing Independent Freestanding Emergency Departments to Provide Care to Medicare and Medicaid Beneficiaries during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued critical guidance allowing licensed, independent freestanding emergency departments (IFEDs) in Colorado, Delaware, Rhode Island, and Texas to temporarily provide care to Medicare and Medicaid patients to address any surge. This action by the Trump Administration increases hospital capacity to ensure these states can quickly and effectively care for their most vulnerable citizens.

*April 22- [HHS Awards Nearly \\$165 Million to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic in Rural Communities](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded nearly \$165 million to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in rural communities. These investments will support 1,779 small rural hospitals and provide additional funding to 14 HRSA-funded Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs) to provide technical assistance on telehealth to help rural and underserved areas combat COVID-19.

*April 22- [HHS Announces Additional Allocations of CARES Act Provider Relief Fund](#). President Donald J. Trump signed the bipartisan CARES Act legislation to provide relief to American families, workers, and the heroic healthcare providers on the frontline of the COVID-19 outbreak. \$100 billion is being distributed by the Administration to healthcare providers, including hospitals battling this disease.

*April 22- [Trump Administration Launches New Toolkit to Help States Navigate COVID-19 Health Workforce Challenges](#). At President Trump's direction, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR) released a new toolkit to help state and local healthcare decision makers maximize workforce flexibilities when confronting 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in their communities.

*April 23- [HHS Announces CARES Act Funding Distribution to States and Localities in Support of COVID-19 Response](#). The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is announcing upcoming action by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide additional resources to state and local jurisdictions in support of our nation's response to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

*April 23- [HHS Awards Nearly \\$5 Million to Poison Control Centers as Calls Spike Due to COVID-19](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), awarded nearly \$5 million to Poison Control Centers across the country to improve their capacity to respond to increased calls due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*April 23- [CMS News Alert April 23, 2020](#). Here is a summary of recent Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) actions taken in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), as 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 www.coronavirus.gov. For information specific to CMS, please visit the [CMS News Room](#) and [Current Emergencies Website](#). CMS updates these resources on an ongoing basis throughout the day; the information below is current as of April 23, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

*April 23- [Trump Administration Releases COVID-19 Telehealth Toolkit to Accelerate State Use of Telehealth in Medicaid and CHIP](#). Today, the Trump Administration released a new [toolkit](#) for states to help accelerate adoption of broader telehealth coverage policies in the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This release builds on the agency's swift actions to provide states with a wide range of tools and guidance to support their ability to care for their Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries during this public health emergency.

Fact Sheets

*April 16- [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2021 Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities \(IRF\) Prospective Payment System \(PPS\) \(CMS-1729-P\)](#). On April 16, 2020, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a proposed rule that updates Medicare payment policies and rates for facilities under the Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility Prospective Payment System (IRF PPS) for fiscal year (FY) 2021. The IRF PPS proposed rule is one of five proposed Medicare payment rules released on a fiscal year cycle to define payment and policy for inpatient hospitals, long-term care hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, inpatient psychiatric facilities, skilled nursing facilities, and hospices.

Blog

*April 17- [When to Seek Emergency Care](#). We are all doing our part to help slow the spread during the COVID-19 pandemic. Physical distancing is important to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but it is equally important that you monitor your health and know when to seek emergency medical care for serious symptoms that are not related to COVID-19. You may be

concerned about going to a hospital or urgent care site during this outbreak, when many people are seeking care for coronavirus.

*April 22- [Going electronic is easy with Medicare online resources](#). Earth Day, celebrated on April 22, is a great time to think about ways to reduce your carbon footprint. Medicare's online resources make reducing your use of paper easier.

*April 22- [Coronavirus & Medicare enrollment: Get the coverage you need](#). To help stop the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), many businesses have temporarily closed. If you recently stopped working or lost your health coverage through your job (or another person's job, like your spouse), you may qualify for a [Special Enrollment Period](#) to enroll in Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance).

*April 22- [Health Providers: Join the Telehealth Revolution](#). As healthcare providers, we swear an oath at medical school graduation that guides us through our careers. Whether on the job or walking down the street, we carry this promise, to our patients, communities, and society as a whole.

Items of Interest

*April 21- CMS Office of Minority Health- Deadline Extended to Review and Comment on Rural Maternal Health Care. The deadline has been extended to submit comments to a Request for Information (RFI) to seek public comments regarding rural maternal and infant health care. To review the RFI, please visit go.cms.gov/ruralhealth. CMS encourages all stakeholders to review the RFI at go.cms.gov/ruralhealth and submit comments to RuralMaternalRFI@cms.hhs.gov. Comments will be collected until Sunday, May 31 at 11:59pm ET.

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