

COVID-19 Report to Members ~ June 29, 2020

Reports are sent on Mondays and Thursdays, unless there's breaking news.



Reimbursement & Policy

Enhanced FMAP during COVID-19

The American Hospital Association and all 50 state hospital associations today committed to collectively advocate for additional financial relief from Congress because of the coronavirus pandemic. The group determined that the fastest way to get the money to states – all of which are facing budget shortfalls – is to support an additional increase in the FMAP beyond the existing enhanced 6.2% increase included as part of the Families First COVID relief package. The FMAP increase would be phased down over time as the impact of the pandemic dissipates.

This option would provide states with additional funding that could help them avoid adverse actions, such as provider reimbursement cuts. However, it would be more broad-based across all Medicaid enrollees, likely resulting in more federal dollars for states. It does not, however, include an explicit protection of reimbursement rates and would face the same political challenges at the state level on how those funds are used.

Idaho waiver for long term care facilities issued

On June 19, the Bureau of Facility Standards **issued a waiver** for home health agencies. The waiver will allow state licensed home health entities to follow the federal requirements outline in the CARES Act. The waiver allows a Medicare patient to be under the care of a nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, or a physician assistant who is working in accordance with Idaho law.

Home health administrators are advised to monitor the status of this waiver at the state level. While CMS has stated this waiver will be permanent and extend beyond the duration of the public health emergency, IDHW's has communicated to Idaho agencies that the waiver's effective date is retroactive to March 1 and will remain in effect until revised or revoked.

Resources & Equipment

Updated visitation guidelines

As hospitals enter what is referred to as "Phase II" of reopening, CMS has issued **modified guidance for hospital visitation**. While they are not recommending welcoming all visitors back to facilities, they have offered modified guidance that addresses both public safety as well as the emotional and health needs of patients. The recommendations are only for patients who test negative for or are not suspected of having COVID-19.

Quality & Patient Safety

Universal masking recommended for healthcare workers

CDC guidance calls for the implementation of universal source control measures at healthcare facilities, including – at a minimum – the use of cloth face coverings or facemasks by inpatients, outpatients, and healthcare personnel while on hospital premises. A **recent publication** by researchers in North Carolina measured incident SARS-CoV-2 infections among healthcare workers (HCW) at Duke Health before and after implementation of universal masking policies. Universal masking of HCWs was associated with a significant decrease in healthcare-acquired SARS-CoV-2 infections. HCWs in this study included all staff working in the inpatient or outpatient healthcare setting, **regardless of the provision of direct patient care**.

Atypical presentations of SARS-CoV-2 infection along with its ability to be transmitted from asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic individuals pose unique infection prevention challenges. Universal masking is a strategy to preserve the healthcare workforce and protect patients by reducing the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from HCW to HCW, from patient to HCW, and from HCW to patient.

The researchers state that "[m]ask etiquette, defined as 'wearing a mask at all times around anyone outside of your household contacts when physical distancing is not possible, limiting unmasked exposures indoors, and performing hand hygiene before and after touching your mask' needs to be reinforced both inside and outside of the workplace to help preserve the HCW workforce. Mask etiquette must also be performed alongside other infection prevention measures including symptom screening, following standard and transmission-based precautions, hand hygiene, physical distancing, and self-isolation coupled with immediate testing and contact notification when symptomatic."

[Click to get our COVID-19 Updates](#)

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

615 N. 7th St.
Boise, ID | 83701 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma®