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Official CMS news from the Medicare Learning Network®

Thursday, July 16, 2020

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News

CMS Directs Additional Resources to Nursing Homes in COVID-19 Hotspot Areas

CMS announced a targeted approach to provide additional resources to nursing homes in Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) hotspot areas. Specifically, we plan to:

- Deploy Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) across the country to provide immediate assistance to nursing homes in the hotspot areas as identified by the White House Coronavirus Task Force
- Implement an enhanced survey process tailored to meet the specific concerns of hotspot areas and coordinate federal, state, and local efforts to leverage all available resources to these facilities

The purpose of these efforts is to target facilities with known infection control issues by providing resources and support that will help them improve quality and safety and protect vulnerable Americans. This is part of the Administration's ongoing efforts to protect the health and safety of nursing home residents across the country during the public health emergency.

For more information, visit the [QIO](#) website. See the full text of this excerpted [CMS News Alert](#) (issued July 10).

Five Things About Nursing Homes During COVID-19

On July 9, CMS shared [Five Things About Nursing Homes During COVID-19](#), part of an ongoing series by HHS. Safeguarding the health and well-being of the most vulnerable and fragile Americans is a top priority for the Trump Administration. [Watch](#) to hear from Administrator Seema Verma about five things CMS is doing to stop the spread of coronavirus in nursing homes.

PEPPER for Short-term Acute Care Hospitals

First quarter FY 2020 Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Reports (PEPPERs) are available for short-term acute care hospitals. These reports summarize provider-specific data statistics for Medicare services that may be at risk for improper payments. Use your data to support internal auditing and monitoring activities. The PEPPER files were recently distributed through a QualityNet secure file exchange to hospital QualityNet Administrators and user accounts with the PEPPER recipient role.

For More Information:

- Visit the [PEPPER Resources](#) website for the [user's guide](#), [recorded training sessions](#), QualityNet account information, [FAQs](#), and examples of how other hospitals are using the report
- Visit the [Help Desk](#) if you have questions or need help obtaining your report
- Send us your [feedback or suggestions](#)

Lower Extremity Joint Replacement: Comparative Billing Report

CMS issued a Comparative Billing Report (CBR) on Lower Extremity Joint Replacement, focusing on providers who submit Medicare Part B claims. These reports contain data-driven tables with an explanation of findings that compare your billing and payment patterns to those of your peers in your state and across the nation.

CBRs are not publicly available. Look for an email from cbrpepper.noreply@religroupinc.com to access your report. Update your contact email address in the Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System to ensure accurate delivery.

For More Information:

- View a [webinar recording](#)
- Visit the [CBR](#) website

Events

Nursing Home Training Series Webcasts: New Topic for July 16

Establishing an Infection Prevention Program in a Nursing Home, With an Emphasis on COVID-19
Thursday, July 16 from 4 to 5 pm ET

[Register](#) for this webcast.

This series is brought to you by CMS and the Quality Improvement Organization Program, a national network of Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organizations serving every state and territory. During this session, learn to:

- Identify the key components of an infection prevention program
- Describe the best-practice strategies needed to establish a program
- Understand the key elements necessary for ongoing infection prevention surveillance

Miss a training? View recordings, slides, and resources on QIOProgram.org.

COVID-19: Lessons from the Front Lines Call — July 17

Friday, July 17 from 12:30 to 2 pm ET

These calls are a joint effort between CMS Administrator Seema Verma, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Stephen Hahn, MD, and the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Physicians and other clinicians: Share your experience, ideas, strategies, and insights related to your COVID-19 response. There is an opportunity to ask questions.

To Participate:

- Conference lines are limited; we encourage you to join via [audio webcast](#)
- Or, call 833-614-0820; Access Code: 3096434

For More Information:

- [Coronavirus.gov](#)
- [CMS Current Emergencies](#) website
- [Podcast and Transcripts](#) webpage: Audio recordings and transcripts

Target Audience: Physicians and other clinicians.

MLN Matters® Articles

Changes to the Laboratory National Coverage Determination (NCD) Edit Software for October 2020

A new MLN Matters Article MM11889 on [Changes to the Laboratory National Coverage Determination \(NCD\) Edit Software for October 2020](#) is available. Learn about changes to the software for clinical diagnostic laboratory services.

Influenza Vaccine Payment Allowances - Annual Update for 2020-2021 Season

A new MLN Matters Article MM11882 on [Influenza Vaccine Payment Allowances - Annual Update for 2020-2021 Season](#) is available. Learn about payment allowances, effective August 1.

Medicare Part A Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Prospective Payment System (PPS) Pricer Update FY 2021

A new MLN Matters Article MM11859 on [Medicare Part A Skilled Nursing Facility \(SNF\) Prospective Payment System \(PPS\) Pricer Update FY 2021](#) is available. Learn about annual updates to the payment rates.

October 2020 Quarterly Average Sales Price (ASP) Medicare Part B Drug Pricing Files and Revisions to Prior Quarterly Pricing Files

A new MLN Matters Article MM11854 on [October 2020 Quarterly Average Sales Price \(ASP\) Medicare Part B Drug Pricing Files and Revisions to Prior Quarterly Pricing Files](#) is available. Learn about new and revised pricing files.

Quarterly Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Drug/Biological Code Changes - July 2020 Update

A new MLN Matters Article MM11769 on [Quarterly Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System \(HCPCS\) Drug/Biological Code Changes - July 2020 Update](#) is available. Learn about dates of service for payable codes.

July 2020 Update of the Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) Payment System — Revised

A revised MLN Matters Article MM11842 on [July 2020 Update of the Ambulatory Surgical Center \(ASC\) Payment System](#) is available. Learn about billing instructions and updates to HCPCS codes.

July 2020 Update of the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) — Revised

A revised MLN Matters Article MM11814 on [July 2020 Update of the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System \(OPPS\)](#) is available. Learn about changes to payment policies and billing instructions.

Quarterly Update for Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule and Laboratory Services Subject to Reasonable Charge Payment — Revised

A revised MLN Matters Article MM11815 on [Quarterly Update for Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule and Laboratory Services Subject to Reasonable Charge Payment](#) is available. Learn about COVID-19 codes 87426, 0223U and 0224U.

Claim Status Category Codes and Claim Status Codes Update — Rescinded

MLN Matters Article MM11699 on [Claim Status Category Codes and Claim Status Codes Update](#) is rescinded. The related change request was rescinded and will not be replaced. See the [Medicare Claims Processing Manual, Chapter 31](#) for information about these codes.

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