



CMS Snapshot

August 23-29, 2019

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

News Releases

*August 23- [CMS Guidance to States Outlines Sponsor Deeming and Repayment Requirements for Certain Immigrants seeking Medicaid and CHIP Coverage](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued guidance to states today regarding how they should determine certain sponsored immigrants' eligibility for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Today's guidance follows the issuance of the Presidential Memorandum on Enforcing the Legal Responsibilities of Sponsors of Aliens, which directs relevant federal agencies to update or issue procedures and guidance as needed, to ensure compliance with the sponsor deeming and repayment obligations under current law.

*August 25- [Secretary Azar Participates in Closing Ceremony for USNS Comfort in Santa Marta, Colombia](#). Today, August 25, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar participated in a closing ceremony for the USNS Comfort in Santa Marta, Colombia with Rear Admiral Steven D. Poulin, SOUTHCOM Director of Operations; Mark Wells, Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Colombia; Dr. Juan Pablo Uribe, Colombian Minister of Health; Carlos Holmes Trujillo, Colombian Foreign Minister; and General Luis Fernando Navarro Jiménez of the Colombian Navy.

*August 27- [Medicare Plan Finder Gets an Upgrade for the First Time in a Decade](#). For the first time in a decade, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today launched a modernized and redesigned Medicare Plan Finder. The Medicare Plan Finder, the most used tool on Medicare.gov, allows users to shop and compare Medicare Advantage and Part D plans. There are more than 60 million people with Medicare coverage. The updated Medicare Plan Finder also provides them and their caregivers with a personalized experience through a mobile friendly and easy-to-read design that will help them learn about different options and select coverage that best meets their health needs. The new Plan Finder walks users through the Medicare Advantage and Part D enrollment process from start to finish and allows people to view and compare many of the supplemental benefits that Medicare Advantage plans offer.

*August 27- [Secretary Azar Attends Health Ministerial Meeting in Cucuta, Colombia on the Venezuelan Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis](#). Yesterday, August 26, Health and Human Services

Secretary Alex Azar attended a ministerial meeting with fellow health ministers from the Americas region concerning the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and its effects on public health in the hemisphere. During the morning, the health ministers visited many sites along the border that are assisting and providing care to Venezuelans who face significant health challenges from infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases that have gone untreated because the failed Maduro regime has destroyed the nation's healthcare system.

*August 28- [CMS offers broad support for Puerto Rico with Hurricane Dorian preparation.](#) The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today announced efforts underway to support Puerto Rico in response to Hurricane Dorian. Today, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency (PHE) in the Commonwealth. CMS is working to ensure hospitals and other facilities can continue operations and provide access to care despite the effects of Hurricane Dorian. CMS will be waiving certain Medicare, Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) requirements; creating special enrollment opportunities for individuals to access healthcare quickly; and taking steps to ensure dialysis patients obtain critical life-saving services.

*August 28- [OCR Issues Notice of Violation to the University of Vermont Medical Center After It Unlawfully Forced a Nurse to Assist in Abortion.](#) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is announcing that, after a thorough investigation and prolonged attempts to resolve the matter, OCR has issued a Notice of Violation letter finding that the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMCC) violated the Church Amendments (42 U.S.C. 300a-7) by forcing a nurse to assist in an elective abortion procedure over the nurse's conscience-based objections. OCR also found that UVMCC has discriminatory policies that assign or require employees to assist abortion procedures even after they have recorded their religious or moral objections to assisting in the performance of such abortions. OCR's Notice of Violation letter asks UVMCC to conform its policies to the Church Amendments and take other corrective action, or face potential action by the HHS component from which UVMCC has received federal funding.

*August 28- [HHS Secretary Azar Declares Public Health Emergency for Puerto Rico Due to Hurricane Dorian.](#) Following President Trump's emergency declaration for Puerto Rico, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar today declared a public health emergency in the territory as Hurricane Dorian makes landfall. The declaration gives the HHS Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) beneficiaries and their healthcare providers and suppliers greater flexibility in meeting emergency health needs.

Blogs

*August 27- [Try Our New and Improved Medicare Plan Finder.](#) Medicare's redesigned Plan Finder makes it easier than ever to compare coverage options, shop for plans and feel confident

in your choice — even when you're on-the-go. This mobile-friendly tool now works on your smart phone, tablet, and desktop.

*August 28- [Ensuring Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes: Five Part Strategy Deep Dive](#). In April, I was proud to announce the five-part approach the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is using to guide our work as we ensure safety and quality in America's nursing homes. We at CMS bear the responsibility to develop and enforce quality and safety standards across the nation's health care system, and we are deeply committed to that job. Every nursing home resident deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and all of our nursing home work at CMS is predicated upon that single goal.

Podcasts

*August 29- [CMS: Beyond the Policy- Episode 6: "Dispatches from the Blue Button Developers Conference"](#). Today's edition is titled "Dispatches from the Blue Button Developers Conference." This annual event brings together some of the nation's top private-sector developers who are helping CMS to better serve Medicare beneficiaries by leveraging Medicare claims data. This podcast features key remarks from CMS Administrator Seema Verma, the application developers and Medicare beneficiaries, regarding the launch of the pilot project, Data at the Point of Care, and the value of these applications.

Upcoming Events and Items of Interest:

*CMS Open Door Forums

[Open Door Forum: New Medicare Card](#): The proposed agenda for the next New Medicare Card Open Door Forum scheduled for Wednesday, September 11, 2019, from 2:00pm-3:00pm ET is as follows: New Medicare Card Project Update. If you wish to participate, dial 1-888-455-1397 Conference Passcode: 4676500

[Special Open Door Forum: Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation \(HOPE\) Tool---Status Update](#). This Special Open Door Forum (ODF) is to allow hospices and other interested parties to ask questions on the development of a Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE) Tool on Thursday, September 12, 2019, 2:00pm-3:00pm ET. This SODF is part of a series of regular SODF's CMS plans to host on this patient assessment tool and other key topics related to the Hospice Quality Reporting Program. The purpose of a HOPE Tool is to develop outcome and other quality measures that relate to the care needs of people through the dying process and to ensure the safety and comfort of individuals enrolled in hospice institutions nationwide. The SODF will provide a status update and welcomes your questions. Special Open Door Participation Instructions: Participant Dial-In Number: 1-888-455-1397, Conference Passcode: 4676500

[Open Door Forum: Long-Term Services and Support:](#) The next Long-Term Services and Support Open Door Forum scheduled for Tuesday, September 17, 2019, from 2:00pm-3:00pm ET. If you wish to participate, dial 1-888-455-1397 Conference Passcode: TBD

[Open Door Forum: Home Health, Hospice and DME:](#) The next Home Health, Hospice and DME Open Door Forum scheduled for Wednesday, September 18, 2019, from 2:00pm-3:00pm ET. If you wish to participate, dial 1-888-455-1397 Conference Passcode: TBD

[Open Door Forum: Skilled Nursing Facilities/Long Term Care:](#) The next Skilled Nursing Facilities/Long Term Care Open Door Forum scheduled for Thursday, September 19, 2019, from 2:00pm-3:00pm ET. If you wish to participate, dial 1-888-455-1397 Conference Passcode: TBD

[Open Door Forum: Employers:](#) The next Employers Open Door Forum scheduled for Tuesday, September 24, 2019, from 2:00pm-3:00pm ET. If you wish to participate, dial 1-888-455-1397 Conference Passcode: TBD

***New Medicare Plan Finder Webinar**

September 5, 2019 2pm-3pmET. The Medicare Plan Finder on [Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) helps people with Medicare compare and choose coverage options, including Medicare health and drug plans. This webinar will preview and walk through Plan Finder updates that are planned for Open Enrollment 2019. To register for this webinar, visit:

http://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1258784&tp_key=53eabd72e7 .

Upon registration, you'll get an email and have the option to add the event to your calendar.

***Back-to-School and School-Based Outreach on Medicaid and CHIP**

Before and during the school year, there are a variety of ways to let parents and caregivers know that their children and teens may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). With health insurance, they can get the immunizations, check-ups, eye exams, dental visits and other care they may need to fully participate in classroom, after-school and summer activities. Schools are great partners to help reach and enroll families with children who are eligible for Medicaid and CHIP.

The Insure Kids Now Campaign has outreach tools and materials to support school-based outreach efforts. Below are outreach materials specifically tailored for Back-to-School and other school-based outreach. You can learn about how others have used these and other campaign materials in our eNewsletters, webinars and videos.

The School-Based Outreach and Enrollment Toolkit can be found [here](#). Tips and ideas, palmcards, posters, social media messages, sample newsletter articles and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) scripts can be found [here](#).

***2019 Medicare National Training Program Workshops**

[Registration](#) for the 2019 CMS National Training Program (NTP) workshops is open. The cities and dates for the workshops are listed below. You're invited to attend at the location and days of your choice to meet your schedule and learning needs.

- Providence, RI: September 10-12

The workshops in Providence will be 3 full days. Agendas will be available on the registration site.

Please note, the CMS Kansas City Regional Office will be hosting similar training locally (tentatively in Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa). Dates and locations will be announced shortly.

What we'll cover:

- High-level and specific information on key aspects of the Medicare Program
- Information on Opioids
- A "Current Topics" session to raise awareness of program changes and innovations
- An overview of the new Plan Finder on Medicare.gov
- Scenario-based learning
- Please note, these workshops don't include information on billing

NTP training workbooks will be provided onsite for Day 1 and Day 3. Additional meeting materials will be available for download on the registration website prior to the workshops. If you would like access, please download and/or print. Free Wi-Fi will be available in the meeting room.

[Register](#) for a 2019 National Training Program Workshop

NOTE: Registration requests will be considered on a first-come, first-serve basis until each meeting reaches capacity. The number of attendees from the same organization may be limited.

***Save the Date: National Medicare Education Program (NMEP) Meeting**

- *September 16, 2019, 10:30 – 12:30 pm EST*
- *In-Person Meeting in the CMS Washington, D.C. Office*
- *Registration and Agenda will be coming soon*

For more information please email partnership@cms.hhs.gov