

CARES Act Financial Guidance to State Survey Agencies

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released guidance to State Survey Agencies (SAs) for the award and administration of supplemental funding provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136). Congress appropriated \$100 million in supplemental funds for costs survey and certification efforts with a focus on areas where there is community spread of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Of this amount, we expect to provide SAs approximately \$81 million which will be available for spending through September 30, 2023.

The survey and certification budget has remained at \$397 million annually, since October 1, 2014, while the number of nursing home complaint investigations has increased by over 5,500 (from 54,646 in FY 2015 to 60,310 in FY 2019). There are currently 15,673 nursing homes in the United States which are required to be surveyed annually. CMS and State Survey Agencies performed 74,916 onsite nursing home surveys in the last year, alone. This additional funding represents a 6% increase over the previously flat-lined funding amount for each of the four years appropriated.

With this funding, states will be able to complete focused infection control survey for nursing homes by July 2020, increase complaint surveys based on COVID-19 trend data reported by nursing homes to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and perform “re-opening” surveys of facilities with previous COVID-19 outbreaks using unique survey protocols to ensure the facilities have Infection Control systems if there is another phase of the outbreak. States will be able to purchase additional PPE (for example, N-95 face masks, surgical gowns, goggles, gloves, and thermometers) for surveyors to ensure worker safety.

CMS is closely coordinating with federal, state, local, and private sector stakeholders to make sure these efforts are complementary across programs, reflect evolving factors associated with the Coronavirus, and provide the highest priority response activities, without overly burdening facilities treating patients with COVID-19.

Since February, CMS has taken unprecedented action to address COVID-19 within nursing homes. On [February 6](#), CMS took action to prepare the United States for COVID-19 by reissuing longstanding infection control guidelines. CMS then moved quickly to address the rapid spread of infection by issuing guidance on new [screening processes](#) for facilities, on the use of [personal protective equipment](#) (PPE), and on [temporary restrictions](#) on non-essential medical staff and visitors in March. CMS immediately followed these actions by [prioritizing routine inspections](#) to conduct targeted surveys for infection control and complaints resulting in findings of Immediate

Jeopardy situation. The Agency also issued a [call to action](#) for nursing homes and state and local governments as a means of reinforcing infection control responsibilities and urging leaders to work closely with facilities to determine needs for testing and PPE. Recently, CMS announced [payment increases](#) for certain lab tests that use high-throughput technologies to rapidly diagnose large numbers of COVID-19 cases. Finally, CMS will now require nursing homes to [report cases of COVID-19](#) directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and inform residents and their families and representatives of COVID-19 cases within their facilities in an effort to improve transparency.

Additional information related to the Commission will be available soon. To keep up with the important and ongoing work of the White House Coronavirus Task Force in response to COVID-19, visit www.coronavirus.gov. For information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).