



CMS Snapshot

March 13-19, 2020

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

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, March 13 through 2pm Thursday, March 19, 2020.

News Releases

*March 13- [CMS Announces New Measures to Protect Nursing Home Residents from COVID-19](#). As part of the broader Trump Administration announcement today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced critical new measures designed to keep America's nursing home residents safe from the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The measures take the form of a [memorandum](#) and is based on the [newest recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

*March 13- [CMS Takes Action Nationwide to Aggressively Respond to Coronavirus National Emergency](#). The Trump Administration today announced aggressive actions and regulatory flexibilities to help healthcare providers and states respond to and contain the spread of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is taking these actions following President Trump's declaration of a national emergency due to COVID-19 earlier today.

*March 13- [Emergency Declaration Press Call Remarks by CMS Administrator Seema Verma](#). *Emergency Declaration Press Call Remarks by CMS Administrator Seema Verma (As prepared for delivery – March 13, 2020)*. As you know, earlier today, President Trump declared the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation a national emergency. This bold move empowers CMS to waive certain federal requirements in Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP to rapidly expand the Administration's aggressive efforts against COVID-19 led by the White House Coronavirus Taskforce.

*March 13- [CMS Publishes FAQs to Ensure Individuals, Issuers and States have Clear Information on Coverage Benefits for COVID-19](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is posting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Essential Health Benefits (EHB) Coverage in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This action is part of the broader, ongoing effort by the White House Coronavirus Task Force to ensure that all Americans – particularly those at high-risk of complications from the COVID-19 virus – have

access to the health benefits that can help keep them healthy while helping to contain the spread of this disease.

*March 13- [HHS funds development of COVID-19 diagnostic tests](#). Two diagnostic tests that may detect severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in approximately one hour will receive advanced development support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response ([ASPR](#)).

*March 13- [Secretary Azar Designates Admiral Giroir to Coordinate COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing Efforts](#). On Thursday, March 12, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar designated Admiral Brett Giroir, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health and head of the Public Health Service, to coordinate COVID-19 diagnostic testing efforts among Public Health Service agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration, as well as state and local public health authorities and private or public clinical laboratories.

*March 13- [Statement from Secretary Azar on President Trump's National Emergency Declaration](#). On Friday, HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement regarding President Trump's declaration that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States represents a national emergency.

*March 16- [Secretary Azar Statement on Launch of Phase 1 COVID-19 Vaccine Trial](#). On Monday, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health [announced](#) that a Phase 1 clinical trial evaluating an investigational vaccine designed to protect against COVID-19 has begun at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute in Seattle, funded by NIH.

*March 17- [OCR Announces Notification of Enforcement Discretion for Telehealth Remote Communications During the COVID-19 Nationwide Public Health Emergency](#). Today, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced, effective immediately, that it will exercise its enforcement discretion and will waive potential penalties for HIPAA violations against health care providers that serve patients through everyday communications technologies during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency.

*March 17- [Secretary Azar Announces Historic Expansion of Telehealth Access to Combat COVID-19](#). On Tuesday, the Trump Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced unprecedented steps to expand Americans' access to telehealth services during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) expanded Medicare coverage for telehealth visits, the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced it will waive potential HIPAA penalties for good faith use of telehealth during the emergency, and the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) provided flexibility for healthcare

providers to reduce or waive beneficiary cost-sharing for telehealth visits paid by federal healthcare programs.

*March 17- [CMS Approves First State Request for 1135 Medicaid Waiver in Florida](#). On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation a national emergency. This bold action enables the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to waive certain requirements in Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP under Section 1135 authority.

*March 17- [President Trump Expands Telehealth Benefits for Medicare Beneficiaries During COVID-19 Outbreak](#). The Trump Administration today announced expanded Medicare telehealth coverage that will enable beneficiaries to receive a wider range of healthcare services from their doctors without having to travel to a healthcare facility.

*March 17- [CMS Sends Guidance to Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly \(PACE\) Organizations](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued guidance to all Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) Organizations (POs) to protect the health and safety of Americans in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. PACE is a Medicare and Medicaid program that helps people meet their healthcare needs in the community instead of going to a nursing home or other care facility.

*March 18- [HHS Takes New Action to Cut Red Tape to Support COVID-19 Response](#). On Wednesday, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) launched an information collection effort to support the Trump Administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, surveying HRSA-funded health centers on their involvement in the COVID-19 response, including whether they are offering diagnostic tests.

*March 18- [HHS Supports Mesa Biotech to Develop a Rapid Diagnostic to Detect Novel Coronavirus Infections](#). In response to the now global pandemic, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), part of the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), continues to work with its public-private partners to find solutions to mitigate the public health impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

*March 18- [HHS Announces New Public-Private Partnership to Develop U.S.-Based, High-Speed Emergency Drug Packaging Solutions](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has launched a public-private partnership to create a U.S.-based, high-speed, high-volume emergency drug packaging solution using low-cost prefilled syringes.

*March 18- [Secretary Azar Statement on President Trump's Invoking the Defense Production Act](#). On Wednesday, President Trump signed an executive order invoking the Defense Production Act and delegating to the Secretary of Health and Human Services authority, if necessary, to order the production and distribution of healthcare supplies as they are most needed. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

*March 18- [COVID-19 Response News Alert: CMS Issues Frequently Asked Questions on Catastrophic Health Coverage and the Coronavirus](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare &

Medicaid Services (CMS) issued Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to clarify coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) by catastrophic health plans. A catastrophic health plan generally may not provide coverage of an essential health benefit before an enrollee meets the plan's deductible.

*March 18- [COVID-19 Response News Alert: CMS Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) for State Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\) Agencies](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is posting an update to its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Medicaid.gov website to aid state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) agencies in their response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

*March 18- [CMS Releases Recommendations on Adult Elective Surgeries, Non-Essential Medical, Surgical, and Dental Procedures During COVID-19 Response](#). Earlier today at the White House Task Force Press Briefing, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that all elective surgeries, non-essential medical, surgical, and dental procedures be delayed during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Fact Sheets

*March 17- [Medicare Telehealth Medicine Health Care Provider Fact Sheet](#). Under President Trump's leadership, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has broadened access to Medicare telehealth services so that beneficiaries can receive a wider range of services from their doctors without having to travel to a healthcare facility. These policy changes build on the regulatory flexibilities granted under the President's emergency declaration.

Blogs

*March 16- [Get your yearly colorectal cancer screenings](#). When life gets busy, it's easy to put off an important test or screening. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, so take some time out of your busy schedule to get screened. Remember, colorectal cancer is very common among men—it's the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. among cancers that affect both men and women.

*March 17- [Website Modernization Continues](#). Americans can consume and interact with online information anywhere, anytime from any digital communications device. We have come to expect instant gratification: what we want, when we want it, where we want it and how we want it so we can talk, interact or act immediately. If we, as consumers, don't immediately find what we want, we move on and the opportunity for impactful communications is lost.

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