



CMS Snapshot

August 20-27, 2020

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

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, August 20 through 2pm Thursday, August 27, 2020.

News Releases

*August 20- [Trump Administration Uses Defense Production Act to Aid Our Most Vulnerable](#).

Under the leadership of President Trump, the Department of Health and Human Services leveraged the Defense Production Act (DPA) to apply priority rated orders for contracts with [Becton Dickinson \(BD\)](#) and [Quidel Corporation](#) through September. These acquisitions will fulfill a large-volume purchase of diagnostic systems and assays for COVID-19 testing and will expedite shipments of these systems and assays to every nursing home certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid services (CMS) with a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) Certificate of Waiver – approximately 14,000 nursing homes – in the United States. The tests can diagnose SARS-CoV-2 infection in approximately 15 minutes. In response, Assistant Secretary for Health and COVID-19 Testing Coordinator Admiral Brett P. Giroir, M.D., issued the following statement.

*August 20- [CMS Administrator Seema Verma Hosts Roundtable in Dallas on COVID-19](#). On Wednesday, August 19, Seema Verma, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and a member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, convened a roundtable discussion with Dallas-area health care leaders to discuss the effects the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had on vulnerable populations in Texas, with a focus on long term care residents and facilities.

*August 24- [Trump Administration Adds Health Plans to June 2020 Plasma Donation Guidance](#).

Today, under the leadership of President Trump, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued amended guidance on how the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule permits covered health care providers (e.g., hospitals, pharmacies, laboratories) and health plans to contact their patients and beneficiaries who have recovered from COVID-19 to inform them about how they can donate their plasma containing antibodies (known as "convalescent plasma") to help treat others with COVID-19.

*August 24- [CMS Issues Informational Bulletin on Medicaid Reimbursement Strategies to Prevent Spread of COVID-19 in Nursing Facilities](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a Medicaid Informational Bulletin (CIB) that provides guidance to states on flexibilities that are available to increase reimbursement for nursing facilities that implement specific infection control practices, such as designating a quarantine or isolation wing for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) patients.

*August 25- [HHS Awards \\$117 Million to Support Health Center Quality Improvement](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), announced over \$117 million in quality improvement awards to 1,318 health centers across all U.S. states, territories and the District of Columbia. HRSA-funded health centers will use these funds to further strengthen quality improvement activities and expand quality primary health care service delivery.

*August 25- [Trump Administration to Release 1.5 Million N95 Respirators from the Strategic National Stockpile for Distribution to Nursing Homes](#). Under the leadership of President Trump, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced the release of 1.5 million N95 respirators from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) for distribution to approximately 3,336 nursing home facilities across the United States.

*August 25- [Trump Administration Launches National Training Program to Strengthen Nursing Home Infection Control Practices](#). Today, under the leadership of President Trump, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is implementing an unprecedented national nursing home training program for frontline nursing home staff and nursing home management. The training is designed to equip both frontline caregivers and their management with the knowledge they need to stop the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in their nursing homes.

*August 25- [Trump Administration Strengthens COVID-19 Surveillance with New Reporting and Testing Requirements for Nursing Homes, Other Providers](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced sweeping regulatory changes that require nursing homes to test staff and offer testing to residents for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Laboratories and nursing homes using point-of-care testing devices will be required to report diagnostic test results as required by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The new rules also require hospitals to provide COVID-19 cases and related data to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

*August 26- [CMS Releases Additional Frequently Asked Questions on the Treatment of Coronavirus Disease Relief Payments on the Medicare Cost Report](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released an additional list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to Medicare providers regarding the Department of Health & Human Services' (HHS) Provider Relief Fund and the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program payments, also referred to as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) relief payments.

*August 26- [CMS posts guidance for implementing new testing requirements in nursing homes and labs](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released guidance for nursing homes and clinical laboratories to assist in enhancing their abilities to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to nursing home residents and their front line staff.

*August 26- [HHS Secretary Azar declares public health emergencies in Louisiana and Texas due to Hurricane Laura](#). Following the lead of President Trump's emergency declarations for Louisiana and Texas, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar today declared public health emergencies in the two states as Hurricane Laura continues its track in the Gulf of Mexico. The [declarations](#) and related [waivers](#) give HHS' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) beneficiaries and their healthcare providers and suppliers greater flexibility in meeting emergency health needs.

*August 26- [HHS Secretary Azar declares Public Health Emergency in California due to wildfires](#). Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar today declared a public health emergency in California due to wildfires, following President Trump's major disaster declaration for the state. The public health emergency [declaration](#) and related [waiver](#) give the HHS [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) beneficiaries and their healthcare providers and suppliers greater flexibility in meeting emergency health needs created by the wildfires.

*August 27- [Trump Administration Announces the Distribution of \\$2.5 Billion to Nursing Homes for COVID-19 Relief Funding](#). Today, the Trump Administration, through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is announcing it has now distributed almost \$2.5 billion of a [planned \\$5 billion](#) distribution to nursing homes to support increased testing, staffing, and personal protective equipment (PPE) needs. This funding allocation was made through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as a targeted distribution from the \$175 billion Provider Relief program funded through the bipartisan CARES Act and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act.

CMS has developed a [Virtual Toolkit](#) to help you stay informed on CMS and HHS materials available on the COVID-19. Please share these materials, bookmark the page, and check back often for the most up-to-date information. For more information, please email partnership@cms.hhs.gov