



CMS Snapshot

March 19-26, 2020

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

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, March 19 through 2pm Thursday, March 26, 2020.

News Releases

*March 19- [Secretary Azar hosts call with counterparts of G7 countries on COVID-19 response.](#)

On Thursday, March 19, Secretary Azar hosted the latest in a series of teleconferences with counterparts from the G7 core countries. The senior officials continued their sharing of information on measures being taken to combat COVID-19, as cases increase in every G7 country. They discussed some of the similar measures that are being taken, including social distancing, travel restrictions, plans for maintaining the availability of necessary medical supplies, optimizing testing procedures, and work on possible vaccines and treatments.

*March 19- [CMS Approves Washington State's Request for 1135 Medicaid Waivers.](#) Today, CMS approved an 1135 Medicaid waiver request for the state of Washington. The state submitted its request for 1135 waiver authority on March 15, 2020 and in keeping with CMS's commitment to ensure our state partners have the tools they need to combat COVID-19, the agency acted within days to approve a wide variety of Medicaid flexibilities.

*March 20- [HHS announces upcoming action to provide funding to tribes for COVID-19 response.](#) Today, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is announcing upcoming action by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide \$80 million in funding to tribes, tribal organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations for resources in support of our nation's response to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

*March 20- [HHS, DOD coordinate international airlift of COVID-19 supplies.](#) On Thursday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defense (DOD) coordinated an emergency international airlift of 500,000 swabs and sample kits used in the COVID-19 testing process in an effort to increase diagnostic testing for Americans.

*March 20- [OCR Issues Guidance on Telehealth Remote Communications Following Its Notification of Enforcement Discretion.](#) Today, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance on telehealth remote

communications following its Notification of Enforcement Discretion during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency.

*March 21- [HHS Funds Phase 2/3 Clinical Trial for Potential Treatment for COVID-19](#). An antibody medicine being evaluated to treat severe cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) will receive additional support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) under an existing partnership with Regeneron Pharmaceuticals of Tarrytown, New York.

*March 22- [Trump Administration Releases COVID-19 Checklists and Tools to Accelerate Relief for State Medicaid & CHIP Programs](#). Today, the Trump Administration released new tools to strip away regulatory red tape and unleash new resources to support state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Because of the President's bold action in declaring COVID-19 a national emergency, CMS now has a full suite of tools available to maximize responsiveness to state needs.

*March 22- [CMS Announces Relief for Clinicians, Providers, Hospitals and Facilities Participating in Quality Reporting Programs in Response to COVID-19](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced unprecedented relief for the clinicians, providers, and facilities participating in Medicare quality reporting programs including the 1.2 million clinicians in the Quality Payment Program and on the front lines of America's fight against the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

*March 23- [CMS Administrator Seema Verma's Remarks as Prepared for Delivery: Updates on Healthcare Facility Inspections in light of COVID-19](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services – or CMS – develops and enforces federal safety standards across the healthcare system. Our network of federal and state inspectors, as well as private accrediting organizations, physically visit each Medicare-participating health care provider to ensure compliance with these standards – including in 15,000 nursing homes.

*March 23- [CMS Announces Findings at Kirkland Nursing Home and New Targeted Plan for Healthcare Facility Inspections in light of COVID-19](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is announcing the preliminary results of a recent inspection of the Life Care Center nursing home in Kirkland, Washington – the epicenter of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in that state. The inspection, which the Agency conducted with the Washington Department of Social & Health Services, has helped inform CMS's national strategy for keeping patients safe in nursing homes and other healthcare facilities.

*March 23- [CMS Approves Medicaid Section 1135 Waivers for 11 Additional States in Response to COVID-19](#). Today, in keeping with its commitment to ensure states have the necessary tools to respond to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved an additional 11 state Medicaid waiver requests under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act (Act), bringing the total number of approved Section 1135 waivers for states to 13.

*March 24- [HHS Awards \\$100 Million to Health Centers for COVID-19 Response](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), awarded \$100 million to 1,381 health centers across the country with funding provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020. HRSA-funded health centers may use the awards to address screening and testing needs, acquire medical supplies and boost telehealth capacity in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

*March 24- [HHS Provides \\$100 Million to Help U.S. Healthcare Systems Prepare For COVID-19 Patients](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (HHS ASPR) today announced it will provide \$100 million to aid U.S. healthcare systems in preparing quickly for a surge in COVID-19 patients. The support will directly benefit the National Special Pathogen System, and is authorized in the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act 2020.

*March 24- [OCR Issues Guidance to Help Ensure First Responders and Others Receive Protected Health Information about Individuals Exposed to COVID-19](#). Today, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance on how covered entities may disclose protected health information (PHI) about an individual who has been infected with or exposed to COVID-19 to law enforcement, paramedics, other first responders, and public health authorities in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule.

*March 24- [HHS Announces Grants to Provide Meals for Older Adults](#). Today, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is announcing \$250 million in grants from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to help communities provide meals for older adults. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, signed into law by President Trump on March 18, 2020, provided the additional funding for the nutrition services programs authorized by the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965.

*March 25- [HHS Implements President Trump's Hoarding Prevention Executive Order](#). Today, under President Trump's Executive Order to prevent hoarding of health and medical resources necessary to respond to the spread of COVID-19, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar announced a list of certain health and medical resources that are subject to hoarding prevention measures.

*March 25- [Secretary Azar Statement on Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act](#). Today, HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement regarding President Trump's signing of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

*March 26- [CMS News Alert March 26, 2020](#). Here is a summary of recent CMS actions taken in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), as part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-

19, click here www.coronavirus.gov. For information specific to CMS, please visit the [CMS News Room](#) and [Current Emergencies Website](#).

Fact Sheets

*March 23- [Kirkland, Washington Update and Survey Prioritization Fact Sheet](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is responsible for the Medicare and Medicaid Programs. As part of that responsibility, CMS develops and enforces the essential health and safety standards that health care providers must meet in order to participate in the programs. In other words, providers must comply with federal standards as a requirement to receive federal reimbursement through those Programs.

Blogs

*March 23- [Make healthier choices for a healthier you. Medicare can help!](#) Food isn't just for survival — it can foster relationships, spark conversations, and connect cultures. Above all, smart food choices are good for you and your family's health, and overall well-being. While confusing food labels and fad diets can make healthy eating challenging, National Nutrition Month and Medicare are here to help!

*March 24- [Are you among the 1 in 3 Americans at risk for diabetes?](#) Each day, 4,000 Americans are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes — a serious disease that can lead to kidney disease, blindness, and amputations. Tuesday, March 24 is American Diabetes Association Alert Day — a day that focuses on how important it is to understand your risk of developing diabetes. You can take the [Diabetes Risk Test](#) to find out your risk for type 2 diabetes since it most often develops in middle-aged and older adults.

*March 25- [Spring into action with Medicare preventive care](#). Spring means more daylight, blooming flowers, and warmer weather. Make sure you enjoy it all while staying proactive with your health. It's time to spring into action with Medicare's preventive care.

*March 25- [A Renewed Commitment to Our Nation's Older Adults](#). The law reauthorizes critical Older Americans Act (OAA) programs through 2024. Since 1965, the OAA has provided critical services that have enabled millions of older Americans to stay in their own homes and communities. Services supported by the OAA include congregate and home-delivered meals, case management, specialized transportation services, employment and volunteer programs, adult day care, senior centers and activities, personal care, homemaker and chore services, legal support, health promotion, and disease prevention.

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