



CMS Snapshot

September 24- October 1, 2020

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

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, September 24 through 2pm Thursday, October 1, 2020.

News Releases

*September 24- [Trump Administration Announces Historically Low Medicare Advantage Premiums and New Payment Model to Make Insulin Affordable Again for Seniors](#). Ahead of the annual Medicare Open Enrollment, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), under the leadership of President Trump, announced today that average 2021 premiums for Medicare Advantage plans are expected to decline 34.2 percent from 2017 while plan choice, benefits, and enrollment continue to increase.

*September 24- [El Gobierno del Presidente Trump Anuncia Primas de Medicare Advantage Históricamente Bajas y un Nuevo Modelo de Pago Que Hace la Insulina Asequible Para las Personas Mayores](#). En anticipación de la Inscripción Abierta de Medicare anual, los Centros de Servicios de Medicare y Medicaid (los CMS por sus siglas en inglés), bajo el mando del presidente Trump, anunciaron hoy que se espera que las primas promedio de 2021 para los planes de seguro de salud de Medicare Advantage disminuirán en un 34.2 por ciento desde 2017, a la vez que las opciones de plan, los beneficios, y la inscripción siguen aumentando.

*September 24- [HHS Takes Action as Part of President Trump's Healthcare Plan](#). On Thursday, President Trump unveiled his America First healthcare plan, signing an executive order to deliver Americans better care, lower costs, and more choice, continuing the work that HHS has been doing under his leadership.

*September 25- [Health Insurer Pays \\$6.85 Million to Settle Data Breach Affecting Over 10.4 Million People](#). Premiera Blue Cross (PBC) has agreed to pay \$6.85 million to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and to implement a corrective action plan to settle potential violations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Rules related to a breach affecting over 10.4 million people. This resolution represents the second-largest payment to resolve a HIPAA investigation in OCR history. PBC operates in Washington and Alaska, and is the largest health plan in the Pacific Northwest, serving more than two million people.

*September 25- [CMS Releases New Tools to Streamline Certification for Labs Testing for COVID-19](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released new tools to reduce burdensome paperwork and authorization delays for laboratories seeking Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certification to test for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). CMS's quick-start guide helps laboratories with the application process for CLIA certification and includes information on the expedited review process implemented at the beginning of the public health emergency that allows labs to start COVID-19 testing before the official paper certificate arrives by postal mail.

*September 25- [HHS Secretary Azar Statement on Executive Order to Protect Infants Born Alive](#). On Friday, President Trump signed an Executive Order directing the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that American hospitals comply with their obligations under federal law to provide appropriate screening and medical treatment or transfer for infants, especially those born prematurely and/or with disabilities, and otherwise promote efforts to improve the survival of such infants.

*September 28- [Trump Administration Deploys Abbott BinaxNOW Tests to States](#). The Trump Administration today detailed the national distribution plan for the Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card rapid test to assist Governors' efforts to continue to safely reopen their states. BinaxNOW is a unique testing option to provide support to K-12 teachers and students, higher education, critical infrastructure, first responders, and other priorities as governors deem fit. The BinaxNOW rapid test – the only U.S. Food and Drug Administration-authorized antigen rapid point-of-care test that does not require an instrument – is easy to use, will produce COVID-19 test results in 15 minutes, and costs \$5.

*September 29- [HHS Launching Initiative to Track Physician Use and Burdens of Health IT](#) [ONC Awards Cooperative Agreement to American Board of Family Medicine](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) launched an initiative to measure health information technology (health IT) use among office-based physicians across the country. The HHS' Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) awarded a cooperative agreement to the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) to measure the use and potential burdens experienced by office-based physicians. The results of the effort will provide ONC with national-level data on how office-based physicians use health IT, including key measures on interoperability and burden.

*September 29- [CMS Updates COVID-19 Testing Methodology for Nursing Homes](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced an update to the methodology the agency employs to determine the rate of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) positivity in counties across the country. Counties with 20 or fewer tests over 14 days will now move to "green" in the color-coded system of assessing COVID-19 community prevalence.

*September 30- [CMS Releases Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment Trends Snapshot Showing COVID-19 Impact on Enrollment](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released its first

monthly Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment Trends Snapshot today. This new summary report captures impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency (PHE) by tracking total Medicaid and CHIP program enrollment trends for adults and children over a 12-month period.

*September 30- [HHS Announces Funding for Health Information Exchanges to Support Public Health Agencies – STAR HIE Program Funds Five Organizations to Improve Interoperability of Health Data](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced today five cooperative agreements to health information exchange organizations (HIEs) to help support state and local public health agencies in their efforts to respond to public health emergencies, including disasters and pandemics such as COVID-19.

*October 1- [2021 Medicare Advantage and Part D Plan Information Now Available on Medicare.gov Ahead of Medicare Open Enrollment](#). Following [last week's announcement](#) of historically low premiums in Medicare Advantage, starting today, seniors can begin to compare their Medicare coverage options for 2021. CMS has released the 2021 benefit and cost-sharing information for Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans on [Medicare.gov](#).

*October 1- [HHS Awards \\$2.24 Billion in Grants to Help Americans Access HIV/AIDS Care, Support Services, and Medication](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), today announced approximately \$2.24 billion in Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program grants were awarded to cities, counties, states, and local community-based organizations in fiscal year (FY) 2020. This funding supports a comprehensive system of HIV primary medical care, medication and essential support services vital to improving the health quality of more than half a million people with HIV in the United States.

*October 1- [Trump Administration Announces \\$20 Billion in New Phase 3 Provider Relief Funding](#). Today, under the leadership of President Trump, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), is announcing \$20 billion in new funding for providers on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic. Under this Phase 3 General Distribution allocation, providers that have already received Provider Relief Fund payments will be invited to apply for additional funding that considers financial losses and changes in operating expenses caused by the coronavirus.

*October 1- [Veklury \(remdesivir\) Now Available Directly from Distributor following Trump Administration's Successful Allocations to States and U.S. Territories](#). Beginning October 1, 2020, American hospitals can purchase Veklury (remdesivir) directly from the drug's distributor. Veklury is an antiviral drug currently authorized for emergency use by healthcare providers to treat hospitalized adult and pediatric patients with suspected or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. Over the past five months, the U.S. government has overseen the allocation and distribution of Veklury due to drug's limited supply to ensure fair and equitable distribution to COVID-19 patients.

Fact Sheets

*September 24- [Medicare Advantage Value-Based Insurance Design Model Calendar Year 2021 Model Participation](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is releasing the Calendar Year (CY) 2021 participation in the Medicare Advantage (MA) Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) Model and information about the CY 2022 application process for eligible MA organizations.

Blogs

*September 24- [Under President Trump's leadership, CMS has delivered unparalleled medical innovation](#). The Medicare program represents a solemn promise to seniors that their nation will be there for them in their golden years. Fulfilling that promise involves dismantling the unwieldy bureaucratic morass that too often stands between them and the cutting-edge innovation that can lower their costs or even save their lives.

*September 24- [Sickle Cell Treatment Options for Pain Management are Growing](#). As a child growing up in Florida, Shirley Miller knew all too well the pain that can accompany sickle cell disease, an inherited blood disorder that affects nearly 100,000 people in the United States and millions worldwide. Like many others with the disease, her pain crises were frequent and intense and sometimes required hospitalization.

*September 24- [More Achieved in 2020 to Improve Kidney Care Than in Decades](#). Since the Department of Health and Human Services announced the Administration's initiative to advance American kidney health in July 2019, we have delivered more tangible action to improve the lives of American kidney patients than we've seen in the past several decades - *combined*.

*September 25- [Set a reminder—it's time to get ready for Medicare Open Enrollment](#). Medicare Open Enrollment runs from October 15 to December 7, but did you know you can get an early look at next year's health plans and prescription drug plans starting on October 1?

*September 25- [Genetics, Diagnosis, Treatment: NIH Takes On Sickle Cell Disease Globally](#). Each year, some 150,000 children in Nigeria are born with sickle cell disease, the most common—and often life-threatening—inherited blood disorder in the world.

*September 26- [Research advances curative options for people with sickle cell disease](#). For nearly two decades, a bone marrow transplant has been the only known cure for sickle cell disease, an inherited blood disorder that can cause excruciating pain for those who have it. But very few patients have qualified for the grueling procedure. And they're mainly children, who can better tolerate the high doses of chemotherapy needed to wipe out the bone marrow, which doctors then replace with matching donor stem cells from a sibling.

*September 29- [Over 500K Rapid Coronavirus Tests Being Distributed to HBCUs](#). In yet another effort by the Trump Administration to prevent potential COVID-19 outbreaks in high-risk communities, we recently began shipments of the more than 500,000 total BinaxNOW rapid coronavirus tests to 71 of the total 107 selected colleges and universities across the nation that identify as historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The point of care BinaxNOW system is easy to use, requires no instrumentation, and will deliver reliable test results in fifteen minutes or less.

*October 1- [Open Enrollment is one month away!](#) Mark your calendar: Open Enrollment for a 2021 Marketplace plan starts November 1, exactly one month from today.

*October 1- [Open Enrollment includes new coverage option for people with End-Stage Renal Disease \(ESRD\)](#). With Open Enrollment approaching, knowing your options for Medicare coverage is important, especially if you want to change your plan. Starting this Open Enrollment, if you have ESRD, you can enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan during Open Enrollment (October 15 – December 7, 2020) for coverage starting January 1, 2021.

*October 1- [Get ready! Medicare's Open Enrollment starts October 15](#). You can enroll in Medicare health and drug plans from October 15 – December 7. Get ready for Medicare's Open Enrollment with these 5 tips.

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