

HPMS E-Mail

Date: May 12, 2020

Subject: CMS News Alert - 5/11/2020

As part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts taken in response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), following is a summary of recent Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) actions. To keep up with the important Task Force work being done 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](#). CMS updates these resources on an ongoing basis throughout the day; the information below is current as of May 11, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. ET.

CMS Releases Additional Waivers for Hospitals and Other Facilities

CMS continues to release waivers for the healthcare community that provide the flexibilities needed to take care of patients during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). CMS recently provided additional blanket waivers for the duration of the PHE that:

- Expand hospitals' ability to offer long-term care services ("swing beds");
- Waive distance requirements, market share, and bed requirements for Sole Community Hospitals;
- Waive certain eligibility requirements for Medicare-Dependent, Small Rural Hospitals (MDHs); and
- Update specific life safety code requirements for hospitals, hospice, and long-term care facilities.

[Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers](#)

Telehealth Video: Medicare Coverage and Payment of Virtual Services

CMS updated a [video](#) that answers common questions about the expanded Medicare telehealth services benefit during the COVID-19 public health emergency. New information includes how

CMS adds services to the list of telehealth services, additional practitioners that can provide telehealth services, and the distant site services that Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) can provide. Further, the video includes information about audio-only telehealth services, telehealth services that hospitals, nursing homes and home health agencies can provide, along with how to correctly bill for telehealth services.

Medicare Pharmacies and Other Suppliers May Temporarily Enroll as Independent Clinical Diagnostic Laboratories to Help Address COVID-19 Testing

CMS published information for pharmacies and other suppliers that wish to enroll in Medicare temporarily as independent clinical diagnostic laboratories to help address the need for COVID-19 testing. Interested pharmacies and suppliers will need to apply for a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate. CMS wants to ensure that laboratories located in the United States applying for a CLIA certificate are able to begin testing for COVID-19 as quickly as possible.

[MLN Matters Article](#)

CMS Gives States Additional Flexibility to Address Coronavirus Pandemic

CMS has approved over 175 requests for state relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including recent approvals for Alabama, Alaska, California, District of Columbia, Georgia, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin. These approvals help to ensure that states have the tools they need to combat COVID-19 through a wide variety of waivers, amendments, and Medicaid state plan flexibilities, including support for programs that care for the elderly and people with disabilities. CMS developed a [toolkit](#) to expedite the application and review of each request and has approved these requests in record time. These approved flexibilities support President Trump's commitment to a COVID-19 response that is locally executed, state managed, and federally supported.

[Section 1135 Waivers](#)

[Section 1115\(a\) Waivers](#)

[1915\(c\) Waiver Appendix K Amendments](#)

[Medicaid State Plan Amendments](#)

[CHIP State Plan Amendments](#)

