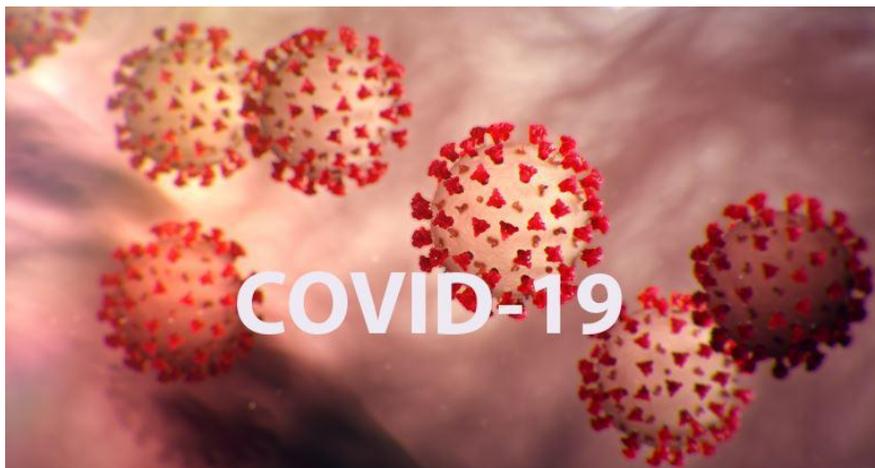


June 15, 2020



COVID-19 Information Presentation on Tuesday

Stay on top of the latest news on COVID-19, as it relates to medical practices, on Tuesday, June 16, at 6:30 with Greg Holzman, MD, State Medical Director. The Montana Medical Association's COVID information sessions will now be held monthly, the third Tuesday of the month, before the MMA Legislative and Public Health Committee meeting from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM.

In addition to the latest COVID updates from Greg Holzman, MD, State Medical Director, this week's presentation includes Jason Cohen, MD, Hospitalist from North Valley Hospital of Whitefish speaking on how this community medical center re-opened its medical services. A question and answer session will follow the presentations. Please mute your line.

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MMA Announces 54 Recipients of Cash Assistance Grants to Small Independent Practices

The MMA awarded \$200,000 to 54 small independent practices to cover COVID-19 related response and relief items as part of its Physician Practice Re-Boot Program. Independent practices in Montana were eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in cash assistance. Additionally, many practices were provided a cash grant to cover the annual subscription (\$300) for a telehealth platform by DrFirst to start or support telehealth services. Priority was given to requests from all independent practices to start or expand telehealth through the DrFirst solution, followed by applications from rural, independent primary care practices, and then applications from other independent practices.

The funding for the Physician Practice Re-Boot Program was provided by a \$200,000 grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana. Proceeds from the MMA partnership with DrFirst were donated to the MMA Foundation to expand interoperability.

HHS Announces Medicaid/CHIP Provider Relief Fund

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services expects to distribute \$15 billion to eligible Medicaid and CHIP providers. The payment to each provider will be at least two percent of reported gross revenue from patient care; the final amount each provider receives will be determined after the data is submitted, including information about the number of Medicaid patients providers serve. Providers must submit their data by July 20, 2020. Before applying through the [Enhanced Provider Relief Fund Payment Portal](#) applicants should:

[Read the Medicaid Provider Distribution Instructions - PDF*](#)

[Download the Medicaid Provider Distribution Application Form - PDF*](#)

MMA Explores Securing PPE for Independent Practices

The MMA Executive Committee approved plans to explore joining a collaborative effort to bring personal protective equipment (PPE) to the Montana physician community. The MMA intends to work with a reputable and certified supplier of PPE to offer members the opportunity to be connected with a vetted bulk PPE supplier.

“Montana continues to be measured in its reopening and, while it is unknown if a second wave will occur in the Fall, it is essential that all medical practices have access to PPE supplies,” Jean Branscum, MMA CEO, stated. “We are exploring the formation of a new partnership to ensure MMA physician members have a consistent supply should an increase in need arise this Fall.”

Physicians interested in utilizing this vetted bulk PPE supplier should contact the MMA at mma@mmaoffice.org.

AMA Urges Extra Vigilance on COVID-Mitigating Steps

“In far too many states—in rural and urban locations—we are seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases that could lead to further illness, deaths and other potentially dangerous impacts on health systems across the country,” said Susan R. Bailey, MD, President of the American Medical Association. “Physicians, scientists and public health experts are learning more every day

about COVID-19, but we already know what stops the spread of the virus—wearing a face mask, maintaining physical distancing, and washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds. Adhering to these simple steps is the most effective way to prevent deaths and safely allow re-opening to continue. America’s physicians and the men and women on the front lines of this health care crisis urge you: do not confuse re-opening with returning to normal. Acting as though COVID-19 is behind us now will lead to another surge of COVID-19 cases.”

Click [here](#) to read more.

Nursing Home COVID-19 Data and Inspections Results Available on Nursing Home Compare

On June 4, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) posted the first set of underlying COVID-19 nursing home data. On April 19, CMS announced the requirement that nursing homes inform residents, their families, and their representatives of COVID-19 cases in their facilities. In addition to this, nursing homes are required to report COVID-19 cases and deaths directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and CMS is making this data publicly available. As part of this announcement, CMS also posted the results from the targeted inspections announced on March 4 to allow inspectors to focus on the most serious health and safety threats like infectious diseases and abuse during the pandemic.

Click [here](#) to read more.

New COVID-19 FAQs on Medicare Fee-for-Service Billing

CMS released additional [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) on our recent COVID-19-related waivers to help providers, including physicians, hospitals, and rural health clinics. Find more answers to questions on outpatient therapy, telehealth and appropriate coding, and Federally Qualified Health Centers. For more information visit the website below:

- [Coronavirus.gov](#)
- [CMS Current Emergencies](#) website

COVID-19: Using the CR Modifier and DR Condition Code

CMS revised MLN Matters Special Edition Article SE20011 on [Medicare Fee-for-Service \(FFS\) Response to the Public Health Emergency on the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) to clarify when you must use modifier CR (catastrophe/disaster related) and/or condition code DR (disaster related) when submitting claims to Medicare. The update includes a chart of blanket waivers and flexibility that require the modifier or condition code.