

MMHPI COVID-19 Regulatory & Reimbursement Newsletter

Letter to Providers #30: State and Federal Updates – October 16, 2020

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With federal and state health care policies changing in response to COVID-19, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) is issuing *COVID-19 Regulatory & Reimbursement Newsletters* to support providers. In these newsletters, we highlight recent changes and extensions to regulatory and reimbursement rules, as well as newly published or updated guidance and answers to frequently asked questions.

These newsletters, along with additional information on mental health resources during a pandemic, are posted here: <https://www.texasstateofmind.org/covid-19/>. If you would like to have additional organizations added to our distribution list or have follow up questions on the content, please email Catie Hilbelink at chilbelink@mmhpi.org.

Texas Updates

State Emergency Declaration Extended

Date	October 7, 2020
Summary	Governor Abbott extended the state disaster declaration for an additional 30 days. The declaration now expires November 7, 2020.
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-renews-state-disaster-declaration-for-covid-19

New Method of Calculating “High Hospitalization” Areas

Date	October 7, 2020
Summary	Governor Abbott’s executive order (EO) GA-32, on the reopening of bars, changes the way the state will calculate areas of the state with “high COVID-19 hospitalizations”. The “high hospitalization” threshold is an important metric that determines the capacity at which businesses in a region can open. Previously, “high hospitalizations” were calculated as trauma service areas with seven consecutive days in excess of 15 percent of COVID-19 hospitalized patients over total hospitalized patients. Under EO GA-32, the new calculation will be seven consecutive days in excess of 15 percent of COVID-19 hospitalized patients over total capacity. This change was effective October 14, 2020. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is updating its hospitalization data to correspond to the updated definition of areas with high hospitalizations; read more here .
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-executive-order-to-open-bars-in-qualifying-counties-in-texas

Enroll to Administer COVID-19 Vaccines

Date	October 7, 2020
Summary	<p>Governor Abbott encouraged Texas health care providers to enroll in the DSHS immunization program to be eligible to administer COVID-19 vaccines once they are available. Hospitals, medical practices, pharmacies, and long-term care facilities that want to participate are required to enroll as vaccine providers at EnrollTexasIZ.dshs.texas.gov to administer COVID-19 immunizations in Texas. Information on enrollment, provider requirements, ordering/distribution, storage, reporting, and timing of vaccine availability is available from the DSHS' provider letter and FAQs.</p>
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-encourages-health-care-providers-to-enroll-in-dshs-immunization-program-in-preparation-for-covid-19-vaccine

Addition of Procedure Codes for Testing

Date	October 13, 2020
Summary	<p>Effective September 16, 2020, for dates of service on or after September 8, 2020, COVID-19 testing procedure code 86413 will be added in the following programs: Medicaid, the Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program, Healthy Texas Women (HTW), and Family Planning Program. Procedure code 86413 is a benefit for the following providers and places of service listed in this table.</p> <p>Effective August 10, 2020, COVID-19 testing procedure codes 86408 and 86409 became benefits in the following programs: Medicaid, the CSHCN Services Program, HTW, and Family Planning Program. Procedure codes 86408 and 86409 are benefits for the following providers and places of service listed in this table.</p>
Links	<p>https://www.tmhp.com/news/2020-10-13-addition-procedure-code-86413-covid-19-testing</p> <p>https://www.tmhp.com/news/2020-10-13-covid-19-testing-procedure-codes-86408-and-86409-are-now-benefits</p>

ESRD Facility Requirements in Response to COVID-19

Date	October 12, 2020
Summary	The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) adopted an emergency rule in response to the state of disaster declared in Texas relating to COVID-19. Under the new emergency rule, effective October 13, 2020, end stage renal disease facilities (ESRDs) are required to comply with alternative operational requirements related to staffing ratios, in-home visits, telemedicine, incident reporting, and education and training requirements for staff, to safely and effectively treat patients and utilize staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Link	https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/facilities-regulation/memos/gl-20-2023.pdf

Assisted Living Facilities: Updated FAQs

Date	October 9, 2020
Summary	HHSC updated COVID-19 related frequently asked questions (FAQs) for assisted living facilities and expanded their visitation FAQs.
Links	https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/govdelivery/alf-faqs.pdf https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/providers/long-term-care/alf/alf-covid-visitation-faq.pdf

State Resources to El Paso

Date	October 12, 2020
Summary	Governor Abbott announced that DSHS and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) have surged medical personnel and personal protective equipment to El Paso to help combat COVID-19 and support hospitals in the region. This deployment of 75 medical personnel, including nurses and respiratory therapists, is in addition to the 169 personnel previously deployed to El Paso. DSHS is also working with contracted staffing agencies to ensure personnel are available to be deployed to other regions seeing an increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations.
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-surges-state-resources-to-support-covid-19-response-in-el-paso

\$20 Million For Disaster Crisis Counseling Services

Date	October 9, 2020
Summary	<p>Governor Abbott announced HHSC will receive more than \$20 million in additional federal funding for disaster crisis counseling services for Texans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Regular Services Crisis Counseling Program.</p> <p>This grant is in addition to the \$5.8 million in FEMA crisis counseling funds health officials announced in May and will extend counseling services to 28 local mental health and behavioral health authorities in Texas. The grant is expected to connect an additional 240,000 Texans throughout the state to short-term crisis counseling services.</p> <p>The funding will also continue the COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line and support various organizations that focus on emergency management, public health, social services, and crisis counseling in emergency shelters. People struggling with substance use issues will also benefit from the disaster crisis counseling services.</p>
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-hhsc-announce-more-than-20-million-for-disaster-crisis-counseling-services

Federal Updates

New Repayment Terms for Accelerated and Advance Payment Program

Date	October 8, 2020
Summary	The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced new repayment terms for the Accelerated and Advance Payment program, including a longer time period before repayment, lower recoupment rates during repayment, lower interest on remaining unpaid balance, and additional repayment flexibilities.
Link	https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-announces-new-repayment-terms-medicare-loans-made-providers-during-covid-19

New CPT Codes for COVID-19 Testing, Multiplex Tests

Date	October 6, 2020
Summary	The American Medical Association released current procedural terminology (CPT) codes for reporting on medical claims two laboratory tests (87636 and 87637) that simultaneously detect the COVID-19 virus, influenza A/B and respiratory syncytial virus. It also released CPT codes for two antigen tests for the COVID-19 virus (87426 and 87811) and revised the code descriptors for CPT codes 87301-87430 to clarify proper reporting for antigen tests read by a machine. These are available for immediate use. See the latest CPT coding guidance for more.
Link	https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/cpt/covid-19-cpt-coding-and-guidance

Contracts for New Testing Technologies

Date	October 6, 2020
Summary	The National Institutes of Health's (NIH's) Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics initiative awarded nearly \$100 million in contracts to scale up and manufacture new COVID-19 testing technologies. The technologies include an antigen test that provides results in 15 minutes, a viral RNA test deployed in mobile vans that can travel to COVID hotspots, and tests that require only saliva, nasal swabs, or blood from a finger prick.
Link	https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-radx-initiative-advances-six-new-covid-19-testing-technologies

Non-CLIA-Certified Labs to Stop COVID-19 Testing

Date	October 9, 2020
Summary	CMS issued 171 cease-and-desist orders to facilities that were doing COVID-19 testing without Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificates or outside the scope of existing CLIA certifications. The letters include information for non-certified labs on the CLIA certification process. CMS recently streamlined the CLIA review process.
Link	https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-takes-action-protect-integrity-covid-19-testing

CDC Guidance and Reports

Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education

Summary	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its guidance to help colleges and universities control COVID-19 transmission on campuses. The guidance is related to testing , case investigations and contact tracing , and other considerations .
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html

Social Needs

Date	October 1, 2020
Summary	A CDC study analyzed the social needs of low-income families with children in Dallas, Houston, Washington, D.C., and Southwest Florida during the pandemic. Over 90 percent of respondents reported being food insecure. About 13 percent said they were shopping at a food bank or pantry, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. Findings highlight the compounding effect the pandemic has on underserved communities and the need for targeted strategies to support these populations.
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2020/20_0322.htm

Mitigation Measures

Date	October 9, 2020
Summary	CDC reports the number of COVID-19 cases in Arizona stabilized and then decreased after sustained implementation and enforcement of statewide and locally-enhanced mitigation measures, beginning approximately two weeks after implementation and enforcement of mask mandates and enhanced sanitations practices began on June 17, 2020; further decreases were observed during July 13–August 7, after statewide limitations and closures of certain services and businesses. Widespread implementation and enforcement of sustained community mitigation measures, including mask wearing, informed by state and local officials' continual data monitoring and collaboration can help prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and decrease the numbers of COVID-19 cases.
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6940e3.htm?s_cid=mm6940e3_w

Factors Influencing Risk for Exposure Among Young Adults

Date	October 9, 2020
Summary	<p>CDC published a report analyzing the factors influencing risk for COVID-19 exposure among adults aged 18-23 years in Winnebago, WI. They found perceived low severity of disease outcome; perceived responsibility to others; peer pressure; and exposure to misinformation, conflicting messages, or opposing views regarding masks were identified as drivers of behaviors that might influence risk for COVID-19 exposure among young adults. Identifying factors that influence risk for COVID-19 exposure and framing messaging to target those factors could help persuade young adults to adhere to public health guidelines that prevent the spread of COVID-19. Providing clear and consistent messages regarding the need for and effectiveness of masks could help increase widespread adoption of evidence-based guidance.</p>
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6941e2.htm?s_cid=mm6941e2_w