

Meadows Institute COVID-19 Regulatory & Reimbursement Newsletter

Letter to Providers #42: State and Federal Updates – January 29, 2021

Contents

Texas Updates2

- Extended Flexibilities..... 2
 - Multiple Medicaid Flexibilities 2
 - Healthy Texas Women and Family Planning Program 3
 - CLASS Telehealth Therapies 3
 - HCS and TxHML Providers 4
 - 1915(c) Waivers: Face to Face Services Coordination Suspension 4
 - Children with Special Health Care Needs Services Program 5
 - Guidance for New and Initial Medicaid Prior Authorizations 6
 - Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities..... 6
 - CHIP Copayments..... 7
- CLASS and DBMD Interest List Reduction Slot Releases 7
- Texas Division of Emergency Management Updates 8
 - Rapid Testing for Front Line Workers of Small Businesses 8
 - Lubbock: Alternate Care Site Established 8
 - Laredo: Surging State Resources 9
 - Austin: Therapeutic Expansion 9
- Updates for Monoclonal Antibody Therapy Administration Codes M0239 and M0243 10
- Therapeutics Updates..... 10
- COVID-19 Vaccine Resource for CDS Employees..... 11
- Vaccine Updates 11
- Becoming a Vaccine Hub 12

Federal Updates.....12

- Executive Action on COVID-19 12
- Guidance for Surveys During Public Health Emergency 12
- Google Launches Pilot Vaccine Finder; Includes Texas 13
- HIPAA Enforcement Flexibility & COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Apps..... 13
- CPT Codes, Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate 14
- HHS Awards Funds to Expand Immunization Information Sharing Collaboration 14
- CDC Guidance and Reports..... 15
 - Updated Guidance: mRNA Vaccines 15
 - COVID-19 Cases and Transmission in 17 K–12 Schools 15

With federal and state health care policies changing in response to COVID-19, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (Meadows Institute) 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://mmhpi.org/work/covid19/>. 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

Extended Flexibilities

Multiple Medicaid Flexibilities

Date	January 25, 2021
Summary	<p>The following Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) COVID-19 flexibilities have been extended through February 28, 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correction to ‘COVID-19 Guidance: targeted case management through remote delivery’• Waiver extension for durable medical equipment certification and receipt form• Claims for telephone (audio-only) behavioral health services• Claims for telephone (audio-only) medical services• Rural Health Clinic reimbursement for telemedicine and telehealth services• School Health and Related Services (SHARS) provided through telemedicine or telehealth• Claims for telehealth service for occupational, physical, and speech therapy• Claims for telephone (audio-only) early childhood intervention specialized skills training• Claims for telephone (audio-only) nutritional counseling services• Texas Health Steps checkup guidance extended through July 31, 2020
Link	https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-25-multiple-medicaid-covid-19-flexibilities-extended-through-february-28-2021

Healthy Texas Women and Family Planning Program

Date	January 26, 2021
Summary	The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has extended Healthy Texas Women and Family Planning Program COVID-19 related telemedicine (physician-delivered) and telehealth (non-physician delivered) flexibilities through February 28, 2021.
Link	https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-26-telemedicine-physician-delivered-and-telehealth-non-physician-delivered-services

CLASS Telehealth Therapies

Date	January 27, 2021
Summary	<p>The following Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) professional and specialized therapy services are available by telehealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical therapy• Occupational therapy• Speech and language pathology• Recreational therapy• Music therapy• Behavior support• Dietary services• Cognitive rehabilitation therapy <p>Initially effective March 15, 2020, these flexibilities have been extended through February 28, 2021. Acceptable telehealth formats are synchronous audiovisual interaction or asynchronous store and forward technology. Use these with synchronous audio interaction between the client and the distant site provider.</p> <p>The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has relaxed HIPAA requirements to allow use of video for telehealth services. Texas Medicaid recognizes OCR's HIPAA enforcement discretion as it relates to telehealth platform requirements. Therapies must have a treatment plan. The goals and outcomes must support being provided through telehealth. Revision of therapy hours may be added to an IPC and authorized by HHSC per the process outlined in IL 2020-46.</p>
Link	https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-27-covid-19-update-telehealth-guidance-class-professional-and-specialized-therapies

HCS and TxHmL Providers

Date	January 27, 2021
Summary	<p>Emergency rules related to COVID-19 mitigation and response for Home and Community-based Services (HCS) and Texas Home Living (TxHmL) providers that were scheduled to expire on January 22, 2021 have been extended through March 22, 2021. The following rules are extended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home and Community-based Services rule 40 TAC §9.198 and 9.199• Texas Home Living rule 40 TAC §9.597 <p>HHSC's temporary waiver of certain requirements in Sections 3710, 4381.3, 4381.7(6) and 4381.7(7) of the HCS and TxHmL billing guidelines have been extended through February 28, 2021. This extension was published in information letter (IL) 2021-07 In-Home Day Habilitation Information for Program Providers, which replaces IL 2020-19. In addition, this IL revises references to reflect recent HCS and TxHmL billing guidelines changes that went into effect January 1, 2021.</p> <p>Additionally, the following temporary policy change has also been extended through February 28, 2021: HHSC lifted the prohibition on service providers of respite and CFC PAS/HAB from living in the same home as the person receiving HCS and TxHmL program services. This provides access to needed services for people living in their own or family's home. A person's spouse or a minor child's parent is still prohibited from being a paid service provider of these services due to guidelines.</p>
Links	<p>https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-25-covid-19-emergency-rules-hcs-and-txhtml-program-providers-extended</p> <p>https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-27-home-day-habilitation-information-program-providers-covid-19-il-2021-07</p> <p>https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-26-covid-19-update-temporary-change-hcs-and-txhtml-policy-service-providers-respite-and</p>

1915(c) Waivers: Face to Face Services Coordination Suspension

Date	January 26, 2021
Summary	<p>The suspension of face-to-face service coordination visits for fee-for-service (FFS) Medicaid 1915(c) waiver case managers and service coordinators is extended through February 28, 2021. This temporary policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)• Texas Home Living (TxHmL)

- Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)
- Home and Community-based Services (HCS)
- General Revenue Service Coordinators
- Community First Choice Service Coordinators
- Pre-admission Screening and Resident Review Habilitation Coordinators

Case managers, service coordinators, and habilitation coordinators are encouraged to complete visits by phone, telehealth, or telemedicine.

Link

<https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-26-update-covid-19-guidance-ffs-service-coordinators-and-case-managers-january-26>

Children with Special Health Care Needs Services Program

Date

January 28, 2021

Summary

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program will provide reimbursement for previously identified telemedicine and telehealth services through February 28, 2021. Effective dates remain as stated in the original notifications, which are listed below:

- Claims for telephone (audio only) medical services
- Claims for telephone (audio only) behavioral health services
- RHC and FQHC Reimbursement for telemedicine (physician-delivered) and telehealth (non-physician delivered) services
- Claims for telehealth service for occupational, physical, and speech therapy for the CSHCN services program

All services listed in the CSHCN Services Program Provider Manual, Chapter 19, "FQHC and RHC," Chapter 29, "Outpatient Behavioral Health," and Chapter 38, "Telecommunication Services," remain eligible for CSHCN Services Program reimbursement. Providers can refer to these chapters for additional information about the CSHCN Services Program telemedicine and telehealth service benefits.

Link

<https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-28-cshcn-covid-19-telehealth-and-telemedicine-extensions-through-february-28-2021>

Guidance for New and Initial Medicaid Prior Authorizations

Date	January 27, 2021
Summary	<p>HHSC directed the Texas Medicaid & Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) to process new and initial prior authorization requests, including recertification requests, by relaxing document submission timeframes for providers if they are unable to provide certain required documentation during the COVID-19 emergency. This direction will remain in effect through February 28, 2021. The guidance applies to all state plan services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acute care services• Long-term services and supports• Personal assistance services• Personal care services• Community First Choice• Private duty nursing• Day activity and health services• Durable medical equipment and supplies <p>Examples of such documentation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual-required timely signatures from physicians and other providers• Client signatures• Up-to-date visit with primary care or ordering physician• Certification of timely face-to-face visits
Link	https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-27-covid-19-guidance-new-and-initial-medicaid-prior-authorizations

Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities

Date	January 27, 2021
Summary	<p>Effective January 27, 2021, currently licensed chemical dependency treatment facilities (CDTFs) are temporarily permitted to provide abuse, neglect, and exploitation (ANE) training and Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCi) training to staff through live, interactive, instructor-led, electronic means, in addition to in person, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.</p> <p>HHSC originally adopted emergency rule amendments for CDTF and ANE and NVCi training on July 31, 2020 and extended them on November 28, 2020. The emergency rule expired on January 26, 2021. In accordance with Section 2001.034, Texas Government Code, HHSC adopted emergency rule amendments to</p>

§448.603(d), relating to Training, in 25 TAC, Part 1, Chapter 448, Subchapter F on January 27, 2021, due to imminent peril to the public health, safety, or welfare. These emergency rule amendments may not be effective for longer than 120 days and may not be renewed for longer than 60 days.

Link

<https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/facilities-regulation/memos/gl-21-3000.pdf>

CHIP Copayments

Date

January 27, 2021

Summary

HHSC extended the waiver of Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) copayments through February 28, 2021. The waiver applies to medical office visit copayments only.

Link

<https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-26-chip-copayments-waived-through-february-28-2021-if-public-health-emergency-extended>

CLASS and DBMD Interest List Reduction Slot Releases

Date

January 19, 2021

Summary

HHSC published [IL 2021-03 CLASS and DBMD Interest List Reduction Slot Releases](#), replacing IL2020-26, COVID-19 Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) CLASS and Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Interest List Reduction Slots, previously issued on June 2, 2020. The revision instructs CLASS case management agencies (CMAs), direct services agencies (DSAs), and DBMD program providers on the requirements of signatures on enrollment documentation.

Link

<https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-19-il2021-03-covid-19-class-and-dbmd-interest-list-reduction-slot-releases-replaces>

Texas Division of Emergency Management Updates

Rapid Testing for Front Line Workers of Small Businesses

Date	January 22, 2021
Summary	<p>Governor Abbott and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) announced the expansion of the COVID-19 Rapid Testing Program for frontline workers at Texas small businesses by dedicating one million BinaxNow Rapid Tests to the program. The COVID-19 Small Business Rapid Testing Program launched in December as a pilot program and has helped small businesses throughout the state conduct rapid tests on employees to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>Through this program, TDEM will provide local Chamber of Commerce organizations with COVID-19 testing supplies that will then be allocated to local small businesses that choose to participate in the program. Small businesses can administer these tests to employees who choose to participate. The program has been developed using the framework of the COVID-19 Rapid Testing Pilot Program for Texas school systems, implemented by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and TDEM in October, which provides access to rapid testing for Texas teachers, students, and staff in participating school systems.</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce organizations that wish to participate in the program will receive instructions for registering for the program directly from TDEM, or they may visit https://tdem.texas.gov/chambertesting/ for further information.</p>
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-tdem-expand-covid-19-rapid-testing-program-for-front-line-workers-of-small-businesses

Lubbock: Alternate Care Site Established

Date	January 25, 2021
Summary	<p>Gov. Abbott announced that TDEM, in partnership with the city of Lubbock, Lubbock County, Covenant Health System, and UMC Health System, has established an Alternate Care Site in Lubbock to expand hospital capacity in the region. Opening at the former Grace Medical Center, the facility will provide the South Plains with additional hospital beds, medical equipment, and medical personnel to assist with the region's COVID-19 response. The facility has a capacity of 20 beds and can expand to more beds if needed.</p>
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/state-of-texas-establishes-alternate-care-site-in-lubbock-to-expand-hospital-capacity

Laredo: Surging State Resources

Date	January 22, 2021
Summary	<p>Gov. Abbott announced that the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and TDEM have surged medical personnel, equipment, testing supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to Laredo to help combat COVID-19 and support hospitals in the region.</p> <p>DSHS has deployed a total of 470 staff to Laredo and delivered ventilators, infusers, oxygen concentrators, hospital beds, cardiac monitors, oxygen flowmeters, IV poles, BiPAP machines, and more. Over 87,000 COVID-19 test kits have been provided to the city of Laredo Health Department and the Laredo Fire Department. DSHS has supplied eight auxiliary medical units and ambulances as requested. Additionally, the State of Texas has provided over 29,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to date with more on the way.</p> <p>TDEM and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have provided Laredo and Webb County with over 33.9 million pieces of PPE, including over 5.9 million masks, over 25.4 million gloves, 260,000 face shields, and nearly one million gowns and coveralls. State testing teams, coordinated by TDEM, have tested over 38,000 specimens at 29 locations throughout Laredo and Webb County.</p>
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-surges-state-resources-to-support-covid-19-response-in-laredo

Austin: Therapeutic Expansion

Date	January 25, 2021
Summary	<p>Gov. Abbott issued a news release announcing the expansion of the COVID-19 therapeutic infusion center in Austin to increase capacity to treat COVID-19 patients. In collaboration with Ascension Seton, Baylor Scott & White, and St. David's Healthcare, this regional infusion center will be provided a regular supply of monoclonal antibody therapy to treat patients, who meet certain criteria, with a referral from a hospital or doctor.</p>
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-tDEM-announce-expansion-of-covid-19-therapeutic-infusion-center-in-austin

Updates for Monoclonal Antibody Therapy Administration Codes M0239 and M0243

Date	January 25, 2021
Summary	<p>Effective for dates of service on or after November 9, 2020, procedure code M0239 (administration of Bamlanivimab) can be billed by the following provider types in nursing home settings: Physician (D.O.), Physician (M.D.), Physician Group (D.O.s only), and Clinic/Group Practice.</p> <p>Effective for dates of service on or after November 21, 2020, procedure code M0243 (administration of Casirivimab and Imdevimab) can be billed by the following provider types in nursing home settings: Physician (D.O.), Physician (M.D.), Physician Group (D.O.s only), and Clinic/Group Practice.</p> <p>Procedure codes M0239 and M0243 are pending a rate approval hearing and are not currently benefits. Services provided before the rate hearing is completed and expenditures are approved will be denied with the following explanation of benefits (EOB) 02008: "This procedure code has been approved as a benefit pending the approval of expenditures. Providers will be notified of the effective dates of service in a future notification if expenditures are approved."</p> <p>Once expenditures are approved, TMHP will automatically reprocess the affected claims. Providers are not required to appeal the claims unless they are denied for other reasons after the claims reprocessing is complete.</p>
Link	https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-25-updates-monoclonal-antibody-therapy-administration-codes-m0239-and-m0243

Therapeutics Updates

Date	January 21, 2021
Summary	<p>The latest federal therapeutics allocation to Texas was higher than expected, with nearly 65,000 doses of the drugs, bamlanivimab (53,415) and casirivimab/imdevimab (10,514), allocated to Texas since November when distribution began. Hospitals can register to receive therapeutics here and can contact the therapeutics email address with additional questions. Texas hospitals are required to report vaccine doses administered via TDEM's Therapeutics & Vaccine Reporting Portal and ImmTrac2.</p>

COVID-19 Vaccine Resource for CDS Employees

Date	January 27, 2021
Summary	HHSC provided a resource for consumer directed services (CDS) employees experiencing challenges accessing the COVID-19 vaccine because they do not have a badge or photo ID verifying their health-care worker status. The resource template is attached to IL 2021-06 . Financial management services agencies (FMSAs) can complete and provide to CDS employees to assist in verifying they are home health-care workers.
Link	https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-01-27-covid-19-vaccine-resource-cds-employees-il-2021-06

Vaccine Updates

Date	January 25, 2021
Summary	<p>On January 25, 2021, the state’s Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel met to discuss the latest vaccine updates and make recommendations for week eight allocations and beyond. The state plans to continue prioritization of hubs for vaccine allocation, followed by hospitals and local health departments. Here is a roundup of other key facts from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pfizer Labels. Per the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Pfizer vaccine labels will be updated to indicate that six doses are available per vial. This change will show that there are 1,170 doses per tray, up from 975. It will appear that there is more vaccine, but it’s the same amount facilities have been receiving.• Janssen Vaccine. Janssen is expected to request emergency use authorization for its vaccine next week. The Janssen vaccine will be a single dose, preservative-free vaccine. A total of 2,400 doses of the vaccine will be distributed per shipment, which is beyond the capacity of many facilities. The state is looking into whether smaller shipments may be an option. <p>DSHS published the week seven official distribution list, which includes 82 mass vaccination hubs and 130 other providers. According to the state’s news release, the added hub locations for this week are in Burnet, Dallas, Gregg, Montgomery and Navarro counties. Texas providers have administered more than 1.6 million doses of vaccine. A total of 1.37 million people have received at least one dose, and more than 228,000 have been fully vaccinated.</p>

Becoming a Vaccine Hub

Date	January 22, 2021
Summary	The Texas Hospital Association (THA) has fielded numerous inquiries about how sites can become mass vaccination hubs. THA has confirmed that DSHS is considering adding hubs in areas that currently do not have a hub. Hospitals that wish to be considered as a hub provider should indicate that interest by coordinating with local public health officials and by sending plan details to DSHS at localvaccines@dshs.texas.gov for future consideration. THA has updated its vaccine hub FAQs to assist hospitals interested in becoming hub sites. The state continues to be focused on providers that can administer at least 1,000 to 2,000 doses per day in urban settings, or at least 200 to 400 per day in rural settings.

Federal Updates

Executive Action on COVID-19

Date	January 21, 2021
Summary	<p>President Biden signed a series of executive orders aimed at addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The actions focus on expanding testing, administering vaccines, advancing racial equity, among other areas. Biden rejoined the World Health Organization, encouraged mask wearing, created a White House COVID-19 Response Team, and implemented a “whole of government approach” to examining and addressing inequities. Many of the executive actions are part of the Administration’s National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness, which was released January 21, 2021.</p> <p>The American Hospital Association (AHA) distributed a special bulletin summarizing President Biden’s recent executive action related to COVID-19 and other items. The bulletin provides details on actions related to testing, vaccines and supplies, among other areas.</p>

Guidance for Surveys During Public Health Emergency

Date	January 21, 2021
Summary	The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released updated guidance putting in place certain limitations on the hospital survey process, including limiting onsite surveys to immediate jeopardy complaint allegations.

Link | <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and-memos-states-and/hospital-survey-priorities>

Google Launches Pilot Vaccine Finder; Includes Texas

Date	January 25, 2021
Summary	POLITICO reported that Google will use VaccineFinder data to provide a list of local COVID-19 vaccination sites and logistical information. The results will look similar to its map and list of COVID-19 testing centers that appear when you search: “Covid testing near me.” Texas, Arizona, Louisiana, and Mississippi will be the first to see the new dashboard, which will display drive-thru locations, whether you will need an appointment or referral, and whether vaccination is limited to certain groups. Google also is distributing \$155 million in grants aimed at education and vaccine outreach to underserved populations, including people of color and rural populations.
Link	https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-pulse/2021/01/25/vaccine-crunch-doesnt-curb-biden-teams-expectations-792958

HIPAA Enforcement Flexibility & COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Apps

Date	January 19, 2021
Summary	The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced it will not impose penalties on covered providers, their business associates, or vendors for HIPAA rule violations related to web-based apps used in good faith to schedule individual appointments for COVID-19 vaccination. According to the notice , HHS will immediately exercise this enforcement discretion in how it applies the HIPAA privacy, security and breach notification rules during the public health emergency retroactive to December 11, 2020. OCR encourages covered providers and business associates using these apps to implement certain “reasonable safeguards” to protect individuals’ protected health information, such as using only the minimum necessary public health information, using encryption technology and enabling all available privacy settings.
Link	https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/01/19/ocr-announces-notification-enforcement-discretion-use-online-web-based-scheduling-applications-scheduling-covid-19-vaccination-appointments.html

CPT Codes, Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate

Date	January 19, 2021
Summary	The American Medical Association announced Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes for reporting the single-dose Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine and its administration on medical claims if the FDA approves the candidate vaccine or authorizes it for emergency use. FDA approval is expected in mid-February, and the understanding is they will release a very large supply that the company has in the pipeline by late February. It will be a single dose shot.
Link	https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-announces-update-covid-19-vaccine-cpt-codes

HHS Awards Funds to Expand Immunization Information Sharing Collaboration

Date	January 19, 2021
Summary	<p>HHS, acting through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), announced a series of investments to help increase data sharing between health information exchanges (HIEs) and immunization information systems.</p> <p>ONC will award nearly \$20 million in funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The projects will build on and expand ONC's Strengthening the Technical Advancement and Readiness of Public Health Agencies via Health Information Exchange (STAR HIE) Program by helping communities improve the sharing of health information related to vaccinations. Through these collaborations, public health agencies can get additional help tracking and identifying patients who have yet to receive their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and better identify those who may be high-risk who have not yet received a vaccination. ONC will also award funds to the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the Colorado Regional Health Information Organization (CORHIO), to support immunization related health information exchange collaborations.</p>
Link	https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/01/19/hhs-awards-funds-to-expand-immunization-sharing-collaboration.html

CDC Guidance and Reports

Updated Guidance: mRNA Vaccines

Date	January 21, 2021
Summary	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its guidelines on mRNA vaccines. Among other updates, the changes cover new recommendations on intervals between first and second dose as well as interchangeability of vaccine products.
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html

COVID-19 Cases and Transmission in 17 K–12 Schools

Date	January 26, 2021
Summary	COVID-19 outbreaks related to kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) classroom settings have been rarely reported; however, in-school transmission risk has not been well described. Among 17 rural Wisconsin schools, reported student mask-wearing was high, and the COVID-19 incidence among students and staff members was lower than in the county overall (3,453 versus 5,466 per 100,000). Among 191 cases identified in students and staff members, only seven (3.7%) cases, all among students, were linked to in-school spread. With masking requirements and student cohorting, transmission risk within schools appeared low, suggesting that schools might be able to safely open with appropriate mitigation efforts in place.
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7004e3.htm?s_cid=mm7004e3_w