

Meadows Institute COVID-19 Regulatory & Reimbursement Newsletter

Letter to Providers #52: State and Federal Updates – April 16, 2021

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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 Rachael McLaughlin at rmclaughlin@mmhpi.org.

Texas Updates

NHSN COVID-19 Module

Date	April 9, 2021
Summary	<p>The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has published the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Long Term Care Facility COVID-19 Module Enrollment. The letter explains who can report into the NHSN COVID-19 module including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assisted Living Facilities• Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with an Intellectual disability• Nursing Facilities <p>Enrolling in the NHSN COVID-19 module provides long-term care facilities with a secure reporting platform. This allows for reporting outcomes and process measures in a systematic way so they can meet the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) reporting requirements for COVID-19 cases, testing and more. The NHSN reporting system has fewer system requirements than the DSHS system. Some providers may prefer its user interface.</p>
Link	https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/communications-events/news/2021/04/enroll-nhsn-covid-19-module

Visitation Comparison Table for Assisted Living Facilities

Date	April 13, 2021
Summary	<p>HHSC Long-term Care Regulation has published Visitation Comparison Table for assisted living facilities. The table can be used as a tool to help providers determine the visitation requirements for those providers who have offered the COVID-19 vaccine and those who have not.</p>
Link	https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/communications-events/news/2021/04/hhsc-publishes-visitation-comparison-table-assisted-living-facilities

Vaccine Updates

Reimbursement Rate Updates for COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Procedure Codes

Date	April 1, 2021
Summary	<p>Effective for dates of service on or after April 1, 2021, reimbursement rates for COVID-19 vaccine administration procedure codes will be updated for Medicaid, the Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program, Healthy Texas Women (HTW), and Family Planning Program.</p> <p>The following link shows the updates: COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Procedure Codes</p> <p>The Texas Medicaid Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) will automatically reprocess affected claims, if any are identified. Providers are not required to appeal the claims unless they are denied for additional reasons after the claims reprocessing is complete.</p>
Link	https://www.tmhp.com/news/2021-04-07-reimbursement-rate-updates-covid-19-vaccine-administration-procedure-codes

Pause on Use of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

Date	April 13, 2021
Summary	<p>DSHS is asking vaccine providers in Texas to pause all administration of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s health alert and the recommendation and from the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). DSHS has also updated its Johnson & Johnson FAQs focused on safety. Governor Greg Abbott's related statement can be found here.</p> <p>The pause is recommended following reports of blood clots in six individuals 6 to 13 days after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Right now, these adverse events appear to be extremely rare and are being further evaluated to ensure vaccine safety. People who have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider. Clinicians must report this information into the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System as soon as possible. DSHS confirmed that providers will not receive replacement vaccines at this time. Providers are instructed to hold on to the vaccine, keep it properly stored, and wait for additional guidance.</p>

Link | <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/news/releases/2021/20210413>

State Vaccine Numbers

Date	April 9, 2021
Summary	According to DSHS, more than 1.9 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine are being shipped to providers across Texas. Allocations for this week, week 18, are posted here . As a reminder, Texas will receive less vaccine this week due to a reduction of approximately 350,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The CDC has told states to expect smaller weekly allocations of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine until a plant in Baltimore is authorized to participate in vaccine production. Texas has now administered more than 13.6 million doses, an increase of 1.8 million in the past week and 3 million since vaccination was opened to everyone 16 years and older at the beginning of last week. Overall, more than 8.8 million people have received at least one dose, and 5.25 million are now fully vaccinated. About four in 10 of all eligible Texans have gotten a COVID-19 shot, and almost one-quarter are fully vaccinated. About 70% of Texas seniors have received at least one dose, and more than half are now fully vaccinated.
Link	https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/news/releases/2021/20210409

Steps To Be A Vaccine Provider

Date	April 8, 2021
Summary	Providers interested in becoming a COVID-19 vaccine provider must enroll with DSHS. Information on how to become a vaccine provider can be found here . All organizations and providers participating in the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must administer COVID-19 Vaccine at no out-of-pocket cost.• May not deny anyone vaccination based on the vaccine recipient's coverage status or network status.• May not charge an office visit or other fee if COVID-19 vaccination is the sole medical service provided.• May not require additional medical services to receive COVID-19 vaccination.• May not seek any reimbursement, including through balance billing, from the vaccine recipient.• More information can be found here.
Link	https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/mcs-covid-19-info-handout-apr-8-2021.pdf

Reminder: ICFs/IID must report COVID-19 Vaccination Data

Date	April 12, 2021
Summary	<p>Effective February 12, 2021, HHSC adopted new COVID-19 vaccination data reporting emergency rules requiring intermediate care facilities for individuals with an intellectual disability (Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF)/Individuals with an Intellectual Disability (IID)) or related conditions to accurately report COVID-19 vaccination data for staff and residents to HHSC in the format established by HHSC within 24 hours of completing a round of vaccinations.</p> <p>HHSC published Provider Letter 2021-05 with instructions on how to report vaccination data information to HHSC using Survey Monkey. Read the ICF/IID vaccination data reporting rules here.</p> <p>Facilities must continue to report all new vaccination data for staff and individuals using the online survey. Complete the survey here.</p>
Link	https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/communications-events/news/2021/04/reminder-icfsiid-must-report-covid-19-vaccination-data

Save Our Seniors Update

Date	April 14, 2021
Summary	<p>Governor Abbott announced that DSHS, the Texas Division of Emergency (TDEM), and the Texas Military Department (TMD) have announced 35 counties participating in the seventh week of the Save Our Seniors COVID-19 vaccine initiative. The Governor announced the Save Our Seniors program in Corpus Christi in March to provide vaccines to seniors throughout the state. To date, over 50,000 Texans have been vaccinated through this initiative.</p>
Link	https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-announces-35-participating-counties-for-seventh-week-of-save-our-seniors-initiative

Federal Updates

Blanket Waivers for Long-Term Care to End in May

Date	April 8, 2021
Summary	Beginning May 10, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will no longer waive certain requirements for long-term care and skilled nursing facilities. The terminated waivers are related to resident roommates and grouping and resident transfer and discharge, with some exceptions. CMS tweeted that facilities have been able to adjust operations to meet the time-frame requirements for conducting required assessments, care plans and notifications during the public health emergency, based on its analysis and communications with stakeholders. The CMS memo can be found here .
Link	https://www.cms.gov/files/document/summary-covid-19-emergency-declaration-waivers.pdf

Mental Health Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Date	April 14, 2021
Summary	Analyses from March Kaiser Family Foundation COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor found that those hardest hit by the mental health impacts of the coronavirus pandemic have been younger people and women, including mothers. Younger adults and women, including mothers with children under 18 years old in their households, are among the most likely to report that stress and worry related to coronavirus has had a negative impact on their mental health. Nearly half of Black adults (49%), White adults (48%), and about four in ten Hispanic adults (43%) say the coronavirus has had a negative impact on their mental health, including three in ten Black adults (31%) and one-fourth of White (23%) and Hispanic (25%) adults who say it has had a “major impact”. Smaller shares of adults ages 65 and older and men (including fathers with children in the home) say they have experienced mental health impact from the coronavirus. It is notable that some previous studies have shown that men , older adults , and Black adults may be less likely to report mental health difficulty and more likely to face challenges accessing mental health care.
Link	https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/mental-health-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/

New Guidance and Resources to Expand Access to COVID-19 Vaccines for People with Disabilities and Older Adults

Date	April 13, 2021
Summary	The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Administration for Community Living (ACL), and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have published several new resources to help states, vaccination providers, and others leading COVID-19 response activities improve access to vaccines for people with disabilities and older adults. These resources clarify legal requirements, illustrate some of the barriers to vaccine access faced by people with disabilities and older people, and provide strategies – and examples of how the aging and disability network can help employ them – to ensure accessibility.
Link	https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/04/13/new-legal-guidance-and-resources-to-ensure-and-expand-access-to-covid-19-vaccines-for-people-with-disabilities-and-older-adults.html

CDC Reports

Trends in Racial and Ethnic Disparities in COVID-19 Hospitalizations, by Region

Date	April 12, 2021
Summary	Within each U.S. Census region, the proportion of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 was highest for Hispanic or Latino patients. Racial and ethnic disparities were largest during May–July 2020 and became less pronounced as the pandemic spread throughout the country; however, disparities remained in December 2020 in all regions. Understanding the social determinants of health contributing to geographic and temporal differences in racial and ethnic disparities at a local level can help guide public health prevention strategies and equitable resource allocation, including COVID-19 vaccination, to address COVID-19–related health disparities.
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7015e2.htm?s_cid=mm7015e2_w

Emergency Department Visits for COVID-19 by Race and Ethnicity

Date	April 12, 2021
Summary	Data from 13 states indicate that compared with White persons, Hispanic and American Indian or Alaska Native persons experienced 1.7 times the rate, and Black persons experienced 1.4 times the rate of emergency department care visits for COVID-19 during October–December 2020. Emergency department COVID-19 visit data can provide insight into ongoing areas of racial/ethnic inequity in health status and disease outcomes and can be used to prioritize prevention resources, including COVID-19 vaccination, to reach disproportionately affected groups.
Link	https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7015e3.htm?s_cid=mm7015e3_w

Decontaminated Disposable Respirators

Date	April 9, 2021
Summary	The FDA issued guidance urging health care facilities to transition away from using crisis capacity conservation strategies, such as decontamination or bioburden reduction, to extend the use of N95s and other similar disposable respirators.
Link	https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/letters-health-care-providers/fda-recommends-transition-use-decontaminated-disposable-respirators-letter-health-care-personnel