



Families First Coronavirus Response Act



President Trump signed a second coronavirus emergency aid package into law Wednesday evening. This bill responds to the coronavirus outbreak by providing paid sick leave and free coronavirus testing, expanding food assistance and unemployment benefits, and requiring employers to provide additional protections for health care workers.

The bill also includes provisions that:

- establish a federal emergency paid leave benefits program to provide payments to employees taking unpaid leave due to the coronavirus outbreak
- expand unemployment benefits and provide grants to states for processing and paying claims
- require employers to provide paid sick leave to employees
- establish requirements for providing coronavirus diagnostic testing at no cost to consumers
- treat personal respiratory protective devices as covered countermeasures that are eligible for certain liability protections
- temporarily increase the Medicaid federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP).

[Read a full summary here.](#)

Conference Call with ADPH

We will be hosting another conference call with ADPH regarding the most recent Coronavirus COVID-19 update on Monday, March 23. If you are interested in joining the call, please look at the details below.

DATE: Monday, March 23

TIME: 7:00PM

PHONE NUMBER: 1-800-469-8538

PASSCODE: 750761

Emergency Procedure Order Clarification

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Medical



Association has been working closely with the Alabama Department of Public Health and advocating for physicians throughout the state.

Yesterday, Alabama State Health Officer, Dr. Scott Harris, in consultation with the Medical Association implemented a Statewide Social Distancing Order. During the emergency, all elective medical procedures are ordered to be delayed.

[See the full order here.](#)

We support ADPH's decision in banning elective procedures and imposing restrictions on visitation.

These changes will impose new challenges for physicians; however, we want to provide clarification on the order itself. **The order is not intended to force physicians to close their offices.** The definition of "elective procedure" within the order is intentionally broad enough to allow physicians to exercise judgement on what constitutes an elective procedure versus an immediate healthcare need. The informal guidance given as to what is, and what is not, elective is a reference to [CMS Adult Elective Surgery Procedures and Recommendations.](#)

The Medical Association President, John S. Meigs, MD, FAAFP, says it best, "Our physicians are on the front lines and will continue to provide first contact, preventative and ongoing essential care during this medical crisis. We trust physicians to work at their discretion while maintaining proper social distancing techniques and other safety precautions suggested by Governor Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Public Health."

UPDATE: Daycare Prohibition Order Amended

The order given yesterday also closes all preschools and childcare centers, except for those operated exclusively for the benefit of law enforcement, hospitals, ESRD Treatment Centers, EMS and state and local governments. The childcare center must be employer-operated and located on the premises for the exception to apply.

The Medical Association requested an amendment to this order to include all healthcare workers, including physicians and their office staff. The order has been amended to reflect that change.

Telehealth Coding and Basics: with Questions and Answers

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



The Medical Association has asked Dr. Eric Wallace to lead this webinar on Telehealth Coding and Basics. Wallace, a nephrologist, is the medical director for Telehealth at UAB, where he is working on creating a statewide telehealth network in Alabama. He is the first physician in the United States to replace a comprehensive face-to-face visit with a telehealth visit for a home dialysis patient.

Please ask an administrative member of your staff to join you, since they often work with billing issues.

Date: Saturday, March 21, 2020

Time: 9:00AM CST

Meeting number (access code): 801 221 414

Meeting password: eiMxpNJM448

Join by phone

+1-415-655-0001 US Toll

Join from a video system or application

Dial [801221414](tel:801221414)@uabemedicine.webex.com

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

Join using Microsoft Lync or Microsoft Skype for Business

Dial [801221414](tel:801221414).uabemedicine@lync.webex.com

Join the Meeting

UPDATE: Telehealth in Alabama during COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE)

prepared by Kim Huey, MJ, CHC, CPC, CCS-P, PCS, CPCO, COC

The Medical Association reached out to Kim Huey, coding expert, to help us navigate the most recent updates within coding and telehealth. She has graciously supplied and updated **an article on our website** for our members.

New COVID-19 Website



The Medical Association of the State of Alabama has compiled resources for physicians and health care providers on the latest news, research and developments.

Check it out here!



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