



## **ADPH Advises Health Care Providers in Use of COVID-19 Tests not Approved by the United States FDA**



The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) supports health care workers' efforts to care for Alabama citizens during this COVID-19 health crisis. As this public health emergency evolves, there is need for increased availability of SARS CoV-2 diagnostic testing. In response to this demand, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released policies to authorize emergency use of in vitro diagnostics to increase testing capacity and development to promote widespread testing for COVID-19. As a result, the availability of commercial testing devices proliferated, many with false claims by distributors. ADPH therefore advises health care providers to choose COVID-19 testing systems that are FDA approved when making decisions regarding their patients.

[View the Full Story on NewsCenter](#)

## COVID-19 QUESTIONS? GET ANSWERS & EARN CME.



As providers, physicians and members of the health care team want to do whatever they can to ensure the health and well-being of their patients. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the practice of medicine is facing challenges in delivering the best care amid government mandates and ever-changing public perceptions of the situation. At the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, we want to help by offering online COVID-19 CME courses (free for members).

Courses include:

- **PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS IN THE COVID-19 ERA**
- **PPE FOR PHYSICIANS: NEW, USED AND REFRESHED**
- **AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE DOCTOR'S SYMPTOMS OF COVID AND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC**

**Credits**

The Medical Foundation of Alabama designates this enduring material for a maximum of .25 AMA/PRA Category 1 Credits<sup>SM</sup>. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama through the joint providership of the Medical Foundation of Alabama and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama. The Medical Foundation of Alabama is accredited by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

[HTTPS://WWW.ALAMEDICAL.ORG/COVID19](https://www.alamedical.org/covid19)

## Second Round of Funding Coming: Do You Have Questions About the Paycheck Protection Program?



As you have seen by our updates, we are always on the lookout for helpful resources, from all levels of government, that may help you and your practice weather the storm created by COVID-19. This week the Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Treasury Department released a document that provides answers to frequently asked questions about the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which was established to provide forgivable loans to businesses for keeping employees on the payroll.

**[You can learn more about the Paycheck Protection Program by clicking here.](#)**

Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed the "Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act," the supplemental COVID-19 bill that passed the Senate earlier this week.

It is likely that some elements of the programs receiving added funds in this legislation will be revised to assure they are better targeted toward facilities and physician practices most in need, so we cannot yet provide details on how the new money will be distributed.

A CARES 2.0/COVID 4.0 bill remains under development for consideration in early May, and will cover a wider range of issues.

**Read a Summary of the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act Here**

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**Blue Cross Opens Telehealth to Level 4 Visits**



The Medical Association has been in discussion with Blue Cross about the possibility of them allowing physicians to bill for level 4 offices visits via telehealth.

Blue Cross was one of the first payors to open up their telehealth policy to audio only (telephone) visits and are to be commended for doing so. However, the original policy only allowed up to a Level 3 visit to be billed. As the pandemic has evolved it has become apparent that the level of care being provided by physicians on telephone visits justifies billing for Level 4. Consequently, the Medical Association asked Blue Cross to consider our request.

Blue Cross has announced today that effective immediately they will begin paying for Level 4 visits under their telehealth policy. Two level IV E&M CPT codes have been approved for telehealth services and added to the Telehealth Billing Guide: 99204 and 99214.

These codes are available for telehealth services effective April 24, 2020.

[View the Policy Here](#)

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**Medical Association Working with Stakeholders on Elective Surgery Options**



As discussions take place within state government about re-opening the state to retail businesses and other commerce, the Medical Association is working with state leaders on a plan that would allow physicians to safely resume elective surgeries and other health care services that have been significantly reduced due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Medical Association fully supports the current health order and the Governor's position that there needs to be a consistent reduction of new cases before measures can be adopted to open up the state to full economic activity. However, conversations do need to begin with stakeholders about the timing of the relaxation of the health order and the guidelines that would accompany any revised order.

The principles that the Medical Association support in making these decisions are as follows:

1. Ensuring Health Workforce Safety
2. Availability of adequate PPE
3. Availability of widespread testing
4. Development of robust contact tracing

The current health order purposely gives physicians broad discretion to determine what health services are essential and what services can be delayed. Similarly, it is the Association's position that under any new health order, physicians should have the ability to determine if their practice environment and protocols meet the broad thresholds listed above and have the flexibility to develop their own internal policies to do so.

As Governor Ivey and Dr. Scott Harris develop plans for moving forward, The Medical Association will work with the specialty societies and county medical societies to gather recommendations that will be provided for our state leadership.

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# Frontline Heroes

## Discount Day April 25

Special thanks to all first responders,  
law enforcement officers, physicians and nurses.



# 30% off

our family of brands  
eligible regular-price  
merchandise\*

# 20% off

all other merchandise  
eligible regular-price  
items\*

Offer good in store only—just show your badge or ID.

We appreciate everything you do to keep us safe and healthy.

Offer valid April 25, 2020, only in store with Balance® Rewards card to first responders, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, firefighters and police officers who present valid ID for proof of employment as a First Responder. 30% discount is available for the following Walgreens family of brands: A Little Something™, Big Roll™, Complete Home™, Dashing Fine Gifts®, Finest® Nutrition, Infinitive®, Living Solutions®, Modern Expressions®, Nice!®, Patriot Candles®, PetShoppe™, Play Right®, Smile & Save®, Walgreens, Walgreens seasonal brands, Well Beginnings®, West Loop®, and Wexford®. Proof of age may be required. Discount not valid on alcohol, dairy, tobacco, stamps, gift cards, newspapers, magazines, money orders/transfers, transportation passes, lottery tickets, charitable donations, pseudoephedrine or ephedrine products, clinic services, prescriptions, pharmacy items or services, sales tax, the Prescription Savings Club membership fee, and items or services submitted to insurance for reimbursement or where otherwise limited by law. Offer is not combinable with buy 1 get 1 free, buy 1 get 1 50% off, or buy 2 get 3rd FREE. Offer does not apply to bulk orders, back-ordered items and out-of-stock items.

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