



MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA®

Mayor Woodfin Wants 'Shelter in Place' for Birmingham, Including Curfews



SHELTER IN PLACE

Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin has [proposed an ordinance](#) preventing Birmingham residents from traveling or leaving their homes except to go to work, buy essential items and groceries, go to the doctor or exercise.

The "shelter in place" ordinance if approved would go into effect immediately and stands until April 3 at 12 a.m.

[Read more on AL.com](#)

3.23.2020 Conference Call with ADPH



We hosted another conference call with ADPH last night regarding the most recent Coronavirus COVID-19 updates. There were over 460 physicians on the call. If you

could not join the call, or would like to listen again, you can find a link to the recording below.

If you had any questions that were not answered, please contact [Mallory Camerio](#) and let her know what the question was and we will do our best to get it answered for you.

3.23.2020 Call Recording



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Education Resources

As developments surrounding COVID-19 rapidly evolve, it is more critical than ever to rely on trusted resources for the latest, accurate information. Below, you will find a wealth of resources and accredited continuing education activities provided by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) aimed at helping you navigate the healthcare landscape during the COVID-19 response in Alabama.

[Find Education Resources Here.](#)

#StayHome to Confront COVID-19



The AMA, AHA and ANA **issued an open letter** today calling on the American people to stay home to help reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus and limit its long-term health effect on our country. Staying at home in this urgent moment is our best defense to turn the tide against COVID-19.

Read the letter here.

BCBS UPDATES

Flexibility on Prior Authorization of Procedures

During the term of the declared emergency, BCBS will allow a provider to reschedule a patient who is certified for a procedure on a particular date, to a new date, without receiving another prior authorization for the new date, as long as the procedure is completed within a year. The provider needs to notify BCBS of the new date.

Amends Cost Sharing During Emergency

· Effective March 1, 2020

- As a result of the Families First Act, in-network diagnostic tests for COVID-19 will be covered at 100% with no member cost sharing. Out-of-network diagnostic tests for COVID-19 will be covered at the out-of-network benefit level.
- If an in-network office visit, urgent care visit, emergency room visit, behavioral health visit, or telehealth service results in a claim being filed by the in-network PPO provider with a COVID-19 related diagnosis as outlined by the CDC and American Medical Association, that office visit, urgent care visit, emergency room visit, behavioral health visit, or telehealth service will be covered at 100% with no member cost sharing. Out-of-network services will be covered at the out-of-network benefit level.
- More than one in-network office visit, urgent care visit, emergency room visit, behavioral health visit, or telehealth service for the same member incurred on the same day will be covered if the urgent care visit, emergency room visit, behavioral health visit, or telehealth service is rendered by different in-network PPO providers and the claims are filed with a COVID-19 related diagnosis as outlined by the CDC and American Medical Association.
- Inpatient deductibles, copays and coinsurance will be waived if a member is admitted to an in-network hospital with a COVID-19 related diagnosis as outlined by the CDC and American Medical Association.

Announces Continued Coverage for Employees

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama has announced that they will continue to provide health insurance coverage for employees who are laid off, furloughed or otherwise temporarily severed from employment. Most group health insurance plans require employees to work a minimum of 30 hours per week to be eligible for coverage. However, under the recently announced policy, employees working less than 30 hours (down to zero) can continue to have coverage as long as the premium is paid by the employer group.

ADPH Updates Testing Criteria



Due to dwindling testing supplies, the Alabama Department of Public Health has been forced to revise its testing criteria. Previously, ADPH approved testing simply based on a physician's order; however, it has become necessary for the department to institute new testing criteria.

Persons with no symptoms should not be tested. Testing is also not recommended for persons with mild symptoms. Please direct patients to stay home, practice home care, and call if symptoms worsen. All persons are asked to practice social distancing and to limit social interactions.

All providers requesting COVID-19 testing must complete the online Novel Coronavirus PUI form found on the [ADPH Coronavirus for Healthcare Providers webpage](#). Providers should select the category of the laboratory where the specimen will be sent for testing: Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL), commercial, or clinical laboratory on the form. An email confirming successful submission of the form will be sent. If BCL is selected, the email will include confirmation or declination of approval for testing. Once approved, the email includes a link to the BCL requisition form which must accompany the specimen.

[Follow specimen collection and shipping instructions carefully.](#)

The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) provides free access to the BCL Web Portal. The BCL Web Portal is an electronic system for ordering and receiving laboratory test results. BCL recommends all providers use its Web Portal to assist submitting all test requisitions and for receiving all test results in a timely manner. To register for a Web Portal account, using your work email address, **[please email us the following information:](#)**

- Facility name
- Facility address
- Facility phone number
- Point of contact

The following testing criteria is now in place pursuant to the March 23 health order:

- The patient is symptomatic with at minimum (measured or subjective fever OR cough OR shortness of breath, **AND**
- The patient is hospitalized, or
- The patient is immunocompromised or has co-morbidities, or
- The patient age 65 years or older, or
- The patient is a healthcare worker, or
- The patient is associated with a long-term healthcare facility

[Click here for the most current testing information.](#)

Ask CMS to Cover Telephone-Only Visits for Seniors

The increased use of telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic is critical to maintain as much access to care as possible for patients while appropriately practicing social distancing. At present, CMS's current telehealth policy for Medicare patients falls far short of achieving these goals by not allowing telephone-only visits for Alabama seniors.

Do your part and contact CMS, the President and Vice President, and Congress today.



If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please [unsubscribe](#)

