



MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA®



Summary of Coronavirus Stimulus Bill

The Medical Association is monitoring updates on the Senate approved, \$2 trillion stimulus and COVID-19 relief package. We will send out the most recent information as more details become available.

Provisions of particular interest to physicians and their practices include the following:

- Creates a new loan product within the Small Business Administration for loans of up to \$10 million to help cover payroll and overhead costs, with expanded loan forgiveness criteria. Physician practices with not more than 500 employees may qualify.
- \$100 billion in direct financial support to hospitals, physician practices, and other health care providers under the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. This support is for costs of treating COVID-19 patients as well as to ease the financial impact on those who lose revenue due reductions in other services as a result of the pandemic. Exact eligibility criteria and application process is not yet defined pending implementation.
- Suspension of the 2% Medicare sequester in May through December 2020.
- Limitations on liability for volunteer health care professionals during COVID-19 emergency response.

- A temporary waiver of the face-to-face visit requirement with home dialysis patients.
- Authority for the Secretary of HHS to waive telehealth coverage requirements for new patients during a national emergency. Previous legislation provided flexibility only for established patients seen within the past three years.
- Secretary will also allow for enhanced use of telehealth under Medicare for federally qualified health centers.
- The "health extenders" package that was set to expire on May 22 has now been extended to November 30.

ProAssurance Coronavirus Information Center



The situation regarding COVID-19 is changing rapidly, and ProAssurance has developed a Coronavirus information center. View the website by clicking below.

[**View the Information Center Here**](#)

Alabama Schools Closed for the Rest of Year



Alabama K-12 public schools should plan for students to finish their school year at home, Governor Kay Ivey said today.

"This decision has not been made lightly," said Ivey in a press conference late today. She said she hoped Alabama would be able to welcome back students on April 6. "However, the virus continues to spread."

[Read the story on AL.com](#)

Prescribing Medications during SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)



The Alabama Board of Pharmacy (ALBOP) has received reports from patients taking hydroxychloroquine as a maintenance medication for lupus and rheumatoid arthritis that cannot get their medication due to supply shortages.

As a result, the ADPH is asking prescribers to exercise care when prescribing medications that may be in short supply during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, there is no evidence that hydroxychloroquine reduces severity or prevents COVID-19 infection.

For information from ALBOP regarding COVID-19, please visit the website linked below.

[ALBOP Website](#)

Telemedicine in the Time of COVID-19 Webinar

On Saturday, March 21st, The Medical Association asked Dr. Eric Wallace to lead a 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. If you missed the webinar, or would like to watch it again, [click here](#).

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. [American Senior Alliance](#) joins the Medical Association in calling on CMS to fix the Alabama telehealth policy.

[Do your part and contact CMS, the President and Vice President, and Congress today.](#)



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