



MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA®

HAPPY NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY!

Thank you, today and every day, to the physicians who put their health and safety at risk to help others.



There could not be a better time to let our members know how much we appreciate them. We are so grateful for your dedication to patient care in these unprecedented times. Thank you for all that you do!

**Financial Relief for Medicare Providers
through Advanced Payments**



The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is announcing an expansion of its accelerated and advance payment program for Medicare participating health care providers and suppliers, to ensure they have the resources needed to combat the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). This program expansion, which includes changes from the recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, is one way that CMS is working to lessen the financial hardships of providers facing extraordinary challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensures the nation's providers can focus on patient care.

[Read the Full Alert from CMS](#)

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans



Do you have questions about the low-interest federal disaster loans for small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)? We have compiled a [summary of the U.S. Small Business Administration Economic Injury Disaster Loan for you here!](#)

[You can also find a summary of the Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program here.](#)

[See the AMA's CARES Act Summary Here](#)

Blue Cross Updates Cost-Sharing Policy



BCBS has announced a new policy regarding cost-sharing (co-pays, deductibles or co-insurance) for telehealth visits.

Under this new policy, Cost-sharing for all telehealth visits will be waived regardless of whether there is a diagnosis related to COVID-19.

[Telehealth Coverage Guidelines](#) | [COVID-19 Coding Guide](#)

*Note: Some self-insured groups may opt-out of this policy.
Practices need to check eligibility and benefits to confirm.*

[**See the Telehealth Billing Guide Here**](#)



Changes to Liability Protection under Governor Ivey's Proclamation

Governor Kay Ivey issued a proclamation on March 13, 2020, declaring a state public health emergency in the State of Alabama, and setting forth an "alternative standard of care" for health care professionals who in good faith are executing an "alternative standard of care plan." The alternative standard of care plan falls under an emergency operation plan for a "health care facility." Under her proclamation, physicians working in some settings will have

more liability protection. Limited immunity is provided under the proclamation when a health care facility has an emergency operation plan and implements its alternative standard of care plan. There is no guidance in the proclamation as to exactly what facilities or what providers are covered. The Medical Association is working with others in order to interpret the scope of this liability protection, and it hopes to have guidance as soon as possible. In the meantime, physicians who work for a hospital in the State of Alabama should look to the hospital's emergency operation plan that is now activated for some guidance.

United Healthcare Updates During Health Emergency

Telehealth Policy

UnitedHealthcare is temporarily waiving the CMS and state-based originating site restrictions and audio-video requirement, where applicable, for Medicare Advantage, Medicaid and commercial members. Care providers will be able to bill for telehealth services performed using audio-video or audio only communication while a patient is at home. This change will apply immediately and be effective until June 18, 2020. The reimbursement policy change applies to services provided to members covered by all Medicaid plans.

Expanded Provider Telehealth Access - Through June 18, 2020, eligible medical providers who have the ability and want to connect with their patient through synchronous virtual care (audio-video or audio only) can do so, except in the cases where we have explicitly denoted the need for interactive audio/video such as with PT/OT/ST, while a patient is at home. UnitedHealthcare will reimburse both participating and non-participating care providers who submit appropriate telehealth claims. Benefits will be processed in accordance with the member's plan.

Virtual Check in Policy

UnitedHealthcare's commercial and Medicare Advantage plans currently reimburse for "virtual check-in" patients to connect with their doctors remotely. These services are for established patients, not related to a medical visit within the previous 7 days and not resulting in a medical visit within the next 24 hours (or soonest appointment available). These services can be billed when furnished through several communication technology modalities, such as telephone (HCPCS code G2012) or captured video or image (HCPCS code G2010).

COVID-19 Testing Cost-share Waiver

UnitedHealthcare is waiving cost sharing for COVID-19 testing during this national emergency. We're also waiving cost sharing for COVID-19 testing-related visits during this same time, whether the testing-related visit is received in a health care provider's office, an urgent care center, an emergency department or through a telehealth visit. This coverage applies to Medicare Advantage, Medicaid and commercial plans. UnitedHealthcare is also monitoring state-specific regulations related to this public health emergency.

Prior Authorization Changes

Prior authorization is not required for COVID-19 testing and COVID-19 testing related visits effective March 24, 2020.

Jefferson County Agencies Set Up PPE Donation Site

The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) and the Jefferson County Healthcare Coalition in conjunction with Christian Service Mission and the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) are appealing to community organizations, corporations, universities, healthcare providers, etc. that have closed or restricted their operations temporarily to donate much-needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in order to save lives in the fight against coronavirus/COVID-19.

Please contact the Coordination Center at (205) 254-2550 Monday – Friday from 10am to 2pm for questions regarding donations.

The following items will be considered for donations:

- N95 Masks
- Surgical Masks
- Isolation Gowns
 - Gloves
 - Face Shields
- Sterile Specimen Collection Swabs
- Hand Sanitizer

Drop-off locations and hours include:

Christian Service Mission Warehouse

[3600 3rd Avenue S – Birmingham, AL 35222](#)

Monday – Thursday 9am to 3pm

Friday 9am to 12pm (noon)

**Please note that only unopened packages and supplies will be accepted.
The supplies should not be damaged, but out of date items will be accepted.*



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