



# CMS NEWS ALERT

APRIL 27, 2020

Here is a summary of recent Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) actions taken in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), as part of the ongoing White House Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19, click here [www.coronavirus.gov](http://www.coronavirus.gov). For information specific to CMS, please visit the [CMS News Room](#) and [Current Emergencies Website](#). CMS updates these resources on an ongoing basis throughout the day; the information below is current as of April 27, 2020 at 10:45 a.m.

## **CMS Reevaluates Accelerated Payment Program and Suspends Advance Payment Program**

CMS announced that it is reevaluating the amounts that will be paid under its Accelerated Payment Program and suspending its Advance Payment Program to Part B suppliers effective immediately. The agency made this announcement following the successful payment of over \$100 billion to healthcare providers and suppliers through these programs. CMS had expanded these temporary loan programs to ensure providers and suppliers had the resources needed to combat the beginning stages of the COVID-19. Funding will continue to be available to hospitals and other healthcare providers on the front lines of the coronavirus response primarily from the [Provider Relief Fund](#).

[Press Release](#)

## **Trump Administration Releases COVID-19 Toolkit to Accelerate State Use of Telehealth in Medicaid and CHIP**

CMS released a new toolkit for states to help accelerate adoption of broader telehealth coverage policies in the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The toolkit will help states identify policies that may impede the rapid deployment of telehealth when providing care. This release builds on the agency's swift actions to ensure that Americans can access the health care services they need through electronic and virtual means, minimizing travel to healthcare facilities and supporting efforts to limit community spread of the virus.

[Press Release](#)  
[Toolkit](#)

## **Infection Control Guidance to Home Health Agencies on COVID-19**

CMS issued guidance to respond to questions from Medicare & Medicaid Home Health Agencies and Religious Nonmedical Healthcare Institutions. The guidance addresses the COVID-19 outbreak and minimizing transmission to other individuals.

[Guidance](#)

## **Now Available: Nursing Home Five Star Quality Rating System Updates, Nursing Home Staff Counts, and Frequently Asked Questions**

In a recent memo to State Survey Agencies, CMS announced that the inspection domain of the Nursing Home Compare website will be held constant temporarily due to the prioritization and suspension of certain surveys, to ensure the rating system reflects fair information for consumers. In addition, CMS is releasing information that shows the average number of staff each nursing home has onsite, each day (nursing staff and total staff), and aggregated by state and nationally. Along with these announcements CMS released a list of Frequently Asked Questions to clarify certain actions the agency has taken related to visitation, surveys, waivers, and other guidance.

### [Memo](#)

### [Five-Star Quality Rating Information](#)

## **CMS Gives States Additional Flexibility to Address Coronavirus Pandemic**

CMS has approved more than 125 requests for state relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including recent approvals for Arizona, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington. These approvals help to ensure that states have the tools they need to combat COVID-19 through a wide variety of waivers, amendments, and Medicaid state plan flexibilities, including for programs that care for the elderly and people with disabilities. CMS developed a [toolkit](#) to expedite the application and review of each request and has approved these requests in record time. These approved flexibilities support President Trump's commitment to a COVID-19 response that is locally executed, state managed, and federally supported.

### [Section 1135 Waivers](#)

### [Section 1115\(a\) Waivers](#)

### [1915\(c\) Waiver Appendix K Amendments](#)

### [Medicaid State Plan Amendments](#)

### [CHIP State Plan Amendments](#)

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