

The Trump Administration continues our work to make sure that states have a range of COVID-19 testing platforms and options. Today, **\$583 Million was disbursed to FQHCs for testing.** HRSA [awarded nearly \\$583 million](#) to 1,385 HRSA-funded health centers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and eight U.S. territories to expand COVID-19 testing. Nearly 88 percent of HRSA-funded health centers report testing patients, with more than 65 percent offering walk-up or drive-up testing. Health centers are currently providing more than 100,000 weekly COVID-19 tests in their local communities. As Secretary Azar noted, these “health centers are vital to making testing easily accessible, especially for underserved and minority populations.”

Provider Relief Fund Updates

Attestation Deadline Extended: HHS [extended the deadline for healthcare providers to attest](#) to receipt of payments from the Provider Relief Fund and accept the Terms and Conditions. Providers will now have 45 days, increased from 30 days, from the date they receive a payment to attest and accept the Terms and Conditions or return the funds. As an example, the initial 30-day deadline for providers who received payment on April 10, 2020, is extended to May 24 from May 9, 2020. With the extension, not returning the payment within 45 days of receipt of payment will be viewed as acceptance of the Terms and Conditions.

Additional Information for Providers on Uninsured Program: HRSA released [FAQs on the Uninsured Program](#) for providers. The FAQs clarify questions related to eligibility for patients and providers, eligible claims and coding, program administration, and reimbursement/payment.

Funding Released for High Impact Distribution: UnitedHealthGroup began disbursing the \$12 billion in funding announced last week to hospitals in high impact areas. Hospitals will receive this funding via direct deposit and will need to review the [terms and conditions](#) and sign the [attestation form](#) regarding the funding.

Testing Updates

Information on Community-based Testing Sites: HHS created a new webpage and resource with [information on community-based testing sites](#). HHS has partnered with pharmacy and retail companies to accelerate testing for more Americans in more communities across the country. The webpage includes links for how and where to get a drive-thru test.

COVID-19 Q & A for Consumers: FDA posted a new [Q/A for consumers](#) that focuses on remdesivir and different types of COVID-19 tests.

Treatment Updates

Manufacturers to Notify FDA if Device will be Discontinued: The FDA issued an immediately in effect guidance [Notifying the Center for Devices and Radiological Health of a Permanent Discontinuance or Interruption in Manufacturing of a Device Under Section 506J of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#). This guidance is intended to assist manufacturers in providing FDA timely, informative notifications about changes in the production of certain medical device products that will help the Agency prevent or mitigate shortages of such devices during the COVID-19 public health emergency. On May 11, 2020, the FDA will host a [webinar for medical device manufacturers and others](#) interested in learning more about the guidance.

Information on Reporting Animal Drug Shortages: FDA released new guidance on [Reporting and Mitigating Animal Drug Shortages during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#). To help animal drug sponsors submit timely and informative notifications, FDA is publishing a guidance for immediate implementation about the importance of these notifications, how sponsors can notify FDA, and the details to provide about the discontinuance or interruption of manufacturing and other factors that may impact availability of animal drug products. The guidance also provides examples of steps FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) may take to prevent or mitigate animal drug shortages, and information sponsors can provide proactively to help avoid shortages.

Update on FDA Actions to Combat Fraud: FDA released a statement regarding [Combatting Fraudulent COVID-19 Medical Products](#). The FDA is provided an update on the agency's efforts to combat the extremely concerning actions by companies and individuals that are exploiting or taking advantage of widespread fear among consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to scammers on the internet selling unproven medical products, the FDA has taken – and continues to take – a number of steps to find and stop those selling unapproved products that fraudulently claim to mitigate, prevent, treat, diagnose or cure COVID-19.

Diagnostics Update: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the FDA has worked with more than 385 test developers who have said they will be submitting EUA requests to the FDA for tests that detect the virus. To date, the FDA has issued 60 individual EUAs for test kit manufacturers and laboratories. In addition, 25 authorized tests have been added to the EUA letter of authorization for high complexity molecular-based laboratory developed tests (LDTs). The FDA has been notified that more than 240 laboratories have begun testing under the policies set forth in our COVID-19 Policy for Diagnostic Tests for Coronavirus Disease-2019 during the Public Health Emergency Guidance.

Reopening America

Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance: CDC previously released detailed guidance on [cleaning and disinfection](#). They have updated their resources to add new information on [Cleaning and Disinfecting: Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#). The information includes advice on developing a plan, implementing, maintaining and revising a plan as well as decision trees for making a plan to clean and disinfect different types of surfaces.

Information for Critical Infrastructure Employers: CDC released new guidance on [COVID-19 Critical Infrastructure Sector Response Planning](#). The guidance includes information on creating and updating a response plan and what to do if employees are exposed.

Telehealth Updates: HHS with the Surgeon General released a [new video on telehealth](#) that shares basic information with consumers about telehealth including the privacy protections and Medicare allowance of payments for visits. ASPR has also posted a new [telehealth tipsheet](#) that outlines what it is, who is using it, ongoing challenges for telehealth and trends to watch post COVID-19.

Senior Nutrition Programs: ACL released a guidance document on the [Phased Reopening of Senior Nutrition Programs](#). As senior nutrition programs begin to establish their new normal, they will need to consider how to measure the impact of their programs. Policies and procedures should ensure that senior nutrition programs are reaching the intended population and should align with the goals of the OAA, i.e., offering a meal and opportunities for socialization to delay the onset of adverse health conditions. Furthermore, policies and procedures must be consistent with guidance from state and local health departments and emergency management agencies to ensure safety of participants and providers.

CMS Updates

Nursing Home Reporting Requirements: CMS released additional information in a [memo and FAQ](#) about the new nursing home reporting requirements and enforcement of the requirements. There will be a week grace period to submit the first round of COVID-19 testing information to CMS and CDC and after that fines may be charged to operators who fail to comply. CMS will begin posting data received from the CDC National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) for viewing by facilities, stakeholders, or the general public.

Medicaid and Medicare Waiver Flexibilities: CMS has approved over 155 requests for state relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including recent approvals for Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Hawaii, Maryland, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, the U.S. Virgin Islands, 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 support 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.

Annual Exchange Payment Rule Released: CMS released their [Final Payment Notice for 2021 Coverage Year](#). The Final rule works towards lowering premiums, improving consumer experience, promoting program integrity and stabilizing the market. In response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, CMS is also announcing today a one week extension of the Qualified Health Plan (QHP) certification and rate review timelines. This additional time will allow issuers and states to better collect and assess data around the effects of COVID-19 and thereby establish more accurate premium rates.

Research

Findings Show Recovered Patients Make Antibodies: NIH posted a blog that outlines study findings that [Nearly Everyone Who Recovers From COVID-19 Makes Coronavirus Antibodies](#). Although more follow-up work is needed to determine just how protective these antibodies are and for how long, these findings suggest that the immune systems of people who survive COVID-19 have been primed to recognize SARS-CoV-2 and possibly thwart a second infection.

Research Study on Impact of COVID-19 on People with Rare Diseases: NIH announced a new research survey to examine the [impact of COVID-19 on the rare disease community](#). For the millions of people living with a rare disease, the novel coronavirus disease COVID-19 presents challenges, from potential reduced access to needed medical care to possible heightened anxiety and stress. A new online survey launched by the National Institutes of Health-supported Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN) aims to find out how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting individuals with rare diseases, their families and their caregivers. Results will help the rare disease research community shed light on the needs of people with rare diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic and other potential health crises, in addition to informing future research efforts.

I close with a **Private Sector Hat's Off to UnitedHealthGroup.**

UHG announced they are going to refund a portion of premiums as well as offer other relief measures for their customers. UHG will provide [\\$1.5 billion in support to their customers](#) as a result of the pandemic. An example of an action they are taking includes: for people served by UnitedHealthcare commercial fully insured benefits, credits ranging from 5% to 20% depending upon the specific plan will be applied to premium billings received by customers in June and for people served by

UnitedHealthcare under Medicare Advantage plans, all specialist and primary care physician cost sharing will be waived at least through the end of September.

Stay safe. Questions go to Gary.Beck@HHS.gov.