



CMS Regional Office

CMS News Alert - April 16, 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. 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 16, 2020 at 10:15 a.m. ET.

CMS Increases Medicare Payment for High-Production Coronavirus Lab Tests

CMS announced that Medicare will nearly double payment for certain lab tests that use high-throughput technologies to rapidly diagnose large numbers of COVID-19 cases. This is another action the Trump Administration is taking to rapidly expand COVID-19 testing. Along with the March 30 announcement that Medicare will pay new specimen collection fees for COVID-19 testing, CMS's actions will expand capability to test more vulnerable populations, like nursing home patients, quickly and provide results faster. Medicare will pay laboratories for the tests at \$100 effective April 14, 2020, through the duration of the COVID-19 national emergency.

[Press Release](#)

CMS Implements CARES Act Hospital Payment and Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility Waivers

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act increases payment for Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) and long-term care hospital (LTCH) inpatient hospital care attributable to COVID-19. CMS provided guidance for IPPS hospitals and LTCHs on how to code claims to receive the higher payment.

The CARES Act also waives the requirement that Medicare Part A fee-for-service patients treated in inpatient rehabilitation facilities receive at least 15 hours of therapy per week.

[MLN Connects Article](#)

[Emergency Declaration Waivers Summary](#)

CMS Approves Additional State Medicaid Waivers and Amendments to Give States Flexibility to Address Coronavirus Pandemic

CMS has approved 52 COVID-related emergency waivers, 31 state amendments, 11 COVID-related Medicaid Disaster Amendments and one CHIP COVID-related Disaster Amendment in

record time. States are using a [toolkit](#) CMS developed to expedite the application and approval of Medicaid state waivers and State Plan Amendments.

CMS recently approved two additional COVID-related emergency Medicaid waivers, delivering urgent regulatory relief to ensure the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands can quickly and effectively care for their most vulnerable citizens. CMS also approved COVID-related Medicaid Disaster Amendments that bring relief to Arkansas and Rhode Island. These approvals help to ensure that states have the tools they need to combat COVID-19 through a wide variety of state plan flexibilities. CMS continues to authorize amendments to ensure emergency flexibilities in programs that care for the elderly and people with disabilities, including most recently for Colorado, Louisiana and Nevada. 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](#)

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

[Medicaid State Plan Amendments](#)

[CHIP State Plan Amendments](#)