



## CMS Regional Office

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# CMS NEWS ALERT for May 7, 2020

Here is a summary of recent Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) actions taken in response to coronavirus disease 2019 (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 May 7, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. ET.

### New Guidance Available on Requirements for Notification of Confirmed and Suspected COVID-19 Cases Among Residents and Staff in Nursing Homes

Nursing homes are now required to report the first week of COVID-19 data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) beginning May 8 but no later than May 17. For the first time, all 15,000 nursing homes will be reporting this data directly to the CDC through its reporting tool. This reporting requirement is the first action of its kind in the agency's history. On April 19, CMS announced the agency would be requiring facilities to report COVID-19 information to the CDC and to families. Within three weeks of that announcement, on April 30, CMS issued an Interim Final Rule with Comment Period with the new regulatory requirements. As nursing homes report this data to the CDC, we will be taking swift action and publicly posting this information so all Americans have access to accurate and timely information on COVID-19 in nursing homes.

CMS has a longstanding requirement for nursing homes to report cases of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, to the appropriate state or local health department. This new requirement not only helps health departments intervene when needed, but serves to provide awareness to the public (e.g., families), and surveillance for public health agencies and the CDC. The importance of ongoing transparency and information sharing has proven to be one of the keys to the battle against this pandemic. Building upon the successes of the Trump Administration prior to COVID-19, CMS has strongly supported transparency, such as the work done over the past several years to improve public access and understanding of nursing home inspection reports and expand the information available to consumers on Nursing Home Compare. The agency remains committed to greater transparency, and plans to publicly release new data by the end of May. CMS will never stop working to give patients, residents, and families the clearest and most accurate information possible.

### Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions

#### CMS Releases Additional Medicaid & CHIP COVID-19 FAQs for State Medicaid and CHIP Agencies

CMS released additional frequently asked questions (FAQs) to aid state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) agencies in their response to the coronavirus disease 2019

(COVID-19) pandemic. The new FAQs cover a variety of Medicaid and CHIP topics, including emergency preparedness and response, benefit, financing, eligibility and enrollment flexibilities, information technology, and data reporting. CMS is committed to providing our state partners the resources they need during this public health emergency.

## New Frequently Asked Questions

### Comprehensive Medicaid COVID-19 FAQs

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

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.

### Section 1135 Waivers

### Section 1115(a) Waivers

### 1915(c) Waiver Appendix K Amendments

### Medicaid State Plan Amendments

### CHIP State Plan Amendments