



## **CMS Snapshot**

### **June 18-25, 2020**

Delivered to you by the Partner Relations Group in the Office of Communications

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, June 18 through 2pm Thursday, June 25, 2020.

#### **News Releases**

\*June 19- [CMS Announces Membership of Independent Coronavirus Commission on Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes](#). Today, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that the MITRE Corporation has published the membership of the independent [Coronavirus Commission on Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes](#). CMS, under the leadership of President Trump and his Plan to Open Up America Again, seeks an independent review and comprehensive assessment of the nursing home response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The agency tasked the contractor, MITRE, to solicit membership applications, select the members, and facilitate the Commission's work. The Commission's review will help inform current and future responses to COVID-19 and potential future infectious disease outbreaks within nursing homes.

\*June 19- [CMS News Alert June 19, 2020](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has instructed Medicare Administrative Contractors and notified Medicare Advantage plans to cover coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) laboratory tests for nursing home residents and patients.

\*June 22- [Trump Administration Issues Call to Action Based on New Data Detailing COVID-19 Impacts on Medicare Beneficiaries](#). Today, under the leadership of President Trump, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is calling for a renewed national commitment to value-based care based on Medicare claims data that provides an early snapshot of the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on the Medicare population. The data shows that older Americans and those with chronic health conditions are at the highest risk for COVID-19 and confirms long-understood disparities in health outcomes for racial and ethnic minority groups and among low-income populations.

\*June 23- [HHS Announces Partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine to Fight COVID-19 in Racial and Ethnic Minority and Vulnerable Communities](#). *\$40 Million Initiative Will Help Communities Hardest Hit by the Pandemic*. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

(HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) announced the selection of the Morehouse School of Medicine as the awardee for a new \$40 million initiative to fight COVID-19 in racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable communities. The Morehouse School of Medicine will enter into a cooperative agreement with OMH to lead the initiative to coordinate a strategic network of national, state, territorial, tribal and local organizations to deliver COVID-19-related information to communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

\*June 23- [HHS Announces MENTAL Health Innovation Challenge](#). *Challenge seeks online tool to help socially isolated Americans connect and engage.* Today, the [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#) and the [Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health](#) launched the MENTAL Health Challenge to combat the social isolation and loneliness that older adults, people with disabilities and veterans often experience. A total of \$750,000 in prizes will be awarded for development of an easy-to-use online system that offers recommendations for programs, activities and resources that can help users connect to others and engage in the community, based on their individual needs, interests and abilities.

\*June 23- [CMS Unveils Major Organizational Change to Reduce Provider and Clinician Burden and Improve Patient Outcomes](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is announcing the creation of the Office of Burden Reduction and Health Informatics to unify the agency's efforts to reduce regulatory and administrative burden and to further the goal of putting patients first. The new office is an outgrowth of the agency's Patients over Paperwork (PoP) Initiative, which is the cornerstone of CMS's ongoing efforts to implement President Trump's [2017 executive order to "Cut the Red Tape"](#) and eliminate duplicative, unnecessary, and excessively costly requirements and regulations. This announcement permanently embeds a culture of burden reduction across all platforms of CMS agency operations.

\*June 23- [HHS Secretary Azar Statement on Victory for President Trump's Price Transparency Agenda](#). On Tuesday, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia granted summary judgment to the Department of Health and Human Services in a challenge to the Trump Administration's new hospital price transparency requirements, which are scheduled to take effect January 2021. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

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\*June 25- [HHS Secretary Azar Statement on End of Eastern DRC Ebola Outbreak](#). On June 25, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Ministry of Health officially announced the end of the Ebola outbreak in the eastern DRC that has been ongoing since August 2018. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

\*June 25- [HHS Announces New Organ Transplant Guidance](#). *Update Improves Transplant Safety and Access to Lifesaving Organs*. Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) published an updated [solid organ transplant guideline](#) to assess donors and monitor recipients for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus, and hepatitis C virus infections. This guideline reflects advances in transplant technology and safety that can increase the number of organs available for transplants.

## Fact Sheet

\*June 19- [Market Saturation and Utilization Data Tool](#). Market Saturation and Utilization Data Tool was developed to allow the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to monitor market saturation as a means to help prevent potential fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA). Market saturation, in the present context, refers to the density of providers of a particular service within a defined geographic area relative to the number of beneficiaries receiving that service in the area. The data can be used to reveal the degree to which use of a service is related to the number of providers servicing a geographic region.

## Blog

\*June 18- [Use Marketplace coverage to improve your health](#). Health coverage is important even when you don't feel sick. No matter your health status, there are things you can do proactively to lead a healthier life.

\*June 22- [Medicare COVID-19 Data Release Blog](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released preliminary data on COVID-19 derived from Medicare claims. The data provides a highly instructive picture of the impact of COVID-19 on the Medicare population, further confirming a number of long understood patterns in the disease such as the elevated risk for seniors with underlying health conditions.

*CMS has developed a [Virtual Toolkit](#) to help you stay informed on CMS and HHS materials available on the COVID-19. Please share these materials, bookmark the page, and check back often for the most up-to-date information. For more information, please email [partnership@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:partnership@cms.hhs.gov)*