



Special COVID-19 Edition

RKL is acutely aware of the serious strain the COVID-19 emergency will have on skilled nursing providers. Any providers who have difficulty navigating the ever-changing waivers, issues with cash flow or questions regarding the clinical aspect of the COVID-19 emergency are encouraged to reach out to any of our Senior Living partners, [Stefanie Knaub](#), [Stephanie Kessler](#), and [Jeffrey Boland](#), for assistance.

CMS Temporarily Waiving 3-Day Qualifying Hospital Stay

Retroactive to March 1, 2020, CMS has instituted a blanket waiver temporarily waiving the requirement for a 3-Day Qualifying Hospital Stay to qualify for skilled care in a skilled nursing facility (SNF). The waiver allows Medicare to pay for SNF care without a 3-day stay for beneficiaries who are either dislocated or affected by the COVID-19 emergency. Providers must report a condition code “DR” on claims related to this emergency waiver in order for the claim to process without a qualifying hospital stay.

In addition, this waiver authorizes renewed SNF coverage for beneficiaries who had previously exhausted their SNF benefits without first having to reset a new benefit period. This is eligible only for beneficiaries affected by the emergency who are admitted to an SNF. [Here are some additional resources regarding this waiver...](#)

Waiver 1135 Expands Telehealth Services

Beginning March 6, 2020 and for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, Wavier 1135 allows Medicare to pay for office, hospital and other visits furnished via telehealth. In an effort to keep Medicare beneficiaries at home and healthy, CMS is allowing for an expansion to the previous telehealth reimbursement. Telehealth visits will be considered the same as in-person visits and will be paid at the same rate as regular in-person visits. Telehealth visits include physician, nurse practitioner, clinical psychologists and therapy visits.

- [Read the telehealth fact sheet here](#)
- [View a list of approved telehealth HCPCS codes](#)

Pennsylvania Medicaid Waives Prudent Payment of Claims

Effective for claims with a Remittance Advice date of March 23, 2020 and for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services will waive Prudent Payment of claims to ease the financial burden of MA providers. This will allow providers to submit claims and be paid in the next financial cycle after the claim is approved for payment. Claims must still follow all billing guidelines and regulations before payment is made. [More information can be found here...](#)

New ICD-10 Code for COVID-19 Effective April 1, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced that the new ICD-10 code for COVID-19 will go into effect on April 1, 2020, instead of the planned effective date of October 1, 2020. This new diagnosis code is U07.1. The FY 2020 PDPM ICD-10 Mappings have been updated to reflect the new vaping code (U07.0 – Vaping-related Disorder) mapped to the “Return to Provider” category and the new COVID-19 (U07.1 – 2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease) mapped to the pulmonary category. [Read more about the change in effective date here...](#)

Expansion of Medicare Accelerated & Advance Payments

Medicare has expanded the Accelerated and Advance Payment Program to additional Medicare providers. Providers who may experience a disruption in claims submission and/or claims processing due to COVID-19 can apply through their Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) for an accelerated or advance payment. [Learn more...](#)

CARES Act Provider Relief Fund

The Provider Relief Fund is an immediate \$30 billion into the healthcare system to support healthcare-related expenses and lost revenue attributable to COVID-19. Payment distribution to eligible facilities kicked off April 10, 2020.

- [Read RKL's blog post on this relief measure](#)
- [Learn more about eligible providers and payments](#)

Temporary Suspension of 2% Medicare Sequestration

Section 3709 of the CARES Act suspends the two percent sequestration reduction in payment between May 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. Hospitals, physicians, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies and other Medicare providers will have a temporary increase in payments during this time period. [Read the official MLN Connects here...](#)

Questions about these updates? Need support to meet requirements?

Contact [Stefanie Knaub](#), RKL Senior Living Services Partner, at 717.590.8648.



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