

HHS COVID-19 Update – May 20, 2020

Funding

\$225 Million for COVID-19 Testing in Rural Communities: HRSA provided [\\$225 million to Rural Health Clinics \(RHCs\) for COVID-19 testing](#). These investments go to over 4,500 RHCs across the country to support COVID-19 testing efforts and expand testing access in rural communities. Rural Health Clinics are a special designation given to health care practices in underserved rural areas by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that help ensure access to care for rural residents. This funding is through the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act that President Trump signed into law on Friday, April 24, 2020 which specifically directed these monies to be allocated to RHCs. HRSA funded RHC organizations based on the number of certified clinic sites they operate, providing nearly \$50,000 per clinic site. To view a state-by-state breakdown of this funding, visit: <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/coronavirus/rural-health-clinics-covid-19-testing-fy20-awards>

Provider Relief Fund Updates: HHS released information on the [Provider Relief Fund deadline for submitting revenue information](#). HHS is reminding eligible providers that they have until **June 3, 2020**, to accept the Terms and Conditions and submit their revenue information to support receiving an additional payment from the Provider Relief Fund \$50 billion General Distribution. All providers who automatically received an additional General Distribution payment prior to 5:00 pm, Friday, April 24th, must provide HHS with an accounting of their annual revenues by submitting tax forms or financial statements. These providers must also agree to the program Terms and Conditions if they wish to keep the funds. Providers who have cases pending before the department for adjudication with regard to eligibility for general distribution funding will not be impacted by this closure. All cases needing individual adjudication will need to be received by HHS no later than June 3, 2020. Additionally, HHS updated the [FAQ document](#) that addresses questions of eligibility, attestation, rejecting payments, terms and conditions, appeals, publication of payment data, funding formulas, change of ownership and other related information about each of the distributions from the Provider Relief Fund.

Reopening America

Reopening Resources for Various Sectors: CDC released their larger [reopening guidance](#) earlier this week, and updated information and resources for [communities, schools, workplaces and events](#), [institutes of higher education](#), [businesses and workplaces](#), and [child care and youth sports](#).

Youth and Summer Camp Information: CDC updated their information on [considerations for youth and summer camps](#). Camp administrators can determine, in collaboration with state and

local health officials, whether and how to implement these considerations, making adjustments to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community. Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community. These considerations are meant to supplement—not replace—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which camps must comply.

Information for Reopening Pools and Water Playgrounds: CDC updated the information on [Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#).

Operators of public aquatic venues can consult with local officials to determine if and how to implement these considerations while adjusting them to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local jurisdiction. Their implementation should also be informed by what is feasible, practical, and acceptable. The webpage includes information on promoting behaviors to prevent the spread of COVID-19, maintaining healthy environments, maintaining healthy operations, and preparing for when someone gets sick.

Managing Healthcare Workforce Challenges: ASPR released [Version 3 of the COVID-19 Workforce Virtual Toolkit](#). This collection provides a curated set of resources and tools for decision-makers managing healthcare workforce challenges in response to the COVID-19 emergency. This version includes several newly released resources and an entirely new collection titled Workforce Solutions from the Field that highlights promising practices.

Testing

Performing Testing in Nursing Homes: CDC updated their information on [Testing Guidance for Nursing Home Residents](#) and [Considerations for Performing Facility-wide SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Nursing Homes](#). CDC has recommendations for when nursing homes should [test all residents and healthcare personnel \(HCP\) in nursing homes](#). This document describes considerations for performing facility-wide testing among nursing home residents and HCP. Facility-wide testing involves testing all residents and HCP for detection of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and can be used to inform infection prevention and control (IPC) practices in nursing homes. This document is intended for health departments and nursing homes conducting [viral testing for current infection](#), such as reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR).

Testing updates: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the FDA has worked with more than 400 developers who have already submitted or said they will be submitting EUA requests to the FDA for tests that detect the virus or antibodies to the virus. To date, the FDA has authorized 104 tests under EUAs, which include 91 molecular tests (including [the most recent authorization for Quidel Corporation](#)), 12 antibody tests, and 1 antigen test.

Treatment

Utilizing Real World Data for Pandemic Response: The FDA released information on [a new partnership to promote rigorous analysis of real-world data to inform the pandemic response](#). FDA has entered into an agreement with Aetion to collaborate on advanced analytical techniques to answer urgent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) research questions. The FDA and Aetion aim to answer questions about the use of diagnostics and medications in the pandemic, and risk

factors for COVID-19-related complications in different patient populations. Evaluation of real-world data has the potential to provide a wealth of rapid, actionable information to better understand disease symptoms, describe and measure immunity and understand available medical product supplies to help mitigate potential shortages. These data can also inform ongoing work to evaluate potential therapies, vaccines or diagnostics for COVID-19.

Information for Pediatric Healthcare Providers: CDC updated their [information for Pediatric Healthcare Providers](#) with information available on children and COVID-19. Revisions were made to include current information and guidance related to multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C).

Monitoring Nursing Home Patients: BARDA [announced a partnership with VitalConnect](#) to monitor nursing home and COVID-19 patients for early indication of patient deterioration. BARDA is partnering with VitalConnect to assess the ability of a wearable device to remotely monitor individuals during the COVID-19 outbreak for changes in health deterioration, including but not limited to respiratory rate, body temperature, blood oxygen levels (SpO2) and heart arrhythmias, to improve patient outcomes. Nursing home patients, an at-risk population, will be continuously monitored for early indication of changes in health status or potentially inform on COVID-19 infection. In addition, in a separate cohort, COVID-19 patients will be monitored to determine any changes in health, including QT interval changes which may require an escalation in care.

List of Medical Devices with Emergency Use Authorization: FDA updated their [list of medical devices authorized by the FDA for emergency use](#) during COVID-19. The list includes the names and descriptions and key information for all the molecular diagnostic and serological (antibody) tests and medical devices that have been authorized for emergency use (under an EUA).

Expanding Ventilation Treatment Options: The FDA approved [succinylcholine chloride injection](#) USP 200 mg/10 mL, which is indicated to facilitate tracheal intubation and to provide skeletal muscle relaxation during surgery or mechanical ventilation. Side effects of succinylcholine chloride injection include anaphylaxis, hyperkalemia, and malignant hyperthermia. FDA recognizes the increased demand for certain products during the novel coronavirus pandemic and we remain deeply committed to facilitating access to medical products to help address critical needs of the American public.

Information for Specific Populations

Information for Caregivers of People Living with Dementia: CDC released [Additional COVID-19 Guidance for Caregivers of People Living with Dementia in Community Settings](#). If you care for someone living with dementia, it's important that you know what you can do to [protect yourself and others](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic and what additional steps you can take to protect your loved one. Additionally, caregivers should be aware of symptoms for COVID-19, and know how to take care of themselves and others

Information for Tribal Leaders: IHS released a letter with [information for tribal leaders](#). The letter includes funding opportunities and technical assistance, testing, supplies and contact tracing resources, guidance and other resources.

How ACF Programs are Affected by CARES Act Income: ACF posted a new document on [ACF programs and increased income from the CARES Act](#). It summarizes existing information from select ACF program offices regarding the treatment of (1) stimulus payments (also referred to as recovery rebates or economic impact payments) and (2) unemployment compensation provided under the CARES Act for purposes of eligibility determination in these ACF programs, or for purposes of setting and enforcing child support orders.

Providing Groceries Through the Older Americans Act Programs: ACL updated [information on groceries and Older Americans Act programs](#). Food insecurity was an issue prior to COVID-19, but it is an even bigger issue during the COVID-19 crisis. Fortunately, all states now have major disaster declarations (MDD) and thus have the authority to exercise maximum flexibility to feed and support older adults, and ultimately help those at highest risk stay at home during the COVID-19 crisis. The updated information includes FAQs on what constitutes a meal and what services are authorized and allowable.

Protecting the Food Supply: The FDA released a new document on [USDA, FDA Strengthen U.S. Food Supply Chain Protections](#). The USDA and FDA today announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help prevent interruptions at FDA-regulated food facilities, including fruit and vegetable processing. The MOU creates a process for the two agencies to make determinations about circumstances in which the USDA could exercise its authority under the Defense Production Act (DPA) with regard to certain domestic food resource facilities that manufacture, process, pack, or hold foods, as well as to those that grow or harvest food that fall within the FDA's jurisdiction. While the FDA will continue to work with state and local regulators in a collaborative manner, further action under the DPA may be taken, should it be needed, to ensure the continuity of our food supply.