

Hospice and Palliative Care Resources for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 07/20/20

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links.

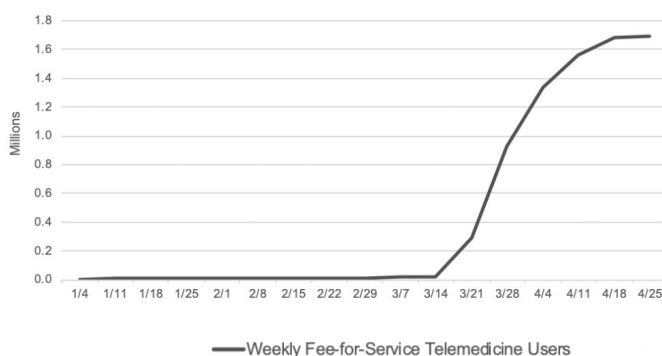
“If life were predictable it would cease to be life and be without flavor.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Policy

Early Impact Of CMS Expansion Of Medicare Telehealth During COVID-19

CMS Administrator Seema Verma commented in a [Health Affairs blog post](#) that “Telemedicine—which includes telehealth and other virtual services—allows patients to visit with clinicians remotely using virtual technology. Innovative uses of this kind of technology in the provision of health care are increasing with advances in telehealth platforms and remote patient monitoring technology. New mobile health apps and wearable monitoring devices help track a patient’s vitals, provide alerts about needed care, and help patients access their physician. CMS has long prioritized telemedicine innovation, but COVID-19’s emergence in the U.S. prompted us to drastically accelerate our efforts.” Before the public health emergency, approximately 13,000 beneficiaries in fee-for-service (FFS) Medicare received telemedicine in a week. In the last week of April, nearly 1.7 million beneficiaries received telehealth services, as shown in the chart below.

Exhibit 1: Number of Medicare FFS beneficiaries receiving telemedicine per week



Source:

Internal CMS analysis of Medicare FFS claims data, March 17, 2020 through June 13, 2020 (using data processed through June 19, 2020) Notes: Telemedicine is defined to include services on the Medicare telehealth list including audio-only visits, as well as virtual check-ins and e-visits.

The wait now is to see what will become permanent after the end of the public health emergency, including what will be in the latest Senate COVID 4.0 package. Administrator Verma states, “CMS is reviewing the temporary changes we made and assessing which of these flexibilities should be made permanent through regulatory action. As part of our review, we are looking at the impact these changes have had on access to care, health outcomes, Medicare spending, and impact on the health care delivery system itself.”

Providers

OCR Issues Guidance on Civil Rights Protections Prohibiting Race, Color, and National Origin Discrimination During COVID-19

[Guidance was issued](#) to ensure that recipients of federal financial assistance understand that they must comply with applicable federal civil rights laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in HHS-funded programs during COVID-19. This Bulletin focuses on recipients' compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI).

Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Calls

Learn the latest clinical information and guidance about COVID-19. [Recent COCA Calls](#) address infection control in nursing homes and dental settings, multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), and clinical perspectives from the across the nation’s healthcare systems.