



Missouri Health Care Association

Weekly Update

April 5, 2024

CMS Publishes Updated Critical Element Pathways to Address Enhanced Barrier Precautions

On April 1, CMS issued new guidance for State Survey Agencies and long term care (LTC) facilities on the use of enhanced barrier precautions (EBP) to align with nationally accepted standards. CMS updated the following [survey critical element pathways](#) (CEPs) due to the enforcement of enhanced barrier precautions (EBPs) outlined in [QSO-24-08-NH](#).

1. CMS-20054 Infection Prevention Control and Immunization
2. CMS-20069 Urinary Catheter or UTI
3. CMS-20070 Dental
4. CMS-20071 Dialysis
5. CMS-20078 Pressure Ulcer
6. CMS-20081 Respiratory Care
7. CMS-20093 Tube Feeding

The largest change is noted in CMS-20054 Infection Prevention, Control, and Immunization:

[\(READ MORE\)](#)

FY2024 SNF Medicaid Reimbursement Update

The new SNF Medicaid rates reflecting the \$10 PPD increase and \$.87 VBP incentive were keyed into the state's system on Wednesday, March 6. All Medicaid days billed on or after that date were paid at the new rate and should have been included in your March 19 payment. If your March 19 payment was not paid at the new rate, it was a timing issue and your next payment, today April 5, should reflect the new rate.

All Medicaid days billed before March 6 were paid at the old rate on March 19. The difference in the old rate and new 1/1/24 and 7/1/23 rates for all Medicaid days paid at the old rate will be included in your retro payment.

The state projects the retro payment for any increases you received to your rate on 7/1/23 and 1/1/24 will be paid with your April 25 payment.

Please remember, if you have a recoupment owed to the state due to rate reductions as a result of a decrease in your 1/1/23, 7/1/23 and/or 1/1/24 CMI/VBP incentive – that recoupment will be taken out of any retro payment due to you. In regard to the recoupments, I have been told there are a small number of facilities whose

recoupments were larger than the amount owed to them for the \$10 retro pay. MO HealthNet will work with us on a fair recoupment process for any facilities in that situation.

COVID Prevention and Response Phase III Announcement - Free PPE Kits Are On Their Way!

The Department of Health and Senior Services COVID Prevention and Response Project will embark upon Phase III in April. This final Phase will include **FREE PPE items shipped directly** to all Missouri Skilled Nursing Facilities, Intermediate Care Facilities, Assisted Living Facilities and Residential Care Facilities.

Each Phase III PPE Kit will include Nitrile Gloves, Gowns, Isolation Masks (all in various sizes) and COVID test kits. Shipments will be coming to facilities directly from Concordance Healthcare via UPS. Shipments dates and information will be shared on the DHSS Listserv. Signatures will be required by the UPS driver, so please alert your office staff of the expected delivery. These medical items will assist all long-term care facilities in providing needed infection protection for residents, staff, and visitors.

Please watch the DHSS Listserv for additional information on when Concordance begins shipping these PPE items. For any questions regarding this project, please contact Mary Menges at mary.menges@health.mo.gov.

CMS Releases Medicare Advantage Payment Rates for 2025

On April 1, CMS issued the [CY 2025 Medicare Advantage \(MA\) Rate Announcement](#). The Rate Announcement is the finalized policies by which CMS calculates MA plan payments and Part D policies. The policies finalized were essentially those proposed in the Advance Notice released in January 2024. CMS is estimating that MA plans will experience (on average) a 3.7% increase (\$16 billion) in revenue next year – similar to the 3.7% in the Advance Notice. The 3.7% includes a blended MA risk score trend (risk adjusted payments) of 3.86%. However, risk score trends vary by plan. In addition, the final rate includes a decrease in benchmark rates for 2025 of 0.16%.

As expected, CMS is continuing its three-year phase in of the risk adjustment model changes initiated in 2024. Some of these changes include clinical reclassification of the Hierarchical Condition Categories (HCCs; MA diagnoses coding) using the ICD-10 codes instead of ICD-9 and constraining several HCCs by the removal of several codes to reduce the effect of MA coding variation from fee-for-service on risk scores. The benchmark calculation also incorporates a 52% phase in of the technical adjustment to direct and indirect graduate medical education expenses.

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REMINDER: CDC NHSN Open Office Hours for Annual Health Care Personnel Influenza Vaccine Reporting

The CDC has scheduled an upcoming open office hours for reporting the annual Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Data (registration is required). **Facilities are required to report this data by May 15, 2024, under the Skilled Nursing Facility Quality Reporting Program (SNF QRP) or may face a two percent reduction to their Medicare annual payment update for FY 2025.**

The next upcoming open office hours is [Thursday April 25, 2024 at 2pm EST](#). Pre-registration is required.

CDC Updates Ventilation Guidance for Communities

Following the updates and simplification of the [respiratory virus recommendations](#) for community settings, the CDC has updated its [ventilation recommendations](#). It is important to note that in the updated respiratory virus recommendations, nursing homes or health care personnel who are providing health care or nursing care to assisted living residents must continue to follow the health care [IPC guidance](#).

The ventilation guidance indicates that ventilation can reduce exposure to respiratory viruses in indoor spaces. Ventilation is considered a [core strategy](#), like [vaccination](#) and good hygiene, that can help protect us from respiratory illness. The CDC offers tips for year-round ventilation which includes:

[\(READ MORE\)](#)

New AHCA Resource: Preparing Before Your Survey

A new survey tip has been posted to the [AHCA Survey Regulatory page](#) to help when preparing before a survey. In the new Survey Tip section, you will find tips related to recently noted survey trends. In the latest [survey tip](#), there are tips to assist you in preparing for survey before the survey team enters your facility. You will also find the previous survey tip related to [F689 and Past Noncompliance](#).

For more information on preparing for surveys and survey management, please visit the [Preparing for Surveys: Before, During, and After Webinar](#) on [ahcancaLED](#). If you have any topics or suggestions for future survey tips or survey/regulatory questions, please email regulatory@ahca.org.

LTC Best Practices for Compliance with OSHA's Employee-Centric Infection Control Regulation

As you know, while there isn't yet a specific infectious disease standard tailored to LTC providers, [OSHA's existing standards and guidelines](#), coupled with forthcoming regulations, necessitate strict infection control measures.

Implementing Best Practices

Many providers have established **resident-centered** infection prevention and control policies. These best practices are intended to mitigate **employee** exposure to infectious disease, but they may already be addressed by your existing infection prevention and control policies – often employee and resident-focused infection control are two sides of the same coin that can be addressed together.

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FDA Updates Safety Recommendations Regarding Plastic Syringes Made in China

Recently, the FDA updated [recommendations](#) for U.S. suppliers of plastic syringes, consumers, health care providers, and facilities. It notes until further notice and because of potential quality and performance issues:

- Immediately transition away from using plastic syringes manufactured by [Jiangsu Caina Medical Co Ltd](#), unless use of these syringes is absolutely necessary until you can complete the transition.
- Immediately transition away from using unauthorized plastic syringes manufactured by **Jiangsu Shenli Medical Production Co Ltd**, which includes all models other than the 5 mL luer lock syringe, unless use of these syringes is absolutely necessary until you can complete the transition.

For all other plastic syringes made in China, while the FDA's evaluation remains ongoing, they continue to recommend the following:

([READ MORE](#))

Health Education Unit Updates

The DHSS Health Education Unit is conducting Weekly Instructor Info Webinars/Q&A Meetups. These sessions will be held the same day and time each week - **every Tuesday at 2:00 pm**. Click this [link](#) to join these weekly meetings. If you have questions, call the Health Education Unit at 573-526-5686.

The HEU and Headmaster met with their Test Advisory Panel in March to address some changes in the skills test and knowledge test. These changes will be effective on July 1, 2023, so please check the Missouri Headmaster Website for the most recent version of the Candidate Handbook.

CNA Testing Information From TMU/Headmaster

Below are the links for the CNA test Candidate Handbook and the Mock Skills. If you have students in your facility who are ready to test with TMU/Headmaster, please make sure they have access to both documents. It is very difficult for a student to pass without reviewing these documents. These are updated often.

- <https://health.mo.gov/safety/cnaregistry/pdf/missouri-candidate-handbook.pdf>
 - <https://www.hdmaster.com/testing/cnatesting/missouri/forms/MO%20MOCK%20SKILLS%207.2023.pdf>
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CNA Testing Events

All regional dates are viewable on the online calendar at <https://mo.tmutest.com/calendar>. To help with scheduling your testing event, contact Headmaster a few days after the CNA course starts. **IMPORTANT** – these are not the only test sites available. If you need a different testing location, please call Headmaster D&S (1-800-393-8664) and ask for the Missouri Team.

PLEASE NOTE: There have been changes to scheduling tests through TMU and to the paperwork for RN Observers. Please reach out to Headmaster with questions. missouri@hdmaster.com.

Knowledge and Skill testing is available April 8 and April 15 at MHCA. Please contact shellie@mohealthcare.com to reserve a time slot.

HQIN Strategies to Use During Your Nursing Home Stand-Up Meetings

HQIN is presenting an educational series tailored for nursing home stand-up meetings, aimed at decreasing preventable emergency room (ED) visits and hospital readmissions. HQIN is sending out talking points that can be included in daily stand-up meetings to increase staff knowledge on relevant topics like effective communication, adverse drug events and infection prevention. The program is designed to empower nursing home staff with practical knowledge to foster a safer environment.

This week is the final week of the series and includes strategies on **Purposeful Conversations**. Below is an overview of information and resources.

(READ MORE)

HQIN and ASCP Team Up to Offer Vaccine Billing Assistance

In an effort to promote and increase adult vaccination, HQIN and the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) have teamed up to offer immunization billing assistance. Specifically, ASCP contacts will provide technical assistance for vaccine billing questions and process options to support immunization efforts.

Facilities striving to improve their COVID-19, flu, and pneumonia vaccination rates can email requests or questions to lrc@hqi.solutions.

Want to Improve Your COVID-19 Vaccination Rates? HQIN Can Help!

Vaccines protect us all from illness and disease, but they are especially critical for our most vulnerable populations. Particularly, the COVID-19 vaccine provides increased protection to adults ages 65 years and older.

In their continued effort to support the health and well-being of older adults, the Health Quality Innovation Network (HQIN) provides FREE COVID-19 vaccination clinic support, through a partnership with [CPESN-USA](#), a clinically integrated network of community-based pharmacies. Their team of experts can assist you in securing vaccine doses and coordinating healthcare professionals to immunize and provide vaccine education to residents and staff. In addition to COVID-19 vaccines, support is also available for pneumococcal and influenza vaccines. Simply complete the [Nursing Home COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Support Request Form](#) to start the process today!

The Center Of Excellence For Behavior Health in Nursing Facilities

The COE-NF released [new education events for April](#) that offers Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) credits. The COE-NF also continues to provide [tailored technical assistance](#), such as an individualized plan to assist your facility with specific behavioral health needs to include training as needed

The COE-NF also has [on-demand training videos](#), which includes bite-sized learnings and longer video modules with pre/posttests on topics such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Mental Health, Substance Use, Trauma Informed Care, and Alcohol Use Disorder. They also offer a wide array of resources on a multitude of mental health topics via the [resource hub](#).

Other Links:

- [The Center of Excellence Fact Sheet](#)
- [Sign up for the monthly newsletter](#)

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