

COVID-19 Update

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June 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

In order to provide updates on the evolving response and best practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic, AHP will be delivering brief, critical updates on an ongoing basis addressing important highlights and frequently asked questions.

TOMORROW: Behavioral Health Consultation - Thursday, June 18th, 7:30 am

Join the AHP Behavioral Health team as well as members from our pharmacy, care management and social work teams every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 7:30am – 8:00 am via Zoom and/or phone for just in-time, virtual consultation support for the behavioral health needs of both your pediatric and adult patients. Click on the zoom link: <https://urmc.zoom.us/j/948873484> or dial in: (646) 876-9923, Meeting ID: 948 873 484.

NEW COVID Response Call Schedule: Mondays and Wednesdays Only

Due to the relative stability in the course of the outbreak in our community and the slower influx of information related to it, AHP's COVID-19 response calls will now be held only twice per week at 12:15 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. **There will be no COVID call this coming Friday, June 19th. Our next COVID-19 Response teleconference will be held at 12:15 pm, Monday, June 22nd.** Please dial-in to 1 669 900 6833 and enter Meeting ID: 989 6918 4459 or click <https://urmc.zoom.us/j/98969184459>

NEW FEATURE: Patient Pearls

AHP's COVID email updates will periodically include *Patient Pearls*: brief, evidence-based information on commonly misunderstood topics about which patients may be receiving confusing or mixed messages from the media or others. Practices are welcome to use and adapt this content for their own patient communications. This first edition of Patient Pearls concerns asymptomatic spread.

Asymptomatic Spread of COVID-19

We know that COVID-19 can be spread by people who have symptoms of the infection (sore throat, low grade fever, shortness of breath or cough, abdominal pain/diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell). You may have also heard that asymptomatic people can spread the virus to others, but recently in the news it was stated that spread by people without symptoms is actually rare, leading to confusion by many.

It is actually very common for people who are pre-symptomatic (i.e., those who contracted the virus and will, but haven't yet, developed symptoms) to spread the virus to others. In some parts of the world up to one-half of all COVID-19 cases trace back to individuals in the pre-symptomatic phase of illness. The pre-symptomatic phase usually lasts about 48-72 hours before symptoms appear. It is still unclear why some patients, especially children, will remain asymptomatic for the entire course of illness while others develop more severe symptoms early on during illness.

Because pre-symptomatic spread is common, it is essential that everyone adheres to measures

that help prevent the spread of the virus, including washing your hands frequently, social distancing and wearing a mask when within six feet of others.

New Info and Resources: Provider Relief Fund Allocation for Medicaid and CHIP

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently published to its website comprehensive FAQs regarding the \$15 billion allocation from the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund earmarked for providers billing Medicaid and CHIP. With detailed information about eligibility and how to apply, this resource can be viewed [here](#).

Simplified PPP Loan Forgiveness Application Now Available

In response to feedback from lawmakers and business groups that the PPP Loan Forgiveness process was too complicated, the Small Business Administration released a three-page "EZ" loan forgiveness form for the use of certain borrowers. The new form requires fewer calculations and less documentation than the full application.

The business owners allowed to use the EZ application include those who are self-employed or have no employees and those who did not reduce salaries by more than 25 percent. To use the form, businesses must also certify that they didn't cut employees' hours or were unable to operate at pre-coronavirus levels because of health mandates. Click [here](#) for the revised form.

NYS Medicaid: Telehealth for FFS Patients Now Eligible for PCMH Incentive

For dates of service on or after March 1, 2020, PCMH-recognized providers billing FFS Medicaid for telehealth visits will receive the PCMH incentive for those eligible visits. Claims filed in advance of this notice will be identified systematically and reprocessed. Read the full update [here](#).

Online Resources

[UnitedHealthcare Provider News](#): Extension of COVID-19 temporary telehealth expansion and cost share waivers through September 30th.

[Excellus Preventive Visits and Telehealth](#): Preventive health visits conducted via telehealth guidance; telehealth preventive visits reimbursable through September 7th.

[MVP Behavioral Health Cost Sharing](#): Cost sharing for in-person, in-network behavioral health care waived for all MVP commercial members EXCEPT qualified high-deductible health plans.

COVID Serologic Testing

Clinical Guidance

Primary care providers may consider ordering IgG antibody testing for:

- Individuals who have fully recovered from COVID-19 who are interested in donating convalescent plasma
- Pediatric patients with suspected or confirmed Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)
- Patients who had illness suggestive of COVID but who were unable to receive PCR testing

Referring patients to UR Labs collection site for phlebotomy may be difficult due to volume of patients able to be accommodated, so community providers are advised to draw in the office and send the tube (SST or standard red top tube) to the lab. For more information about the methodology and performance of UR Labs' testing assay, click [here](#).

Reimbursement Guidance

The only patient cohort for whom health insurance will reliably cover serologic testing are those patients who had symptoms consistent with COVID infection but who were unable to receive PCR testing, and thus antibody testing is being used to confirm prior COVID exposure. The best way to demonstrate this is to code the encounter and reason for test as Z01.84 "Encounter for antibody testing that is not being performed to confirm a current COVID infection nor is being performed as a follow up test after resolution of COVID-19."

Clinical Guidance: COVID PCR Testing

In addition to testing for symptomatic healthcare and other essential workers and long term care residents, primary care providers may consider testing for the following patients:

- Mild to moderately symptomatic patients

- Patients whose living arrangements are not amenable to isolation (e.g., multi-generational household, limitations of physical space, etc.)
- Patients whose employers require evidence of testing either to return to work or to access benefits related to COVID status
- Patients who will be undergoing an aerosolizing procedure (e.g., exercise stress test, endoscopy procedure, transesophageal echocardiography [TEE])
- Pediatric patients with symptoms suggestive of Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)
- Children with complex health needs whose specialized childcare providers (e.g., Daystar) require testing prior to returning

It is likely that these studies will be sent to an outside lab for processing with a turnaround of anywhere from two to five days.

We continue to partner with Dr. Mendoza and County Health Department officials on preparedness and response protocols and will convey information as it becomes available.

Thank you for your continued collaboration in this important public health endeavor.

All the best,



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COVID-19 Resource Links

[Golisano Children's Hospital Coronavirus Information for Families](#)

Project Teach: Seven Ways to Support Kids and Teens Through the Coronavirus Pandemic, in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Site](#)

[Monroe County Health Department](#)

[CDC Coronavirus Site](#)

[New York Department of Health Coronavirus site](#)

COVID-19 Online Databases

- [Greater Rochester Area COVID-19 Tracker](#)
- [Monroe County COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- [NYSDOH COVID-19 Tracker](#)
- [NYS Nursing Home Fatalities](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus Interactive](#)
- [Johns Hopkins COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

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