

## COVID-19 Updates

Please keep the following COVID-19 policies and procedures in mind:

- **Prior Authorization Update for MA Commercial Products:** For Massachusetts Commercial products, in accordance with the Nov. 17 Massachusetts Division of Insurance [Bulletin 2021-15](#), and until further notice, Harvard Pilgrim is waiving prior authorization requirements for any scheduled surgeries and admissions at acute care facilities, mental health hospitals, and post-acute care facilities. These facilities are expected to notify carriers about any inpatient admissions within 24 hours of a patient being admitted and provide updates at a minimum of every five days to support discharge planning. For complete details on prior authorization requirements for these and other products, please refer to our [COVID-19 Provider Information and Resources page](#).
- **Medicare Advantage Plans Coverage of COVID-19 Vaccine:** Through the end of 2021, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reimburses providers for the COVID-19 vaccine and its administration, with providers submitting claims to the appropriate CMS [Medicare Administrative Contractor \(MAC\)](#) for payment. However, beginning Jan. 1, 2022, providers should bill Medicare Advantage plans for the vaccine and its administration.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine for Children Ages 5-11:** On Nov. 2, [the Centers for Disease Control announced](#) that the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for children ages 5 to 11. For billing purposes, please use the following CPT codes:
  - **91307:** Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) vaccine, mRNA-LNP, spike protein, preservative free, 10 mcg/0.2 mL dosage, diluent reconstituted, tris-sucrose formulation, for intramuscular use
  - **0071A:** Immunization administration by intramuscular injection of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) vaccine, mRNA-LNP, spike protein, preservative free, 10 mcg/0.2 mL dosage, diluent reconstituted, tris-sucrose formulation; first dose
  - **Second dose, 0072A:** Immunization administration by intramuscular injection of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) vaccine, mRNA-LNP, spike protein, preservative free, 10 mcg/0.2 mL dosage, diluent reconstituted, tris-sucrose formulation; second dose

For additional coding guidance, please refer to the [COVID-19 Testing and Treatment Coding Grid](#). ◆

## Promoting the Flu Vaccine

The flu season runs from October through April each year, and given the ongoing COVID pandemic, it's more important than ever to emphasize the importance of getting the flu vaccine to your patients. Lessening the total burden of respiratory illnesses is vital to allow for protection of not only those who are at risk for severe illness, but also the healthcare system. Providers play a vital role in supplying patients with the information needed to protect themselves against the flu and in helping a patient decide to receive vaccinations.

The CDC continues to recommend that patients ages six months and older, including pregnant women, receive a flu vaccine every year, with rare exceptions. Flu vaccination provides important protection from influenza and its complications, with the [CDC reporting](#) that in 2019-2020 flu season alone, the flu vaccine prevented an estimated 7.5 million illnesses, 3.7 million medical visits, 105,000 hospitalizations and 6,300 influenza-related deaths in the United States. While some people who get vaccinated may still develop influenza, vaccination may make their illness milder, as a [2017 study published in Clinical Infectious Diseases \(CID\)](#) found, reporting that influenza vaccination reduced deaths, intensive care unit (ICU) admissions, ICU length of stay, and overall duration of hospitalization among hospitalized influenza patients.

This flu season, Harvard Pilgrim is supporting annual influenza immunization efforts by covering flu vaccines at retail pharmacies for a **\$0 cost share for commercial members age 3 years and older**. For Medicare Advantage members, flu vaccines are covered at **\$0 cost share** (billed under Part B) at retail pharmacies or in doctors' offices.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website provides valuable information about vaccination, infection control, prevention, treatment, and diagnosis of seasonal influenza on the [Information for Health Professionals](#) and Influenza [ACIP Vaccine Recommendations](#) pages.



## Transgender Awareness

Looking to improve your health center's ability to provide high-quality care for transgender and gender-diverse patients? Harvard Pilgrim Health Care would like to make providers aware of an educational program for health centers aimed at increasing the availability of culturally responsible, comprehensive primary care for transgender and gender diverse patients.

Beginning in January 2022, Rural TransECHO and the Fenway Institute are offering a program specifically for health centers that are located in or serve predominantly rural U.S. communities. Approximately 20-25 centers will be accepted into the program, which offers the centers the opportunity to learn from experts and peers on ways to improve health services and patient outcomes for transgender and gender diverse patients. The program has curriculum tracks for both clinical and frontline staff and consists of 12 two-hour sessions held virtually over the course of a year. Participants can access more than 100 on-demand webinars

and earn CME/CEU and HRC HEI credits. Visit the [Rural TransEcho application page](#) for more information or to apply. ◆

## Reminder: QMB Members Exempt From Part A/B Cost-Sharing

The Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program put in place by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) assists low-income Medicare beneficiaries with Medicare Part A and Part B premiums and cost-sharing, including deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments. As a reminder, under the QMB program enrollees are exempt from cost-sharing liability, so all providers are prohibited from charging QMB members for Medicare cost-sharing for covered Parts A and B services.

### Identifying members with QMB status

Harvard Pilgrim provides the necessary information to our members and providers regarding QMB eligibility. When we are aware that a Harvard Pilgrim claim is for a member who is a qualified Medicare beneficiary, a message appears on the member's Explanation of Benefits statement, as well as the provider's Explanation of Payment, to identify this status.

In addition, CMS's [HIPAA Eligibility Transaction System \(HETS\)](#) provides Medicare eligibility data to providers and their authorized billing agents (including clearinghouses and third-party vendors) to help verify a patient's QMB status and exemption from cost-sharing charges. Contact your third-party eligibility verification vendor to ask how their products reflect the new QMB information from HETS. Alternatively, you can contact Harvard Pilgrim's Medicare Advantage Provider Service Center at 888-609-0692 to learn the best way to identify the QMB status of your patients.

### More information

For more detailed information about CMS's QMB program, please refer to [this document](#) from the Medicare Learning Network, as well as the [Billing Members](#) policy in Harvard Pilgrim's Medicare Advantage *Provider Manual*. ◆

## Help Us Keep Directory Information Up to Date

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and other regulatory bodies, as well as the federal No Surprises Act of 2021, require health plans to maintain and update data in provider directories — and we rely on providers to review their data and notify us of changes as they happen to ensure that members have access to accurate information. Provider demographic information in our [Provider Directory](#) must reflect accurate data at all times and should mirror the information members may receive directly from the practice or via patient appointment call centers.

On at least a quarterly basis, providers should review and verify the accuracy of their demographic data displayed in our Provider Directory. Any changes to data should be reported

via the [CAQH ProView DirectAssure®](#) tool for those who have implemented it. If your practice has not yet implemented CAQH, please submit a Provider Change Form to Harvard Pilgrim's Provider Processing Center by email at [PPC@harvardpilgrim.org](mailto:PPC@harvardpilgrim.org) to report changes to demographic data or to your address, panel status (open or closed) for each individual provider, institutional affiliations, phone number, or other practice data.

Consistent with provisions related to the [federal No Surprises Act of 2021](#), failure to review and update demographic information at least quarterly may result in suppression from Harvard Pilgrim's Provider Directory until the information is validated. In addition, if Harvard Pilgrim identifies potentially inaccurate provider information in the directory, we may outreach to your practice to validate or obtain accurate information. If we are unable to obtain a timely response, the provider's applicable location may be subject to suppression in the directory until up-to-date information is received.

In addition, please keep the following in mind:

- **Practice location** — As new providers join your practice, it is important that only practice locations where the provider regularly administers direct patient care are submitted for inclusion in the Harvard Pilgrim provider directory. Locations in which a provider may occasionally render indirect care — such as interpretation of tests or inpatient-only care — should be specified to ensure the location information is included in the provider's demographic profile, but not in the provider directory.
- **Timely notice** — As a reminder, notification of address, acceptance of new patients, provider terminations, and other demographic information changes should be submitted at least 30 days in advance.
- **CAQH information** — For more information about CAQH ProView DirectAssure, including benefits, how the process works, and a demonstration video on how to use it, visit the [DirectAssure page](#) on CAQH's website.

For questions, call the commercial Provider Service Center at 800-708-4414 or the Medicare Advantage Provider Service Center at 888-609-0692. ◆

***Network Matters*** is a monthly newsletter for the Harvard Pilgrim provider network

**Audrey Kleinberg**, Director, Provider Relations & Communications

**Annmarie Dadoly**, Editor

**Joseph O'Riordan**, Writer

**Kristin Edmonston**, Production Coordinator

Read *Network Matters* online at [www.hphc.org/providers](http://www.hphc.org/providers). For questions or comments about *Network Matters*, contact Annmarie Dadoly at [annmarie\\_dadoly@harvardpilgrim.org](mailto:annmarie_dadoly@harvardpilgrim.org) or (617) 509-8074.

