

COVID-19 Policy Updates

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This newsletter includes information about the most recent regulatory changes issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and federal advocacy SHM is performing on behalf of hospitalists. SHM will continue to provide you with updated policy and regulatory information relevant to hospital medicine as it is released.

This issue contains:

- [SHM Sends Letter of Support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act](#)
- [SHM Supports Krishnamoorthi Effort for Enhanced Resources to Support Health Care Workers' Mental Health in Next Coronavirus Aid Package](#)
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SHM Sends Letter of Support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act

SHM is pleased to work alongside Senator David Purdue (R-GA) to advocate for the passage of the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (H.R. 6788/S. 3589). SHM is among the initial supporters of this legislation and has sent a letter to both the House and Senate demonstrating our support. SHM is also working with the Senate Judiciary Committee Counsel to advocate for

additional administrative flexibilities that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security may have that will further benefit immigrant hospitalists.

The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act would expand the healthcare workforce during the COVID-19 global pandemic by recapturing 40,000 unused immigrant visas for foreign doctors (15,000) and nurses (25,000), as well as visas for their spouse and children. It also requires the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State to process the recaptured visas expeditiously in order to ensure that qualified healthcare professionals are available where and when needed. These visas would be available to the nurses and physicians who are currently unable to finalize their green card applications due to green card backlogs. This legislation will help reduce the green card backlog while also rapidly expanding the medical workforce in this time of great need.

To read the letters we sent to Congress, please [click here](#). If you would like to send a message to your elected representatives in support of this legislation, visit our legislative action center by [clicking here](#).

[Read letters SHM sent to Congress](#)

[Action alert](#)

SHM Supports Krishnamoorthi Effort for Enhanced Resources to Support Health Care Workers' Mental Health in Next Coronavirus Aid Package

SHM endorsed a letter Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-III) sent to Congress on May 6 urging for the creation of a grant program to provide treatment and mental health care to COVID-19 frontline medical service providers. Additionally, the letter calls for the funding of a comprehensive study within the Department of Health and Human Services. The study would focus on identifying structural and systematic forces that contribute to distress and burnout. The study would also prioritize identifying methods to help mitigate long-term mental health impacts on healthcare workers who treat COVID-19 patients.

To read the press release about this letter, please [click here](#).

[Read press release](#)

SHM Signs Statement Urging Federal Authorities, State and Local Governments to Prioritize Safety in COVID-19 Policies

SHM, alongside numerous other medical and public health associations, signed a statement urging government officials to utilize public health expertise when determining when and how to lift social distancing restrictions. Included in the statement is a call to ensure the process of easing physical distancing measures is guided by regional and local data and preparedness levels, including capacities for widespread testing, contact tracing, patient management and the public health and health care workforces and medical supplies necessary for these critical activities.

To read the complete statement, please [click here](#).

[Read complete statement](#)

CMS Issues Additional Blanket Waivers and Modifications

CMS continues to evaluate the needs of medical providers and institutions. CMS has issued additional waivers and flexibilities to ensure our healthcare workforce can meet the needs of patients on-the-ground. Included in these updated waivers include the expansion of hospitals' ability to offer long-care services. Additionally, CMS has temporarily waived certain eligibility requirements for Sole Community Hospitals and for Medicare-Dependent, Small Rural Hospitals (MDHs).

To read the full list of blanket waivers and learn more about these new changes, please [click here](#).

[Full list of blanket waivers](#)

Provider Relief Fund Payment Processing

On May 1, 2020, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) began processing payments from the Provider Relief Fund. The payments are

targeting hospitals and regions that have treated significant numbers of COVID-19 patients, as well as rural providers. HHS is distributing \$12 billion to 395 hospitals who provided inpatient care for 100 or more COVID-19 patients through April 10, 2020, \$2 billion of which will be distributed to these hospitals based on their Medicare and Medicaid disproportionate share and uncompensated care payments. Rural hospitals, many of which are financially struggling because of the cancellations of elective procedures, will also begin receiving payments from the Provider Relief Fund.

If you would like to learn more about the Provider Relief Fund, please [click here](#). Additionally, to see a state by state breakdown of payments to high-impact hospitals and rural hospitals respectively, click [here](#) and [here](#).

Provider relief fund

Thank you

SHM thanks you for your continued service on the frontlines. Visit [SHM's COVID-19 resource page](#) to stay updated with the latest information by hospitalists and other organizations. SHM wishes you safety and good health during these times.



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