

BURR ALERT

Recent Actions by CMS with Regard to COVID-19: Financial Relief for Medicare Providers and Requested Data Sharing

By Kelli C. Fleming, Esq.

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Over the weekend the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services ("CMS") took additional action with regard to the COVID-19 health emergency facing the United States. These actions are designed to assist healthcare providers in combating the COVID-19 outbreak from a financial perspective and to assist the government in assessing the outbreak by way of additional data sharing.

1. Accelerated Payments to Medicare Providers:

CMS announced an expansion of its accelerated and advance payment program for Medicare participating providers and suppliers. This expansion is designed to help address some of the financial hardships that providers are facing with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing providers to focus on patient care.

Accelerated and advance Medicare payments provide emergency funding and address cash flow issues when there is a disruption in claims submission and/or processing, typically as a result of a natural disaster. CMS is expanding the program for all Medicare providers throughout the United States during the public health emergency related to COVID-19. The payments can be requested by hospitals, doctors, durable medical equipment suppliers and other Medicare Part A and Part B providers and suppliers.

To qualify for accelerated or advance payments, the provider or supplier must:

- Have billed Medicare for claims within 180 days immediately prior to the date of signature on the provider's/ supplier's request form,
- Not be in bankruptcy,
- Not be under active medical review or program integrity investigation, and
- Not have any outstanding delinquent Medicare overpayments.

Medicare will start accepting and processing the accelerated/advance payment requests immediately. CMS anticipates that the payments will be issued within seven (7) days of the provider's request. Additional information on the accelerated/advance payment process and how to submit a request can be found [here](#).

2. Data Reporting and Sharing:

CMS also sent a letter to the nation's hospitals requesting the reporting of data in connection with fighting COVID-19. The letter requests that hospitals report COVID-19 testing data to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS"), in addition to daily reporting regarding bed capacity and supplies to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"). This data sharing will help identify supply and bed capacity needs, as well as enhance COVID-19 surveillance efforts. Hospitals should report data without personal identifying information to ensure patient privacy.

The White House Coronavirus Task Force has been collecting data from public health labs and private laboratory companies, but has not been collecting data from hospital labs that conduct laboratory testing. By sharing this data, hospitals can help federal and state governments direct needed resources during this crisis.

The letter requests that all hospitals report data daily on COVID-19 testing performed in their onsite laboratories. A copy of the letter sent to the hospitals is available [here](#).

For additional information:

Please contact [Kelli Fleming](#) at kfleming@burr.com or 205 458 5429.

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