



COVID-19: Reopening, New Financial Relief, Supplies, and Physician Well-being

The AAFP Is Here to Support You as You Serve Your Patients and Community

April 30, 2020

Dear colleagues,

This week, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the U.S. surpassed 1 million. That staggering number has taken a tough toll on everyone in this country on a variety of levels. At the AAFP, we continue to advocate and provide resources to help you and your communities as we all fight this pandemic.

Reopening Resources

State and local governments are beginning to loosen stay-at-home restrictions, and as I shared last week, we have been working on resources to assist you as you consider reopening or expanding your practice. You can find those tools in the [practice management section of our COVID-19 site](#).

As restrictions are loosened, you may start getting more questions from your patients about COVID-19 symptoms and precautions they should take when they go out in public. We have a variety of patient-facing resources on [familydoctor.org](#), including facts about COVID-19, handwashing, masks and ways to dispel misinformation.

Financial Relief

With additional relief funding opening up this week, we know many of you have questions about how to apply for money. We are working on some short videos that will walk you through the process and provide some tips for applying. These will be available on our Facebook page soon for you to review, and you'll be able to post questions in the comments for an AAFP staff member to address. Here's an overview of the current state of the various financial relief programs (you can also visit our [COVID-19 financial relief page](#) for details):

- **SBA loans:** On Monday, applications for the second round of Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance opened. This includes the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) COVID-19 assistance program. We have details on our [COVID-19 microsite](#) about what you need to know if you are applying for the first time or if you applied last round and didn't receive money before funds ran out.
- **Provider relief fund:** On Sunday, we sent those of you who have ownership in a practice an email about the latest round of provider relief funds administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Unlike the first round of funding, you have to submit information to receive additional money. We expect these funds to go quickly, so find Sunday's email or visit the [financial relief section of our COVID-19 page](#) for details. Please note that you are only eligible for this second round of funding if you received money during the first round. If you didn't receive money during the first round

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of funding and believe you should have, contact the CARES provider relief hotline at 866-569-3522.

- **Payment for treating uninsured patients:** This week, HHS, through the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), launched the COVID-19 Uninsured Program Portal to allow family physicians and clinicians who have conducted COVID-19 testing or provided treatment for uninsured COVID-19 patients on or after Feb. 4 to submit claims for reimbursement. HRSA has contracted with UnitedHealth Group to be the sole administrator of the program. We have details available on our [COVID-19 microsite](#) about the program and how you can submit claims.
- **CMS Accelerated and Advance Payment Program:** Over the weekend, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) abruptly announced that it had stopped taking Accelerated and Advance Payment applications while it re-evaluates the program. The AAFP plans to urge Congress to require CMS to reinstate the program and extend it through the third and fourth quarters of this year. We will keep you updated as we learn more.

Supplies

Amazon has created a site for purchasing medical supplies that are in critically short supply, including personal protective equipment (PPE). The site is currently only available for hospitals and governmental agencies; however, once Amazon's inventory increases, it plans to expand who can purchase supplies. The AAFP is working with Amazon to collect information from our members who wish to purchase medical equipment so they can be authorized to use this special Amazon site. If you wish to have the ability to purchase medical supplies through Amazon in the future, please fill out [this form](#).

Physician Well-being

This pandemic is taking a tremendous emotional and mental toll on those of us in health care. I know we were all saddened to see the tragic news that fellow physician and ER doctor Lorna Breen took her own life last weekend. We recognize that her story is not unique. Many of us are struggling as we battle on behalf of our patients, staff and community and face possible personal financial challenges, as well. I encourage you to take advantage of some resources we have available to help you and your staff care for your mental, emotional and physical well-being during this challenging time:

- Watch our [April 17 COVID-19 webinar](#) on emotional health.
- Review the [COVID-19 self-study materials](#) on physician well-being.
- Visit our [Physician Health First page](#) to conduct a self-check and develop a well-being plan.
- A group of psychiatrists has formed a [Physician Support Line](#) to offer free and confidential peer support to American physicians on the front lines of COVID-19. If you or your colleagues need to speak with a psychiatrist, please contact them.
- For a list of additional support tools, visit our [COVID-19 physician well-being resources](#).

I will close with a couple of quick reminders:

- **Make your voice heard:** As the federal government considers additional legislation, it is critical that Congress hears from you about the importance of family medicine and the need for support. With our [Speak Out tool](#), you can easily contact your members of Congress to let them know the impact COVID-19 is having on your practice and that much more must be done to support family physicians.
- **Virtual Town Hall:** During last night's Virtual Town Hall, we discussed the influence of social determinants of health and potential mitigation strategies for optimizing health outcomes in vulnerable populations during the pandemic. If you missed it, be sure to check out the replay on our [COVID-19 communications page](#). As a reminder, the weekly virtual Town Hall is available for one [live](#) or [enduring](#) CME credit each week, so be sure to evaluate the session and claim your credit.
- **Webinar series:** Our Friday evening COVID-19 webinar series is a one-hour, live, online CME session that provides you with an opportunity for real-time interaction with physician experts and offers a chance to ask questions. This week's topic is *Managing the COVID-19 Crisis: An Emergency Room Family Physician's Perspective*, so join us tomorrow, May 1, at 7 p.m. CDT. Visit the COVID-19 CME page for more details.
- **COVID-19 site:** Don't forget to visit [the AAFP's COVID-19 microsite](#) every day as we regularly add new resources, tools and advocacy information.

As we enter another month of fighting this battle, I continue to be inspired by the difference family physicians are making for their patients and community at large. Words can't express the appreciation I have for all of you — keep up the amazing work!

Gary L. LeRoy, MD
President
American Academy of Family Physicians