**STAY INFORMED:**

**MeCDC General Briefing on COVID-19** - Mondays from 1:00-2:00 PM: [https://zoom.us/j/544261659](https://zoom.us/j/544261659)
- Intended for Maine health care providers, governmental and non-governmental public health organizations, hospitals, clinics, health centers, laboratories, professional associations, first responders, health care administrators, emergency managers, and other similar parties

**MeCDC Twice-weekly Coronavirus Update for Hospital Employees:**
- Tuesdays from 11:00 - 11:30 AM: [https://zoom.us/j/127279950](https://zoom.us/j/127279950)
- Fridays from 1:30 - 2:00 PM: [https://zoom.us/j/685349784](https://zoom.us/j/685349784)

**NETRC Telehealth Virtual Office Hours**
- Tuesdays at 8:00 AM - Call in: +1 646 558 8656 US; Meeting ID: 869 834 403
- Thursdays at 12 PM - Call in: Call in: +1 646 558 8656 US; Meeting ID: 477 247 220

**MPCA Compendium** - Emailed on Tuesdays

**Maine CDC Coronavirus Update for Long Term Care Facilities, hosted by Rita Owsiak** - Wednesdays at 1:00 PM: [https://zoom.us/j/570558574](https://zoom.us/j/570558574)

**Maine CDC Coronavirus Update for Clinicians hosted by Stephen Sears, MD** - Thursdays at 12:30 PM: [https://zoom.us/j/798526090](https://zoom.us/j/798526090)

**MPCA hosts CHC Network Office Hours** - Thursdays from 4:00 - 5:00 PM: [https://mepca.zoom.us/j/394295081](https://mepca.zoom.us/j/394295081)

**MeCDC COVID-19 and Children** - Fridays from 12:15 - 1:00 PM: [https://zoom.us/j/871527860](https://zoom.us/j/871527860) +19292056099, 871527860#.
  - CDC (Dr. Sears); DHHS, (Drs. Belisle and Carmack); MAAP Discussion (Drs. Hagler and Blaisdell) with Child Health Providers.
  - Please send questions to Dr. Belisle by 3 pm on the Wed before (amy.belisle@maine.gov)

**SUBSCRIBE:**

Updates related to COVID-19 cases and screening criteria are available in real-time through the Maine Health Alert Network as well as the US CDC Health Alert Network. FQHC providers and personnel should ensure they are subscribed to these important alerts.

**MAINE HELPS:**

- [Resources](#) for how Mainers can Help
- **Maine Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC)** - A group of local volunteers, connected to a national network, engaging Maine communities to strengthen public health, reduce vulnerability, build resilience, and improve preparedness response and recovery capabilities. For more information, [click here](#).
- **211** - Community Resource Help

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**CLINICAL UPDATE**

**Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)**
COVID-19 Weekly Compendium #5

CLINICAL UPDATE (CONT’D)

Summary of Recent Changes from USCDC - (Revisions were made on March 30th)

- New information about asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic infections
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, and angiotensin receptor blockers and risk of infection or infection severity
- Information about COVID-19 and potential for SARS-CoV-2 reinfection
- Possibility of infection with both SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses
- Additional laboratory and imaging findings in COVID-19
- Updated guidelines from the Surviving Sepsis Campaign
- Inclusion of new resource: Information for Clinicians on Therapeutic Options for COVID-19 Patients
- For more information on the clinical presentation and course among children, see Information for Pediatric Healthcare Providers

Phone Script/Advice Line Tool for possible COVID-19 patients

- Use this printer-friendly script with the accompanying Decision Algorithm and Messages

US CDC Guidance for Public on Masking

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example, to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
  - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.
- How to Make Your Own Mask at Home

Self-Care

- How to Protect Yourself and Others
- Caring for Yourself at Home

CHCNet UPDATE

COVID-19 resources for all-things Health Information Technology, including Telehealth and EHR. Please send your questions or challenges related to Health Information Technology to Greg Parent: gparent@mepca.org and/or Lisa Tuttle: ltuttle@mepca.org.
**COVID-19 Weekly Compendium #5**

**CHCNet Update (cont’d)**

**Rapid Telehealth During COVID-19 ECHO - Ongoing Learning Series**
- **Tuesdays** (except for the 3rd Tuesday each month) from 1:00 - 2:00 PM via Zoom.
- For more information or to register as a participant, please email Greg Parent - gparent@mepca.org.

**HIT/Telehealth Vendor “Speed Dating” -** For CHCs with questions about telehealth, patient engagement/communication, and remote monitoring tools.
- Dates will be finalized ASAP and emails sent with all relevant details. We will be offering multiple dates/times for each vendor.

**Data Governance Academy – COVID-19 edition - Ongoing Learning Series**
- **Save the dates:** April 22nd, May 20th, June 17th, and July 22nd at 12:00 PM. More Information to follow by email in the coming days.
- For all questions please email Greg Parent - gparent@mepca.org.

**CHCNet partnership with Health Initiatives Consulting (HIC)**
- Contact Greg Parent - gparent@mepca.org, for support from the HIC team with data mapping, EHR functions, or any other concerns related to your health information technology tools or workflows.

**NACHC EHR User Groups**
- Please visit the NACHC User Group Information Page to register for monthly meetings, presented by EHR vendors, that address various topics related to maximizing the use of EHRs.

**Telehealth Update**

For updates from insurers and other relevant information concerning Telehealth, please visit the Telehealth Resources page on the MPCA website.

**Telehealth Workflow:** Guiding Principles on how to Choose Between Telephone and Video Appointments

**Policy Update**

**Washington Starts Work on Stimulus Bill #4:** Congressional leaders are now crafting an additional legislative package to further address COVID-19 and its massive impact on both the economy and our nation’s health system. NACHC is requesting a total of $77.3 billion in this round, which not only includes additional immediate funding for COVID-19 support, but a 5-year long-term support of Community Health Centers and key workforce programs as well. Also included in the request is funding for infrastructure investment to support health centers in preparation for the future and to expand services to an additional 10 million patients over 5 years. Furthermore, this request also addresses issues relating to adequate reimbursement for telehealth services consistent with Medicare and Medicaid PPS and protection of 340B program savings for health centers. A copy of NACHC’s proposal can be viewed HERE.

**NACHC Requests $3.1 billion for FQHCs from Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF):** On April 3, NACHC President and CEO, Tom Van Coverden, sent a letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar requesting a $3.1 billion set aside from the $100 billion Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF) that was included in the CARES Act. Details of the ask are as follows:
Policy Update (cont’d)

- Requests $3.1 billion as an upfront payment to CHCs – meaning that funds should be distributed immediately, without requiring CHCs to submit applications first.
- Is clear that the $3.1 billion is for the first three months of the pandemic, and that if net revenues drop even more than estimated, or if the pandemic goes on longer, we will need additional funding.
- Is consistent with NACHC’s “ask” to the Hill - which was approved by the full NACHC Board – in that both request the same amount of funding for the same time period.
- Requests that the following three types of health centers receive a relatively higher level of support:
  - FQHCs with over 500 employees: as they are ineligible for the Paycheck Protection or Emergency Paid Leave programs.
  - FQHC Look-Alikes: as they are ineligible for funds from BPHC
  - FQHCs in “hot spots”: as they are expected to incur the highest costs.
- Emphasizes the importance of health centers being financially sound once we “turn the curve” on the pandemic, as the demands on the primary care safety net will be significantly higher than they were before.

Efforts to Expand Access to Medicare-Funded Telehealth Ongoing: The Monday after CARES was passed, CMS issued an interim final rule that included a number of telehealth policies for FQHCs. Both NACHC and the PCAs were trying to stay optimistic that final guidance would include hoped-for provisions, as found here, that would serve to expand access to Medicare-funded telehealth services. It appears that the final guidance will not include those provisions and attempts that Maine CHCs and others have made to get a clear timeline on the guidance have gone pretty much unanswered from CMS and its contractors.

Leading up to the CARES Act, NACHC, MPCA, and others advocated to our delegation to allow FQHCs to be reimbursed for Medicare telehealth at (or very close to!) Medicare PPS rates. This call for appropriate reimbursement is still front and center to advocacy efforts, including a letter that was sent to Congress from NACHC last week in anticipation of the next aid package that Congress is working on, found here. Note that the Congressional recess extends through April 20 so an additional aid package would likely not be finalized until mid-May. This aid package would be a vehicle to address the Medicare issues as well as to make the case for additional CHC recovery/stabilization funds. We are aware that NACHC is working closely with FTLF to put together legislative language to address the payment issue. Once that language is finalized, we will use that as talking points in follow up conversations with our delegation.

HRSA Coronavirus Disease 2019 COVID-19 FAQs: HRSA has made a number of updates to its COVID-19 FAQs.

Change to HRSA Reporting Frequency: In the bulletin Health Center COVID-19 Information Collection, HRSA shared the HHS announcement requesting that health centers report on COVID-19-related activities. For the past few weeks, these surveys have gone out on Mondays and Thursdays.

Beginning this week, HRSA will open the health center COVID-19 survey ONCE a week on Friday afternoons. It will close the following Monday at 11:59 p.m. ET.
- The survey HRSA sends on Friday, April 10, will cover reporting for Saturday, April 4, through Friday, April 10. It will be due by 11:59 p.m. ET on Monday, April 13.
- After that, the surveys will cover a reporting period beginning on Saturday through the subsequent Friday.
BUSINESS/HR/WORKFORCE UPDATE

Small Business Resources and Guides: The Maine State Chamber of Commerce has assembled a list of information regarding the recent federal aid package and its implementation. In addition to the items, included below, the Chamber will be posting other resources to its website.

- Understanding the Small Business Loans Available Through the CARES Act
- Coronavirus Emergency Loans: Small Business Guide and Checklist
- Guide to the Employee Retention tax Credit for COVID-19 Impacted Employers
- Guide to SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loans

Updates to the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Application Process: Several changes have been made to simplify and streamline the process of applying for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) through the SBA. If you have already submitted your application, you will be contacted with instructions to finalize the process.

- Start the process HERE.
- You will be asked to fill in some basic information about your business and the business owners.
- On the last screen, if you opt in to the $10,000 request for emergency funds, you will need to supply your bank account and routing number.
- You will see a summary of all your information that you can review prior to submitting your application.
- You will not be asked to upload any documentation at submittal; however, you may be asked for supporting information at a later date.
- If you submitted your application prior to March 27, you will need to re-visit the website HERE to submit the $10,000 request for emergency funds.

Paycheck Protection Program: The Paycheck Protection Program prioritizes millions of Americans employed by small businesses by authorizing up to $349 billion toward job retention and certain other expenses. Small businesses and eligible nonprofit organizations, Veterans organizations, and Tribal businesses described in the Small Business Act, as well as individuals who are self-employed or are independent contractors, are eligible if they also meet program size standards. Under this program:

- Eligible recipients may qualify for a loan up to $10 million determined by 8 weeks of prior average payroll plus an additional 25% of that amount.
- Loan payments will be deferred for six months.
- If you maintain your workforce, SBA will forgive the portion of the loan proceeds that are used to cover the first 8 weeks of payroll and certain other expenses following loan origination.

FCC to offer $200 million to reimburse costs of telehealth equipment and services: The FCC will be providing $200 million to help eligible health care providers purchase telecommunications, broadband and devices to provide telehealth services to COVID-19 patients. While there is no information yet regarding how these funds will be distributed, NACHC expects health centers to be eligible to have these costs fully reimbursed. The FCC plans to fund applications on a rolling basis, so it will be important to apply quickly.

Health centers are permitted to deny Emergency Paid Leave to all employees, not just clinicians: On March 29, 2020, the Department of Labor announced that health care employers – including health centers – have the option to deny
Business/HR/Workforce Update (cont’d)

All employees the ability to take Emergency Paid Leave as created under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA.) Previous interpretations had suggested that this leave could be denied only to clinicians. Note that health centers that choose to offer this leave to their staff will be eligible for refundable tax credits to cover their full costs.

Updated memo outlines options to assist with cash flow and payroll issues: This memo is an updated version of the one circulated earlier last week. It provides a brief overview of: Paycheck Protection Loans; Emergency Paid Leave under FFCRA; Economic Injury Disaster Loans; Pandemic Unemployment Coverage; Advanced Medicare Payments; and the $100 billion from the CARES Act.

Finance Office Hours for Health Centers: Beginning this Friday, April 3, 2020, NACHC is offering strategies to manage operations during COVID-19 via Finance Office Hours from 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET. This first session will cover assessing and responding to the crisis.

MPCA Contact Information:

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