

CMS COVID-19 Hospitals Call April 4, 2020

Administrator Verma opened the call

- Focus today on workforce
 - Issues?
 - Best Practices?
- Put out regulatory relief package last Mon – Hospitals without walls, changes to EMTALA, Stark
- Another round at rulemaking to implement the CARES Act – coming out shortly
- Put \$6B out in accelerated payments in a week

Dr. Couch – working on workforce and with FEMA

- After you redeploy employed MDs, as you expand surge, how are you thinking about temporary hires?

Q: Is there clarification on 72 hour waiver rule re SNFs – applies for internal transfers. Does it apply for other transfers?

A: Need to check further – email for additional info.

Q: Significant decline in volume, can't deploy workforce, may need in 6-8 weeks. Will CARES help us pay for them?

A: \$100B in CARES Act that would help, implementation on the way.

Q: Waiver on caps for residents without impacting caps in the future?

A: Have to look into that.

Q: Section 1135 allows 2 EMTALA provisions to waive, but the ability to transfer unstabilized patient hasn't been granted yet

A: Is currently allowed if your hospital isn't a COVID-19 designated facility. Will get more info out.

Q: Accelerated payment for acute care hospitals – only received 3 months.

A: Someone will follow-up.

Q: Really need PPE – chasing rainbows. If we get PPE, workers will respond.

A: We'll share your comments with our colleagues.

Q: Hospitals want to discharge acute care patients to appropriate care. Can they convert to swing-beds on another floor and be paid applicable rate?

A: Can issue more clarification on how it can be done – then it gets into reimbursement issue for swing beds. We have flexibilities in place to accommodate that.

Q: Provider at same location as patient and using telehealth, how do we code?

A: Telehealth only applies where they're in different location. Questions have come up where its part of hospital service – working on clarification.

- Q: Faster turnaround time for COVID suspected patient – burning through PPE while waiting on test results.
- A: Noted. Trying to increase PPE where we can.
- Q: Any thought to sending the CMS forms patients have to sign via email or patient portal? Even for those who aren't COVID positive? Can we do some inpatient only procedures as outpatient and still get paid?
- A: Flexibility on delivery of notices – if guidance isn't out yet, it will be soon. Will look at those who aren't COVID-positive. Haven't changed inpatient/outpatient – could look at it – would need to know what procedures.
- Q: Waiver of 3-day rule to transfer patients to swing-beds in CAHs?
- A: No COP barrier, don't think there are payment barriers, but will have to double-check.
- Q: Millions of applications, talked with lender re SBA portal. Concerned that we're not going to get money fast enough. AHA proposal of \$25K/bed would be faster.
- A: Accelerated payment also available. Understand cash flow is a problem.

David Wright – Quality and Oversight

Re Transfers – 3/30 EMTALA guidance; can move patients to transfer to COVID designated facilities; hadn't directly considered moving non-COVID patients out – will look at that

Dr. Couch – we go through all these questions and run down the answers.

Email: COVID-19@cms.hh.gov