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APG COVID-19 Member Update

April 21, 2020

Dear APG Members:

As this unprecedented health crisis continues, APG remains active in advocating on behalf of your practice and the patients and communities you serve. We will keep you updated with the very latest on COVID-19, any changes in legislation or regulations that you need to know, and best practices that some of your colleagues are implementing to help address this global challenge.

By The Numbers:

According to the [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center](#), there are **2,531,804 cases of coronavirus worldwide**. This includes **804,194 cases in the United States**, which leads all other countries in number of cases.

Federal Update:

Senate Passes Deal on Additional Funds for COVID-19 Programs

Moments ago, the Senate passed a [bill](#) that will add additional monies to its small business loan program included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, as well as additional funding for healthcare providers. Secretary of the Treasury Steve Mnuchin, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Speaker of the

House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) came to an agreement earlier this morning which includes:

- \$75 billion in additional funds for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF) for healthcare providers to provide reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenses and lost revenue from the pandemic
- \$310 billion in additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
 - \$60 billion exclusively for small lenders and community financial institutions
- \$50 billion for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program
 - Plus, an additional \$10 billion for the Emergency EIDL grant program
- \$25 billion to research, develop, validate, manufacture, purchase, administer, and expand capacity for coronavirus tests

The \$75 billion for providers included in the bill is in addition to the \$100 billion originally included in the CARES Act and is subject to the same conditions, which may be read [here](#). The PPP funding comes after the program ran out of funds last week. The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the bill Thursday.

APG Sends Letter to HHS Requesting Risk Adjusted Payment for Audio-only Telehealth Services

Yesterday, APG sent a [letter](#) to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) advocating for audio-only telehealth services to qualify for risk adjusted payment. As it currently stands, part of the criteria for risk adjusted payment for telehealth services hinges upon a face-to-face encounter that uses an interactive audio and video telecommunications system such as a video-equipped smartphone. APG asks that the criteria be expanded to include audio-only technology such as landline phones and non-smartphones in order to accommodate patients who may not have access to such technology and rural and underserved areas without access to broadband internet technologies.

Please click [here](#) to view APG's letter.

APG Submits Letter of Recommendations to Congress for Next Phase of COVID-19 Stimulus

As Congress continues to work to extend financial relief and support for industry in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, APG sent a [letter](#) to House and Senate leadership providing numerous recommendations on how best to address the needs and of physicians and patients amidst the crisis. Among the solutions presented were:

- Healthcare civil liability protections, including qualified immunity for physicians treating and testing all patients under COVID-19 conditions
- Stable payment for providers who contract under Medicare Advantage, as well as incentives for downside risk contracts in the program
- Enhanced payment relief for primary care providers
- Accelerated and/or advanced payment of 2019 performance year shared savings, quality, or performance incentives for accountable care organizations
- Decreased interest rate to 2 percent and extension of the repayment period for advanced/accelerated payments from CMS to 2 years
- Legislation prohibiting business interruption insurance coverage policies from excluding the COVID-19 pandemic

APG has focused its efforts on ensuring that physicians have a stable stream of financial assistance, alleviating near-term financial concerns so that physicians may concentrate on providing care during the pandemic. We are committed to the transformation of our current healthcare system toward a system focusing on value-based care and improved population health, quality, and patient experience.

APG will continue to advocate before Congress on potential stimulus relief as debate in Washington continues.

Please click [here](#) to view APG's letter.

APG Members in Action:

Every day, APG member organizations are finding innovative ways to continue to care for the patients and communities they serve. If you'd like to **share your COVID-19 best practices or story**, please email [David Allen](#), APG Director of Communications, with a brief description of what you're doing and we'll do our best to communicate your good work across APG membership.

We are here to serve as a resource for you. Please don't hesitate to contact me [here](#) with any questions you may have or any situations within your practice that you want me to be aware of.

You can find more resources on our [COVID-19 web page](#). As always, please know that we are in constant contact with federal and agency officials and will share any additional news with you as soon as possible.

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