

Please continue to reach out to your market leader with questions and concerns.

On Capitol Hill

This week the Senate, unable to agree on additional funding to the CARES 3.0 Act, continues to work through the weekend. A final vote will likely be early next week. Republicans want to add \$250B to the CARES package, but Democrats are also asking for added funding for healthcare and states. CMS and HHS continue to churn out waivers, guidance and grants.

CARES Act

- CMS announced the [CARES Act Provider Relief Fund Payment Attestation Portal](#) is now open. Providers who have been allocated a payment from the initial \$30B general distribution must sign an attestation confirming receipt of the funds and agree to the terms and conditions within 30 days of payment.
- CMS Administrator Seema Verma said the next tranche (\$70B) of CARES funding will be announced by the end of the week. She also reiterated that the next round of grants will aim to help providers who might not have benefited from the first round of funding—such as those in Medicaid, or with high uninsured populations.
 - Physicians' groups are seeking broader financial relief in the fourth COVID-19 bill. Requests include a reduction in recoupment of the Medicare Advanced Payment and increases in Medicare payments overall.
 - In a letter to CMS, Senate Democrats requested funding from CARES grants go to the hardest-hit "hot spot" areas.
- Verma did not respond to a question on Wednesday about opening a potential large-scale special enrollment period for healthcare.gov amid the COVID-19 crisis. She said the agency has yet to figure out exactly how much of the \$100B CARES Act fund will be used to reimburse providers treating uninsured COVID-19 patients.
- CMS will lift a 2% sequestration cut in Medicare fee-for-service starting May 1, as required by the CARES Act. The suspension will remain in place through Dec. 31, 2020.

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

- The PPP was closed down after it ran out of money Wednesday night. Congress hopes to restart the program with more funding early next week.
- Private equity-backed physician practices were shut out of accepting the Paycheck Protection loans. Under standards called "affiliation rules," private equity-owned companies, including healthcare practices hit hard by cancellations of elective procedures, won't qualify.

Reopening

- President Trump announced his plan to work with states to reopen the government.
- Both the House and the Senate announced their earliest return for sessions will be May 4.

In the News

- 97% of medical practices have been hurt financially due to COVID-19, the Medical Group Management Association found in a survey of its members.
- United Health mentioned they are considering returning to the ACA marketplace, but it's too early to tell.
- A MedPAC report to CMS requests that they not use 2020 data to evaluate ACOs.
- The insurance industry has asked Congress to subsidize COBRA as part of the next stimulus package.