



Welcome to the summer edition of the AMA's Very Influential Physician (VIP) Insider. Read on for details about these topics:

- Tell Congress to support telehealth during COVID-19 and beyond
- HHS will distribute funds to physicians who participate in Medicaid and CHIP
- Exclusive CMF webinar: Producing Virtual Site Visits for Public Officials
- How much time and resources are legislative offices spending to assist constituents during COVID-19

Tell Congress to support telehealth during COVID-19 and beyond

The current COVID-19 health crisis has put a massive strain on the health care system in our country. During this time telehealth services have emerged as a critical tool to provide care to patients while supporting physical distancing efforts and reducing the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases by avoiding unnecessary outpatient visits.

Stories are coming in from all over the country from physicians and patients alike about the positive effects of expanding telehealth. It has allowed patients to continue to receive the same high-quality care using new digital tools.

While we must remain vigilant in our battle with COVID-19, it is important to recognize that **expanded use of telehealth technology should have a place in our health care system permanently.**

While Congress considers new "phase-four" COVID-19 relief legislation they should ensure that telehealth services are covered and remain available as a viable option for patients at the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Specifically, Congress should permanently lift the geographic and site restrictions on telehealth technologies so Medicare beneficiaries have access to telehealth services, including from home, regardless of where they live.

[Please contact your Senators and Representative today](#) and tell them that any new COVID-19 relief legislation should include the telehealth provisions outlined above.

Expanded telehealth IS working for patients, let's fight to keep it that way!

HHS will distribute funds to physicians who participate in Medicaid and CHIP

The AMA has continued to press the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to swiftly distribute funds to assist those physicians who have not previously received any money from the Provider Relief Fund. The AMA is pleased the department announced it is moving forward to provide some relief. HHS expects to distribute approximately \$15 billion to eligible physicians and organizations that participate in state Medicaid programs and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and have not received a payment from the Provider Relief Fund

General Allocation. The payment to each provider will be at least 2 percent of reported gross revenue from patient care; the final amount each provider receives will be determined after the data is submitted, including information about the number of Medicaid patients providers serve. Before applying through the [enhanced provider relief portal](#), applicants should:

[Read the Medicaid Provider Distribution Instructions \(PDF\)](#)

[Download the Medicaid Provider Distribution Application Form \(PDF\)](#)

Upcoming Webinar: Producing VIRTUAL Site Visits for Public Officials

Join our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation on June 30, 2020 at 1:00 PM (Eastern) for the new Citizen-Advocate webinar.

[Register here!](#)

Program Description: CMF research shows that Members of Congress consider visits to local facilities to be one of the most valuable ways to understand constituent views and opinions – more than any other source of information. Unfortunately, maintaining “social distance” during the COVID-19 crisis has put this very effective advocacy strategy on ice – or has it? This webinar will explore how advocates could resume the use of site visits using virtual platforms and common technology.

Participants will explore the following topics:

- How to leverage commonly available technology to create a VIRTUAL site visit for Members of Congress and staff
- How to entice Members of Congress to participate in a virtual site visit
- How to plan and create an effective virtual site visit that will simulate the real thing

This webinar will be conducted by CMF's Brad Fitch, President & CEO and Seth Turner, Director of Citizen Engagement.

If you have any questions regarding this presentation, please contact Jaime Werner [Jaime Werner](mailto:Jaime.Werner@CongressFoundation.org) at CMF at JWerner@CongressFoundation.org.

How much time and resources are Congressional offices spending to assist constituents during the COVID-19 crisis?

The Congressional Management Foundation wanted to know how much time and resources that congressional offices are spending to assist constituents who have been affected by COVID-19. To find out, CMF asked the following question.

“Please indicate how much time/resources your office is devoting to coronavirus related work.” (Asked on May 8 2020.)

We learned: The majority of Congress' time and resources are focused on the COVID-19 crisis. A total of 85% of congressional staff who responded to CMF's poll indicated that “the vast majority of their work” (defined as 75% or more) is focused on coronavirus-related work. This includes 51% who indicated that “nearly all of their work” (defined as 90% or more) is related to the COVID-19 crisis.

Although [79% of congressional staff indicated that it's okay for advocacy groups with constituents in their district to communicate with Congress on issues not related to COVID-19](#), it's clearly important for advocates to use communication methods that won't divert resources congressional offices are heavily relying on to respond to constituent requests.
