

New CPT resources help doctors adapt to shifting COVID-19 demands

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The COVID-19 pandemic has forced rapid changes on the way physician practices operate. To help doctors navigate the shifting landscape, the AMA has released guidance on issues related to the pandemic, including new Medicare policies, answers to patient concerns and, most recently, advice on coding for COVID-19 testing, treatment and telemedicine services.

Resources include authoritative guidance for using the proper AMA Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) codes regarding evaluation and management (E/M) services stemming from COVID-19 testing, and how codes differ depending on whether patient assessment was done in the office, via telehealth, or a virtual visit, and whether the service was provided to a new or established patient.

Another resource outlines 18 scenarios that physicians may encounter during the pandemic and provides advice on the appropriate codes for services that could stem from those scenarios.

The scenarios reflect recent policy updates from Medicare and commercial payers that went in effect April 1.

“Equipping a health care workforce to accurately code medical procedures, streamlines communication across the health system, reducing administrative and rework costs at a time when resources are stretched by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said AMA President Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA.

The COVID-19 testing-specific scenarios—which include telehealth services for all patients—provide examples of how to code for patient activities such as these:

- Comes to the office for an E/M visit and is tested for COVID-19 during the visit.
- Receives a telehealth visit regarding COVID-19 and is directed to come to the physician's office or physician's group practice site for testing.
- Receives a virtual check-in/online visit regarding COVID-19 (not related to an E/M visit) and is directed to come to the physician's office for testing.

Find COVID-19 resources in one place

These materials are recent additions to the AMA's online COVID-19 Resource Center for Physicians, which is updated daily. It includes news on how the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act can help with practice sustainability, the latest COVID-19 research and expert interviews from the *JAMA Network* COVID-19 Resource Center, and developments from CMS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Also included is a physician's guide to COVID-19, which features resources on how to optimize the supply of personal protection equipment, and guidance from the *AMA Journal of Ethics* on making difficult decisions such as making the best use of limited health care resources and upholding professional duty to treat in the face of personal danger.