

MONTHLY COVID-19 UPDATE

The latest news and updates from the Program Management Office

The following are updates from the PMO regarding COVID-19. Continue to reach out to the PMO and/or Practice Coaches if you need assistance in addressing COVID-19 and progressing in MDPCP care transformation.

COVID-19 Updates & Resources

***New** We are excited to recognize those practices that have made an incredible impact in vaccinating their unvaccinated patients.

Over the past week, the following practices have been tremendous strides in vaccinating their unvaccinated patients and have achieved the highest levels of improvement among those unvaccinated.

1. Eastern Shore Medical Center - 2.26%
2. Pankaj Talwar, M.D. - 1.40%
3. Crofton Medical Group - 1.36%
4. Gilchrist Elder Medical Care - 1.29%
5. Kenneth M. Greene, M.D. & Associates - 1.26%

Note: percentages represent percent increase of MDPCP beneficiaries fully vaccinated

***New** Upcoming COVID-19 Update Webinars

The MDPCP PMO is hosting COVID-19 Update Webinars for primary care practices and providers every other week. These webinars are intended to provide an overview of current COVID-19 impacts across the state, as well as provide up-to-date information on vaccines, testing, and treatment for COVID-19.

Our next webinar will be on November 18th. Please note that this webinar is on a **Thursday**. This webinar will cover case rates, highlights of the vaccine program, updates on vaccine recommendations, and information on pediatrics vaccines for COVID-19.

Registration for this webinar on 11/18 can be found [here](#).



COVID-19 Updates & Resources cont.

***New CDC Recommendations for COVID-19 Booster Doses**

On 10/21, the CDC expanded its recommendations pertaining to COVID-19 boosters to include some populations that have previously obtained Moderna or J&J for their primary vaccine series. The CDC media announcement can be found [here](#).

The Maryland Primary Care Vaccine Program has put together a [COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Guide](#) to assist practices and providers with the implementation of COVID-19 boosters. This guide includes: information on which patients are eligible for a booster dose based on each vaccine, information on when patients are eligible for a booster dose, information on dosage for booster vaccines, updated CPT codes, and FAQs.

Additionally, the Public Health Collaborative has also put together a [messaging toolkit](#) for expanded booster recommendations, including shareable graphics.

***New Pediatric Covid Vaccine Update**

The CDC now recommends the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for the 5-11 year-old pediatric population. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for the 5-11 pediatric population is a different formulation and dosage as the 12+ Pfizer vaccine. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for the 5-11 pediatric population is a two dose regimen and the second dose can be administered 21 days after the initial dose. Additional information on this vaccine can be found on the CDC website [here](#).

Due to sparse distribution resources, initially the Pfizer 5-11 vaccine will be allocated by the State to vaccinating sites. Regular surveys will be sent from mdh.covidvax@maryland.gov where you can indicate your practice's capacity to receive and administer these vaccines. When supply is adequate, you will be able to directly order the Pfizer 5-11 vaccine in ImmuNet. The MDPCP PMO will notify you at that time.

Co-Administration of COVID-19 Vaccines With Other Vaccines

[Monoclonal antibody \(mAb\) treatment](#) is a resource for patients that have recently tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with a person with known or suspected COVID-19. There are many facilities offering monoclonal antibody treatment in Maryland and these locations are updated on the [mAb FAQs page here](#).

MDH wants to encourage providers to refer all eligible patients for monoclonal antibody treatment.

Healthcare providers can review the [provider toolkit](#) and browse [provider resources](#) (under "Information about Monoclonal Antibodies") for items such as [mAb eligibility checklist](#) and the treatment referral form. Additional information can be found on the MDH website [here](#).

COVID-19 Updates & Resources cont.

Did you know?

- **Pregnant people are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.** Compared to non-pregnant people with COVID-19, pregnant people with COVID-19 are at higher risk of developing respiratory complications, being admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU), requiring life support measures (e.g., mechanical ventilation), or having a preterm birth.
- **COVID-19 vaccines are safe and were rigorously tested** before being authorized by the Federal and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in the U.S. Hundreds of millions of people of all ages and races across the world, including those with underlying illnesses, have safely received COVID-19 vaccines. Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is fully FDA approved for ages 16 and up.
- **COVID-19 vaccines do not carry a live COVID virus, so you can't get COVID-19 from them.**
- **You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection.** Side effects reported include injection site pain and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, and fever. These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects.
- **Pregnant or recently pregnant people can receive any FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine.** All of the FDA-authorized vaccines are effective and help prevent severe disease, hospitalizations, and death. Of note, all women younger than 50 years old—regardless of whether they are pregnant or recently pregnant—should be aware of the rare but increased risk for thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) with the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. TTS is a rare condition that involves blood clots with low platelets.

¹ References: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology
² <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19>

Frequently Asked Questions



Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant?

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends that all pregnant people be vaccinated against COVID-19.² Pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 and those with COVID-19 are possibly at increased risk of preterm birth. There is growing evidence that supports the use of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy as it can protect you and your baby.



What if I want to get pregnant?

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems. If you are trying to become pregnant, you do not need to avoid pregnancy after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. There is also no recommendation for routine pregnancy testing before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.



What if I'm breastfeeding?

COVID-19 vaccination of the mother does not pose a risk to their breastfeeding infants. FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines cannot cause infection in either the mother or the infant. Therefore, lactating people can receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Research shows that vaccinated people who breastfeed can pass COVID-19 protection to their babies.

COVID-19 Vaccine Fast Facts for Pregnant and Breastfeeding People¹

Anyone who is pregnant or breastfeeding should consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Everyone 12 years of age and older is now eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination. Read the facts here and talk with your healthcare provider if you have questions.

GoVAX
Let's end COVID, Maryland.



covidlink.maryland.gov



1-855-MDGOVAX (1-855-634-6829)
from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week

Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

CDC Recommends COVID-19 Vaccine for Pregnant Individuals

On 9/29, the CDC issued an urgent health advisory that strongly recommends the COVID-19 vaccine prior to pregnancy or during pregnancy. At this time, only 34.6% of pregnant individuals are vaccinated against COVID-19. As of late October, there have been over 134,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among pregnant individuals. COVID-19 poses an increased risk for this population, including a higher risk of hospitalization, death, and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

For these reasons, the CDC highly encourages practices and providers to encourage and educate pregnant individuals on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine and the safety of the vaccine in relation to their pregnancy. Additional information on COVID-19 vaccines and pregnant individuals can be found here.

MDPCP Updates & Resources

Important Policy Changes for PY2022

CMS recently announced the following policy changes to MDPCP effective in Performance Year (PY) 2022. A high-level summary of these changes is provided below for your convenience. Participants may direct questions to the MarylandModel@cms.hhs.gov help desk.

1. Care Management Fee (CMF) – HCC Override Update

- CMS will be changing the “HCC override policy”, which previously automatically assigned beneficiaries with diagnoses of substance use disorder (SUD), severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI), and dementia to the complex risk tier regardless of the beneficiary HCC score.
- Because the updated HCC model (version 24) now includes SUD and SPMI, these two diagnoses will be eliminated from the HCC override policy beginning in 2022. Dementia will continue to be included.

2. New Health Equity Advancement Resource and Transformation (HEART) Payment within CMF

- This new payment stream within the CMF will provide additional support to MDPCP participants serving socioeconomically disadvantaged populations and promote the state’s and CMS’ goal to improve health equity.
- The new HEART payment will be based on the Area Deprivation Index (ADI) of attributed beneficiaries will be protected funds within the CMF and thus will not be tied to performance and not at risk of recoupment through the PBIP.
- Practices and CTOs will be required to use these funds to pay for services that address social determinants of health for underserved populations, and report on their use of these funds.

3. Total Per Capita Cost (TPCC) Measure for Track 2 Practices

- This measure will apply to Track 2 practices only, and comprise 25% of PBIP. The utilization component will be reduced to 25%, and the eCQM and CAHPS components will remain at 50%.

4. Loss of Advanced Alternative Payment Model (AAPM) status for PY 2022

- In 2022, MDPCP providers will not be eligible:
 - To achieve qualifying APM participant (QP) status through MDPCP, and
 - For the 5% bonus for QPs, if QP status was attained through MDPCP in previous PYs.
- AAPM status for 2021 (and previous PYs) is not impacted.
- CMMI and MDH will be meeting over the coming months to discuss how MDPCP can regain AAPM status for PY 2023.

5. Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Participation in Track 2

- FQHCs will have the option to participate at Track 2 practices for the first time in 2022. Track 2 requirements and expectations will be the same for FQHCs and standard practices.

MDPCP Updates & Resources

MDPCP continues to partner with Mosaic Group

In the past year, Maryland has seen a 21.3% increase in overdose deaths. MDPCP continues to partner with Mosaic Group to address this public health crisis that is impacting our communities. Over the course of the next year, Mosaic Group is available to help practices in three ways:

1. Work with practices to integrate SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) if you have not done so already.
2. Improve performance in practices that have implemented SBIRT and are working to meet target goals
3. Assist all practices that have implemented SBIRT to report in CRISP on the great work you are doing.

Please expect to be contacted by the PMO leaders, your MDPCP coaches, and Mosaic Group to discuss how your practice can best engage with this continued partnership. Thank you for all your hard work on saving the lives of our fellow Marylanders.

***New Evaluation of the MDPCP**

Report Now Available

A new Evaluation of the Maryland Primary Care Program, Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR), is now available! The report analyzes the effectiveness of the MDPCP and confirms cumulative cost savings and reduced utilization generated by the first two years of the program. Click [here](#) to read the full report.

***New PY2021 MDPCP Quarter 3 FAQs**

The PY2021 MDPCP Quarter 3 FAQs are now available. You can find the document [here](#). (CMMI Connect login required.)



***New Health Equity by Demographics Report**

Explore the new Health Equity by Demographics Report in [CRISP Reporting Services](#). This report allows you to break down core utilization and cost measures by age, race, gender, county, region, and dual status, bringing to light any disparities for your practice to take action on.

***New Provider Survey on MCO**

Payments - Your Input Needed!

As you may know, the Maryland Department of Health is developing a value-based payment program directed to primary providers that participate with HealthChoice. The goal is to create a unified program that will be consistent for all MCOs, and so the Department is eager to hear from providers. We are asking for your feedback on [this brief survey](#), which shouldn't take more than five minutes to complete. MDH will review your answers, and will not share them with MCOs.

***New CRISP Report Updates**

- Practice ID to the Practice selection filter
- ADI column to the Likelihood of Avoidable Admission Report
- Date of birth added to PQI-Like Events Report and Drill-through diagnosis details
- Deceased indicator to Beneficiary details
- [Recording](#) for eCQM webinar
- [User Guide](#) for eCQMs on Connect

***New Prediabetes Screening and Referrals Survey**

The Maryland Department of Health is conducting a survey of MDPCP practices to better understand prediabetes screening and referral processes and training needs for chronic disease prevention and management. This survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete and will help guide chronic disease initiatives across the state. Please complete the survey using the link below, and share the link with other colleagues in your practice as well!

You can access the survey [here](#).

If you have any questions or concerns as you are completing the survey, please contact Emily Tolbert, Evaluation Lead, at Emily.Tolbert@maryland.gov. Thank you kindly for your time.

Upcoming Events

[Saturday, November 20](#) (8:00 am)
3rd Annual Rural Health Clinical Congress

[Tuesday, December 7](#) (12-1 pm)
Quarterly CRISP Open Office Hour (Google Meet)

[Tuesday, December 14](#) (12-1 pm)
Quarterly Care Manager Affinity Group (Google Meet)



***New 3rd Annual Rural Health Clinical Congress**

The [3rd Annual Rural Health Clinical Congress](#), a free virtual live CME/CE conference, is less than a month away! This unique educational event is designed specifically for clinicians serving patients in rural and underserved communities. It will be held on Saturday, November 20, 2021, in conjunction with NOSORH's National Rural Health Day. Clinicians can earn up to 6.0 complimentary CME/CE/MOC credits by participating.



Quick COVID-19 Primary Care Survey