

Advocacy News Summary

As the number of coronavirus cases in the United States continues to grow at a rapid pace, both Congress and the Trump Administration are working to address the crisis from a variety of different angles. ASE's lobbyists have summarized the news from the past week in this [document](#).

Advocacy Efforts

ASE is working to support our members regarding getting needed COVID-19 resources. We have reached out to Congress, through our lobbyists, to specifically ask for funding and support for personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies to ensure that sonographers and patients are safe (examples include: gloves, masks, fluid shields, disinfectant, protective clothing supplies like gowns), as we understand labs are running out across the country. Additionally, we have asked for more respirators and point of care devices, especially with AI guidance; assuring that hospitals have rapid testing for COVID19 in their labs so we can determine which patients can have a TEE without exposing staff; ensuring healthcare providers are tested and protected by the law; asking them to grant emergency licensure to mobilize HCPs from other states; easing the payment structure so that patients who go to satellite sites for echo studies can avoid hospitals and allow for more than one echo per patient per year to be reimbursed to prevent more financial strain to hospitals and labs; and lastly, to support paid sick leave, to assure no loss of earned time for healthcare workers who get sick or are forced into quarantine. ASE is also working through other coalitions and alliances to ensure that PPE is the number one ask. **Feel free to support these messages with your own Congressional representatives in your state.**

Changes in Coding

This week, U.S. administration announced the expansion of **Medicare telehealth coverage** to enable beneficiaries to receive a wider range of healthcare services from their doctors without having to travel to a healthcare facility. Beginning on March 6, 2020, Medicare-administered by the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)-will temporarily pay clinicians to provide telehealth services for beneficiaries residing across the entire country. [Click here](#) for more details.

Additionally CMS has created two new COVID-19 specific codes:

New CPT Coding to report COVID-19 testing

AMA has created a new category I Pathology and Laboratory code (87635) for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-2-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) accepted at the March 2020 CPT Editorial Panel meeting. This code is effective March 13, 2020 and will be published in the CY2021 AMA CPT Guide.

Descriptor - 87635 - Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), amplified probe technique.

Source: <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-03/coronavirus-long-descriptors.pdf>

New ICD-10 Code to report suspected COVID-19

An emergency ICD-10 code of U07.1 - 2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease

- For suspected COVID-19, not confirmed or ruled out at the encounter, report codes for the presenting signs and symptoms.
- Do not report a code for coronavirus when this diagnosis is not stated in the medical record
- Possible associated diagnosis codes:

- J12.89: Other viral pneumonia
- B97.29: Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere Z20.828: Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable disease
- Z03.818: Encounter for observation for suspected exposure to other biological agents ruled out

Source - <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/Announcement-New-ICD-code-for-coronavirus-2-20-2020.pdf>

CMS Announces Relief for Clinicians, Providers, Hospitals, and Facilities Participating in Quality Reporting Programs in Response to COVID-19

This weekend the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced **unprecedented relief** for the clinicians, providers, and facilities participating in Medicare quality reporting programs including the 1.2 million clinicians in the Quality Payment Program and on the front lines of America's fight against the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Invitation - 3/24 CMS Call: Lessons from The Front Lines: COVID-19: Today, March 24

Recognizing that innovation is taking place around the nation at the local level, this call series will be a regular forum for providers around the country to share best practices with one another as we address COVID-19 as a nation. The first call will take place on **today, March 24, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM EST**, and topics of discussion include: **Telehealth, Patient Triage, and Workforce Challenges**. CMS invites you to join this call to share your ideas, strategies, and insights with one another.

Participant Dial-In: (866) 501-5502
Conference ID: 4647687

Additional Resources

In an effort to provide important COVID-19-related information to our members, we have created a publicly available **COVID-19 Resource** web page with useful links including governmental updates, transportation alerts, and online educational resources. In addition we have created a **community** to share information on Connect@ASE where members are sharing important procedural information that may be of interest to you. We encourage you to join this group to stay up-to-date.

Also, last week ASE hosted a **FREE Webinar on COVID-19 Preparedness for Echo Labs**. This can be downloaded and will include a Q&A document created from the questions on the call.

For more information, contact Irene Butler, Vice President of Health Policy and Member Services, at IButler@ASEcho.org.

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