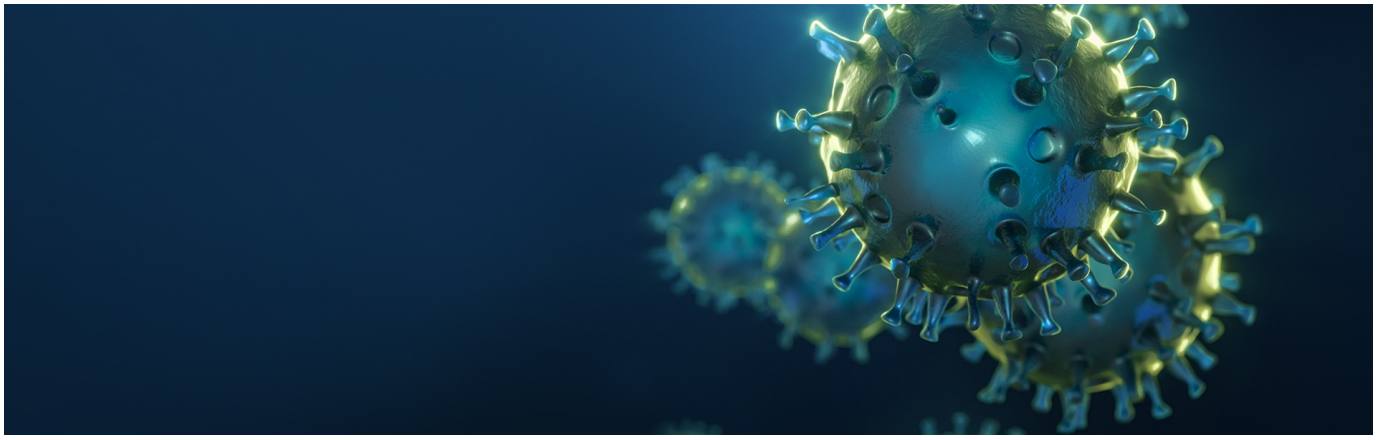
COVID-19 Update: Eased Medicaid Restrictions, N95 Sterilization, Distillery-Made Hand Sanitizer, Food Trucks at Rest Areas, New Data Reporting

April 10, 2020



(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and Dr. Amy Acton, MD, MPH, provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MEDICAID:

Governor DeWine announced that Medicaid, the managed care plans, and MyCare Ohio plans have come together to remove barriers for members receiving Medicaid benefits during this crisis.

"These groups have collaborated to maintain the health of individuals to keep them out of the hospital and reduce undue strain on our healthcare system," said Governor DeWine. "They are trying to reduce the administrative requirements of physicians and others in order to give them more flexibility so that they can focus on safe patient care."

Medicaid has eased several pharmacy benefit restrictions.

- Prior authorizations will be by-passed for new prescriptions.
- Members will receive pharmacy benefits regardless of in-network or out-of-network provider status.
- The threshold for refills on certain prescriptions will be relaxed.
- Pharmacists who dispense emergency refills without a prescription will be reimbursed.
- Pharmacies that dispense over-the-counter medications without a prescription will be reimbursed.
- Member co-pays will be waived for all prescriptions.
- 90-day supplies on maintenance medications will be authorized.

The managed care plans have already lifted prior authorizations for all but a few services. This took effect on March 27. Physicians and other providers, without prior authorization by a managed care plan, are using clinical judgment to determine if something is a medical necessity.

More details will be available on coronavirus.ohio.gov or by calling the COVID-19 Call Center at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

NEW COMPANY STERILIZING N95 MASKS:

Lt. Governor Jon Husted announced that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has granted STERIS Healthcare in Mentor a temporary Emergency Use Authorization for decontaminating compatible N95 and N95-equivalent respirators.

More information is available at steris.com/covid-19.

DISTILLERY-MADE HAND SANITIZER:

Many Ohio distilleries have stepped up and are now are producing large quantities of hand sanitizer. JobsOhio has purchased more than 3,100 cases (more than 1 million ounces) of distillery-made sanitizer. JobsOhio will donate the hand sanitizer to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks.

Shipments of the hand sanitizer are arriving at distribution centers this week and will be delivered to Ohio's 12 Food Banks next week and over the coming months as they need it.

FOOD TRUCKS AT REST AREAS:

Governor DeWine announced a new permit from the Ohio Department of Transportation will allow food vendors to sell food to truck drivers and other essential personnel who stop at any of the state's 86 rest areas.

The permit is of no cost to the vendor and can be found on ODOT's website at www.transportation.ohio.gov

Vendors must display it at all times while operating, and must abide by state and local food service regulations, as well as social distancing guidelines. The Ohio State Highway Patrol will regularly monitor rest areas to enforce compliance with all Ohio laws and regulations.

This is in addition to the regular vending machine service that is provided by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.

NEW CASE SURVEILLANCE DATA:

As Ohio reports data moving forward, there will be new data categories for total COVID-19 cases and total COVID-19 fatalities:

- Confirmed Cases and Confirmed Deaths: Data calculated through laboratory tests. This data is consistent with Ohio's previous data reporting.
- CDC Expanded Case Definition and CDC Expanded Death Definition: Data that follows updated CDC criteria and includes those who have tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies, those who've been diagnosed with COVID-19 without a laboratory test, and those who death certificates list COVID-19 as the cause of death without a laboratory test.
- Ohio will also report the combined total numbers of cases and the combined total number of deaths.

"This new guidance enables us to better track who has the virus currently and those who have had virus, are recovered, and are no longer a threat in passing it along to others," said Governor DeWine. "Using this guidance will be instrumental in helping us trace the spread of the disease and eventually isolate it to smaller pockets or areas, so we can open things back up again. At the same time, it will allow us to target limited resources for a better public heath response."

All of Ohio's COVID-19 data can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language closed captioning, can be viewed on the Ohio Channel's YouTube page.

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH

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