

Health Law Vitals - COVID-19 Edition - March 2020

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PRACTICES Healthcare and Life Sciences, Telehealth

Feature Article

Regulators Expand Opportunities for Telehealth Services Under COVID-19 Shadow

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As the COVID-19 pandemic surges and the social distancing imperative continues, regulators have responded with various guidelines and policies that impact and expand the opportunities for telehealth services. Telehealth, telemedicine, and related terms generally refer to the exchange of medical information from one site to another through electronic communication to improve a patient's health. With COVID-19, there is an urgency to expand the use of technology for routine care and to keep vulnerable patients and patients with mild symptoms in their homes while maintaining access to the care they need. [Read full article here.](#)

Quick Shots

HIPAA Guidance During COVID-19. Amidst continuing COVID-19 concerns, regulators issued certain waivers of HIPAA requirements and penalties as well as additional guidance applicable during this public health emergency. [Read the full article here.](#)

Section 1135 Waivers Provide Some Regulatory Flexibility for Healthcare Providers. On March 13, 2020, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services ("Secretary") authorized waivers and modifications under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, retroactive to March 1, 2020. This authorization followed the Secretary's declaration of a public health emergency in the entire United States on January 31, 2020. These Section 1135 waivers waive certain statutory requirements of the Social Security Act for healthcare providers during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Several 1135 waivers have been issued so far. [Read the full article here.](#)

CMS Issues Guidance for Healthcare Providers Grappling with COVID-19. As COVID-19 continues to spread, CMS has issued guidance to various healthcare providers, including, among others, home health agencies, nursing homes, and hospitals that are caring for the nation's most at-risk patient populations. The guidance is intended to curb transmission and ensure healthcare providers have the information and resources necessary to respond to patient needs. [Read the full article here.](#)

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