



## Alert: Information on HHS' \$50 Billion General Distribution Fund

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### Update

HHS is now dispersing a second \$20 billion round of funds to physicians and other providers. As with the last tranche of payments, these funds are referred to by HHS as “general distribution” funds since they are being distributed broadly rather than on a targeted basis. Please note that unlike the first \$30 billion round of general distribution funding, many physicians will not receive this next round of payments automatically and will have to submit additional data to HHS to receive these funds.

A portion of providers were automatically sent an advance payment on April 24 based on the revenue data they submit in CMS cost reports. Eligible Medicare providers for whom HHS did not have adequate cost report data on file will need to submit their revenue information to the [General Distribution Portal](#) to be able to receive additional general distribution funds and agree to the [Terms and Conditions](#) for this additional distribution. Providers who received their additional funds automatically will still need to submit their revenue information so that it can be verified via the portal.

[Click here for more information](#), including FAQs, eligibility information, and to access the General Distribution Portal.

### *Original Article:*

On April 10, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that it has begun making \$30 billion in emergency payments to Medicare providers to offer financial relief during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All Florida physicians who received Medicare fee-for-service payments in 2019 are eligible.

**HHS notes that these are payments to healthcare providers, not loans, and will not need to be repaid. The approximate value of the payments is equal to 6.2 percent of the provider's Medicare FFS payments in 2019, as calculated using the formula provided by HHS.**

The automatic payments will come to providers via Optum Bank with “HHSPAYMENT” as the payment description. Many physicians have reported that these funds are already available in



their accounts. Providers who normally receive paper checks for reimbursement from CMS will receive paper checks in the mail for this payment as well within the next few weeks.

Within 30 days of receiving the payment, providers must sign an attestation confirming receipt of the funds and agreeing to the terms and conditions of payment. The portal for signing the attestation will be open the week of April 13, 2020, and will be [linked on the HHS website](#). HHS' payment of this initial tranche of funds is conditioned on the healthcare provider's acceptance of the terms and conditions set forth by HHS, and acceptance must occur within 30 days of receipt of payment. These terms and conditions include limitations on surprise medical billing for treatment related to COVID-19.

The full details of this announcement and the full terms and conditions of the funding [are available here](#).

The FMA has strongly advocated for making additional funds available to physicians during the COVID-19 pandemic. We recently joined the AMA and more than 100 other medical societies in [sending a letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar](#) requesting that money from the \$100 billion Public Health and Social Services Emergency fund created under the CARES Act be used for this very purpose. While this initial tranche of funding represents a step in the right direction, we believe that more relief is urgently needed. Additionally, we are concerned about the limitations on surprise medical billing included in this relief and are seeking more guidance and input from our partners in medicine about the details of this provision. Nevertheless, we hope that these funds will help physicians across Florida who are struggling in this time of crisis. Stay tuned for more information.

