

Subject: COVID-19: Testing resources, employment assistance and rural health

Preheader: The AAFP is here to support you as you serve your patients and community

Dear colleagues,

We have entered another week of fighting this pandemic. As cities and states reopen and ease restrictions, we face many of the same challenges along with some new ones. At the AAFP, we continue to advocate and provide resources to help you support your patients and community.

Testing Resources

Testing continues to be a hot topic – especially as communities begin to reopen. From access to tests to special equipment that may be needed, we know you may have a lot of questions. This week, the AAFP introduced new resources (with one more on the way) that we hope you'll find helpful.

- We established a section on our COVID-19 site dedicated to testing (LINK TO: www.aafp.org/testing). With the information on testing options and availability changing rapidly, this page will contain the latest information you need to know.
- This week, we released a self-study package that highlights the fundamentals of testing and how to implement testing in your practice. Visit the CME section of our COVID-19 site (https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19_cme.html#package) for more information.
- Finally, the May 22 COVID-19 webinar will focus on what you need to know about testing. Keep an eye on the AAFP's Facebook page (LINK TO: <https://www.facebook.com/familymed>) or the CME section of the COVID-19 site for details.

Financial Relief and Practice Management

- **EIDLs:** Last week, the Small Business Administration (SBA) announced that all new applications for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) must be to provide relief specifically for U.S. agricultural businesses. If you submitted an EIDL application before May 4, your application will continue to be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. However, family physicians are unfortunately no longer able to apply for this funding. The AAFP continues to advocate for the federal government to do more to support primary care. Additionally, visit the financial relief section of our COVID-19 site [LINK TO: <https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/financial-relief.html>] to determine if you are eligible for other funding.
- **Audio-only E/M visit payment:** I want to share some good news on the payment front that is a direct result of the AAFP's advocacy efforts. Recently, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced an increase in the payment rate for audio-only telephone evaluation and management (E/M) visits. This is retroactive back to March 1, 2020. The new rates align with in-person E/M office visit rates, which now range from \$46-\$110. Check out the telehealth section of our COVID-19 site (LINK TO: <https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/telehealth.html#6>) for details.
- **Employed physician contract changes:** As the U.S. sees a record number of health care jobs being lost, employed physicians may be faced with changes to their employment contracts, reduced hours, furloughs or termination. To help employed physicians navigate changes to their employment situation, the AAFP has developed an employment assistance guide (LINK TO: <https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/Covid-19-practice-management/employment-issues.html>).

I will close with a couple of quick reminders:

- **Make your voice heard:** As the federal government considers additional legislation, it is critical that Congress hears from you about the importance of family medicine and the need for support. With our [Speak Out tool](https://www.aafp.org/content/aafp/advocacy/involved/toolkit/advocacy-resources/speak-out.mem.html) [LINK TO: <https://www.aafp.org/content/aafp/advocacy/involved/toolkit/advocacy-resources/speak-out.mem.html>], you can easily contact your members of Congress to let them know the impact COVID-19 is having on your practice and that much more must be done to support family physicians.
- **COVID-19 site:** Don't forget to visit [the AAFP's COVID-19 site](https://www.aafp.org/covid19) [LINK TO <https://www.aafp.org/covid19>] every day as we regularly add new resources, tools and advocacy information.
- **Rural health learning opportunities**
 - **Town Hall:** At last night's virtual Town Hall, our guest was Beverly Jordan, MD, FAAFP. She discussed the varied practice challenges rural, independent family physicians face during the COVID-19 pandemic and how her rural practice is addressing personal protective equipment, testing, staffing, reopening and more. If you missed it, be sure to check out the replay on our [COVID-19 communications page](https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19-member-communications.html) [LINK TO <https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19-member-communications.html>]. As a reminder, the weekly virtual Town Hall is available for one [live](https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19_cme.html) [LINK TO: https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19_cme.html] or [enduring](https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19-member-communications.html) [LINK TO <https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19-member-communications.html>] CME credit each week, so be sure to evaluate the session and claim your credit.
 - **Rural health livestream:** Today was the first day of the AAFP's Rural Health Livestream course designed specifically for the needs of physicians working in rural communities. If you are interested in rural health or comprehensive CME, there are still four half-day sessions left – you can sign up for any number of them. For more information, visit the [event page](https://www.aafp.org/cme/cme-topic/all/rural-health-live/livestream.html) (LINK TO: <https://www.aafp.org/cme/cme-topic/all/rural-health-live/livestream.html>). If you'd like to register for any or all of the sessions, contact the AAFP Member Resource Center at (800) 274-2237.
 - **Webinar series:** Our Friday evening COVID-19 webinar series is a one-hour, live, online CME session that provides you with an opportunity for real-time interaction with physician experts and offers a chance to ask questions. This week's topic is *Managing COVID-19 With Limited Resources: A Rural Family Physician's Experience*, so join us tomorrow, May 15, at 7 p.m. CDT. Visit the [COVID-19 CME page](https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19_cme.html) [LINK TO: https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus/COVID-19_cme.html] for more details.

You are all making a tremendous difference for our country. Stay strong, brave and awesome!

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