

## **Society COVID-19 Action Update**

***WMS Medigram***

***April 2, 2020***

The Wisconsin Medical Society (Society) continues to advocate for physician and patient needs during this pandemic as Wisconsin's physicians continue to provide high-quality care while putting themselves at risk. The Society's efforts over the last week have produced tangible results in the fight against COVID-19.

### **Creation of temporary licenses**

Governor Evers [issued an order](#) on March 27 easing regulations for retired physicians to return to the workforce and allowing physicians to work across state lines on a temporary basis. The Society worked with the Evers Administration to create these temporary licenses which are tied to the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration.

The Society reached out to retired physicians to identify who would be interested in helping during this crisis. We appreciate all the responses and interest we have received already from retired physicians. If you are a retired physician who is interested in helping during the crisis, please complete this [short form](#).

### **Medical Malpractice guidance**

In conjunction with Governor Evers's order, the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) [issued guidance](#) directing medical malpractice insurers to treat telehealth services the same as if those services were provided in person. In addition, OCI is directing malpractice insurers to work with providers with temporary licenses created under the Governor's order to obtain coverage. This guidance was directly influenced by the Society's actions and engagement.

### **Telehealth Expansion**

In that same order Governor Evers temporarily eased telemedicine guidelines in general and allowed physicians to work across state lines with a temporary license. The order also directed OCI to facilitate coverage outside of traditional settings and to work with insurers on ways to minimize barriers to telehealth. This order was created with Society collaboration.

Both the [Department of Health Services](#) and the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) have announced new guidelines for telehealth. This includes coverage and reimbursement parity, establishing new patient relationships, in-home consultations and telephone-only services among many other policy expansions.

### **State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC)**

Society CEO Bud Chumbley, MD, has been in contact with the SEOC on a number of issues and will be joining its Sector Support Task Force. This will provide the Society and the state's physicians with an active voice in how the emergency actions of the state are handled.

### **Safe Harbor for COVID-19**

The Society will be working with all relevant stakeholders to create a liability safe harbor for physicians providing care during the COVID-19 crisis. Discussions are ongoing and details will follow.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Governor [announced Tuesday](#) that Wisconsin will be receiving its second shipment of PPE from the national stockpile. The Society has been working with the Evers Administration to stress the continued need for PPE and supports all efforts to increase both access and supply.

If you have questions about how to access the stockpile, please contact your local county emergency management coordinator. Additional information can be found [here](#).

Please contact [HJ Waukau](#) with additional questions.