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Important !!HHS announces plan for \$4 billion in COVID-19 payments

1 message

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HomeTown Health CEO's and Senior Staff:

Reference: **HHS announces plan for \$4 billion in COVID-19 payments**

HHS announces plan for \$4 billion in COVID-19 payments

July 10, 2020 – 4:13 p.m. By Sandhya Raman, CQ

The Trump administration announced on Friday how \$4 billion from COVID-19 aid legislation enacted this spring will be distributed to hospitals that serve different vulnerable populations, as well as how funding would be opened to dentists.

The Health and Human Services Department said it would provide \$3 billion to hospitals that serve a large percentage of vulnerable populations. An additional \$1 billion would be allocated to specialty rural hospitals, hospitals that serve small metro areas, and urban hospitals that serve rural Medicare populations.

A senior HHS official estimated payments would likely range from \$100,000 to \$4.5 million for rural providers to between \$100,000 to \$2 million for other providers.

“We’ve been distributing the Provider Relief Funds as quickly as possible to those providers who have been hardest hit by the pandemic,” Health and Human Services Secretary Alex

Azar said in a statement. “Close work with stakeholders informed how we targeted this new round of funds to hard-hit safety-net and rural providers.”

Congress has appropriated \$175 billion in health care provider relief funds through two COVID-19 laws ([PL 116-136](#), [PL 116-139](#)).

A senior HHS official confirmed that of the \$115 billion of relief funds that have been committed, about \$61 billion has been delivered and attested to. But the official cautioned that since providers have 90 days to attest to terms and conditions, the amount of distributed funding is likely much higher.

The official also said HHS has made payments of approximately \$340 million for claims related to testing and treatment from the uncompensated care fund, which is less than HHS had expected to distribute.

HHS is encouraging hospitals and clinics to make use of this opportunity to receive funding for uncompensated care.

Dentists who have not yet received provider funding are now also eligible for funding, but HHS does not have a fixed amount set aside specifically for them.

The senior HHS official said dentists have the same opportunity to apply for funds as other providers, but if all dentists in the market eligible for funding apply it could amount to \$3 billion.

HHS also announced it is working on a new wave of distributions that will be open to a broader group of providers, including behavioral health providers.

Behavioral health care advocates have criticized recent funding distributions for disqualifying certain types of providers. The future round is expected to address some of these concerns, such as providers that do not serve Medicare or Medicaid patients.

The next round of distributions will also focus on hotspot locations affected by COVID-19.

Last month, [HHS announced](#) plans to allocate \$10 billion in provider relief payments to safety net hospitals as well as \$15 billion to providers that participate in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program and have not received payments from the provider relief fund.

Thanks,

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