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Trump Administration Launches New Toolkit to Help States Navigate COVID-19 Health Workforce Challenges

At President Trump’s direction, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR) released a new toolkit to help state and local healthcare decision makers maximize workforce flexibilities when confronting 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in their communities. This toolkit includes a full suite of available resources to maximize responsiveness based on state and local needs, building on President Trump’s commitment to a COVID-19 response that is locally executed, state managed, and federally supported. This work was developed by the Healthcare Resilience Task Force as part of the unified government’s response to COVID-19.

“The Administration has taken swift and unprecedented emergency action to lift regulatory constraints, ease federal rules and approve waivers that help local hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities boost their frontline medical staffs and increase their ability to care of patients in the face of crisis. This new resource will help states apply all of these important changes on the ground in order to maximize their workforce to ensure care for patients,” said CMS Administrator Seema Verma.

In response to this pandemic, the Trump Administration has provided sweeping flexibility to the U.S. healthcare system. To bolster the healthcare workforce, barriers for hiring and retaining of physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals to keep staffing levels high have been removed. Medical practitioners are now able to practice at the top of their license and across state lines, offering more flexibility for rural providers and expanding the available workforce. CMS has also allowed additional healthcare providers to enroll in Medicare temporarily to provide care during the public health emergency. Finally, an unprecedented expansion of telehealth services covered by Medicare, allows patients to have doctor’s visits at home, no matter where they live, to reduce potential exposure to the virus.

The COVID-19 Healthcare Workforce Toolkit builds on the steps CMS has taken to ensure healthcare facilities across the nation are fully staffed and equipped to treat COVID-19 patients as efficiently as possible. This comprehensive toolkit for individuals managing workforces during the COVID-19 pandemic provides helpful information on funding flexibilities, liability protections, and workforce training all in one place. For example, state and local communities will be able to access the COVID-19 Healthcare Workforce Toolkit to see how and where workforce waivers can be applied based on information from other areas.

The COVID-19 Healthcare Workforce Toolkit also provides up-to-date best practices so that state and local healthcare decision makers have a go-to resource to know what's been implemented in the field and to find out how it's working. The toolkit is available online and includes an assistance center, information exchange of case studies and additional peer-to-peer communications that can be used to help local communities determine the best way to battle the COVID-19 based on their unique needs.

The Healthcare Workforce Toolkit is housed on the ASPR Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE). ASPR TRACIE is a healthcare emergency preparedness information gateway that ensures all stakeholders—at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government levels; in nongovernmental organizations; and in the private sector—have access to information and resources to improve preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts. The platform helps to fill gaps in healthcare system preparedness by providing timely, innovative ways to share information and promising practices during planning efforts.

To view the COVID-19 Healthcare Workforce Toolkit, visit:

<https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/Workforce-Virtual-Toolkit>

The COVID-19 Healthcare Workforce Toolkit are part of the ongoing White House Coronavirus Task Force efforts. To keep up with the important work the Task Force is doing in response to COVID-19, visit www.coronavirus.gov. For a complete and updated list of CMS actions, and other information specific to CMS, please visit the [Current Emergencies Website](#).