To assist stakeholders with the COVID-19 outbreak, Health Law Daily is compiling coverage and resources in this recurring tracker.

**Emergency preparedness testing requirements.** CMS has issued guidance for surveyors, providers, and suppliers, on meeting the emergency preparedness testing requirements in light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), including information on an exemption for one of the exercise requirements. The guidance also provides detailed scenarios that outline the exact emergency preparedness exercise that may be exempted based on the previous test done by a facility (see [Exemption available for emergency preparedness plan requirement](https://www.healthlawdaily.com), September 29, 2020).

**Health care subsidies.** The CBO together with the JCT has issued a report to Congress that estimates the number of Americans under the age of 65 who will be receiving some form of federal healthcare subsidy over the next ten years, along with projections as to cost, type of subsidy program, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on job loss and the resultant loss of employment-based medical insurance coverage. The report also offers statistics on private health insurance spending per enrollee over the next ten years and private health insurance premium increases (see [Net federal subsidies for health care estimated to total $10.8 trillion over the next decade](https://www.healthlawdaily.com), September 30, 2020).

**Provider payments.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many elective services were cancelled and non-emergent services were postponed across the country. The reduction in service utilization is problematic because the beneficiaries may experience adverse health effects related to the foregone services and the associated reduction in payments may have lasting financial consequences for providers. The severity of both problems depends on the magnitude of the service reduction, how long it lasts and how rapidly services recover to expected levels. The HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) addressed COVID-19 related changes in beneficiary service utilization and provider payments for the first 6 months of 2020 with early data available to date (see [Medicare utilization, provider payments rising due to COVID-19 after spring drop](https://www.healthlawdaily.com), October 1, 2020).