

February 5, 2016

Important Health Advisory from the New York State Department of Health Regarding the Zika Virus

New York State Department of Health Commissioner Howard Zucker, MD, JD, held a webinar for all clinicians and healthcare providers in New York State Tuesday on Zika virus. This advisory highlights some of the key information from the webinar, [which is available online here](#). The Department also activated an information line for providers and patients, who can call **1-888-364-4723 between 9 AM and 6 PM weekdays**.

The Department's Wadsworth Center Laboratories will provide Zika virus testing for **all** individuals who recently traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission and care currently symptomatic. This is in addition to offering testing to pregnant women who are or were symptomatic and traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission at any point during pregnancy.

- The Wadsworth Center is one of only three state laboratories in the nation with the ability to conduct the advanced testing needed to confirm Zika virus infection. Wadsworth will offer molecular tests which detect the presence of the virus, as well as both screening and confirmatory tests for antibodies against Zika and other related viruses. **Complete results can take up to 21 days after initiation of testing at Wadsworth.**
- Hospitals and providers must contact their LHD (Local Health Department) prior to sending samples to Wadsworth. Upon learning of a request for Zika virus testing, LHDs should contact their regional epidemiologist.
- A minimum of **three** ml of serum and **three** ml of urine should be frozen at -80°C and shipped on **dry ice** to the Wadsworth Center, David Axelrod Institute, 120 New Scotland Avenue, Albany, NY 12208. Wadsworth's Infectious Diseases Requisition form, which is available [here](#), must be completed before submission.
- Results of Zika virus testing will be made available to LHDs and the ordering provider. Providers can access public health consultation for assistance with interpretation of results by calling **1-888-364-4723 between 9AM and 6PM weekdays**.

Women who have traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission **should wait a minimum of 21 days after returning before trying to become pregnant**. Twenty-one days allows for an incubation period of 3-12 days plus approximately 7 days for virus to clear the body.

To date, Zika virus has been diagnosed in 10 New York State residents, each of whom was a returning traveler. No cases of local transmission have occurred in the state.

Zika virus is primarily transmitted by certain species of infected *Aedes* mosquitoes. *Aedes aegypti*, the more efficient vector for humans, is not found in the State. However, *Aedes albopictus*, sometimes called the Asian tiger mosquito, is a possible vector.

- *Aedes albopictus* has been found in Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, and Orange Counties as well as in New York City.
- NYSDOH will be enhancing mosquito surveillance activities as the weather warms up and continue these efforts throughout the summer. Enhanced activities will include but not be limited to:
 - Additional trapping in Putnam, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster, and Dutchess counties to determine whether *Aedes albopictus* has spread farther north.

- Testing *Aedes albopictus* for Zika virus when they're collected during routine mosquito surveillance.

Hospitals and providers must report suspected cases of Zika virus and all other arboviral diseases to the LHD where the patient resides. Providers who cannot reach their LHD can access 24/7/365 public health consultation from NYSDOH at **518-473-4439** during business hours and **866-881-2809** evenings, weekends, and holidays.

If you have any questions, please contact your LHD or the NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at bcdc@health.ny.gov.

Practice Management

E-Prescribing Implementation is Nearly Upon Us!

The final date for implementation of E-Prescribing for both controlled and non-controlled substances is **March 27, 2016**.
Is your practice prepared?



If not, NYACP has a wealth of resources to assist you in your implementation efforts.

- **The NYACP E-Prescribing Page:** [This page contains information](#) on signing up for the Health Commerce System, Prescription Monitoring Program, and other useful information pertaining to the implementation of E-Prescribing.
- **Vendor List:** Courtesy of Surescripts, [find out what vendors are available to suit your E-Prescribing needs!](#)
- **Frequently Asked Questions:** [From the NYS DOH, there is a handy guide of frequently asked questions about E-Prescribing Implementation.](#)
- **Waiver Claims:** To find out if you qualify for a waiver claim, and how to set one up, [you can go here.](#)

How to Avoid the 2017 Meaningful Use Penalty

Article courtesy of AMA

Prior to adjourning for the holidays, Congress passed the Patient Access and Medicare Protection Act (PAMPA), which directed the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to make AMA-supported changes to the Medicare EHR Incentive Program hardship exception process that allows physicians to avoid a Meaningful Use (MU) penalty in 2017.

NYACP encourages ALL physicians subject to the 2015 Medicare MU program to apply for the hardship. CMS has stated that it will broadly accept hardship exemptions because of the delayed publication of the program regulations. Applying for the hardship will not prevent a physician from earning an incentive. It simply protects a physician from receiving an MU penalty. Therefore, physicians who believe that they met the MU requirements for the 2015 reporting period should still apply for the hardship protection. Note that the program operates on a two-year look-back period, meaning that physicians who are granted an exception for the 2015 program will avoid a financial penalty for 2017.

Step-by-step instructions for completing the hardship exception application follow below:

- **STEP 1:** Access the [instructions](#) and download the [application](#). You can type directly into the application on your computer if you plan to submit the application via email (more on this in Step Seven). Note that CMS “strongly recommends” submission via email, but if that is not possible, the application should be printed out and completed using blue or black ink. **Do not use pencil.**
- **STEP 2:** In Section 1.1, provide information for the person working on behalf of the physicians to apply for the hardship exception. **Note that, for the first time, an individual may apply on behalf of a group of physicians.** This individual may be the physician applicant him/herself or the individual filling out the information on behalf of a physician group (for example, a member of the group’s administrative staff). This step is very important because CMS will provide notice of its hardship exception decisions - which are final and cannot be appealed - via the email address provided on the application.
- **STEP 3:** In Section 2, check the box beside the hardship exception reason that best applies to your circumstances. **The AMA is encouraging physicians to apply for a hardship exemption under the “EHR Certification/Vendor Issues (CEHRT Issues)” category (Option 2.2.d in the application), even if they are uncertain whether they will meet the program requirements this year. Because of the delay in publication of the regulation, this category will apply to all physicians. Further, given the delay of the regulations and these updates to the hardship application, CMS has stated that they will refrain from auditing physicians who file under Option 2.2d.** A physician who qualifies for more than one hardship exception category may select all of the options applicable to his or her practice; however, one category will suffice.
- **STEP 4:** Skip Section 3. This section only applies to hospitals.
- **STEP 5:** In Section 4, list the NPI, first name, and last name for each physician applicant. **Again, multiple providers and provider types may apply as a group using a single submission.** Failure to provide each physician’s NPI will result in a delayed hardship exception decision by CMS. In addition to listing each physician’s information on the application itself, CMS will accept physician identification contained in the following formats: Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx), comma delimited (.csv), or text file (.txt).
- **STEP 6:** In Section 5, check the box marked “Confirm” and enter the date of application and the name of the individual completing the form.
- **STEP 7:** Submit the application to CMS. If you are submitting the application electronically, attach the application to an email addressed to ehrhardsip@provider-resources.com. If an electronic submission is not feasible, fax the application to **814-456-7132**. If you have listed the required physician identification in a separate file as described in Step Five above, be sure to attach it to your email or include it with your fax. No additional documentation is required to be submitted to CMS; however, physicians should keep a copy of their application and any documentation supporting hardship exceptions claimed in addition to Option 2.2.d.

If granted, an exemption will prevent penalties for the **2017 payment year**. This hardship exception application **will not affect payment adjustments for 2016. The application must be received by CMS by 11:59PM ET on March 15, 2016.** CMS has not said when applicants will be notified of CMS’ decision.

Register Now: 2016 Medicare Quality Reporting Programs

The Philadelphia Regional Office of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will be hosting two webinars entitled “**The Medicare Quality Reporting Programs: What Eligible Providers Need to Know in 2016**” on **Wednesday, February 10 and Wednesday, February 17, both from 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM EST.** These webinars will feature the same presentations on both dates. Topics that will be discussed include:

- Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) Preview
- 2016 Incentive Payments and 2018 Payment Adjustments
- 2016 PQRS Updates
- 2018 Value-based Payment Modifier (VM) Policies
- Physician Compare Updates for 2016

- Meaningful Use of CEHRT in 2016

The webinars will be delivered via WebEx, and instructions on how to join the calls will be given upon registration. To register for each of the calls, please see the links below:

Wednesday, February 10, 2016, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM EST

1. [Go to this link.](#)
2. Click "Register".
3. On the registration form, enter your information and then click "Submit"

Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM EST

1. [Go to this link.](#)
2. Click "Register".
3. On the registration form, enter your information and then click "Submit"

Once the host approves your registration, you will receive a confirmation email message with instructions on how to join the event.

Member Benefits

MLMIC Policyholders to Receive 20 Percent Dividend

MLMIC's Board of Directors has approved a **20 percent dividend** for all MLMIC policyholders who are insured as of **May 1, 2016, and maintain continuous coverage through July 1, 2016.**



MLMIC's mission is to provide insurance at cost and, to offset premiums, they offer dividends to policyholders when possible. Competitors often promise low initial premiums to attract business, but MLMIC continually operates without a profit motive. Instead, they work to provide much needed relief to policyholders, while maintaining financial stability.

MLMIC, our endorsed mutual insurer, is owned by their policyholders, and they are committed to policyholder-first service. Over the years, MLMIC's financial strength has allowed them to pay more than \$300 million in dividends to their policyholders, an accomplishment unmatched by other insurers.

You can find more about understanding dividends [here](#), and you can [contact MLMIC](#) any time with questions.

Education

Weekend Board Review Course

NYACP and Catholic Health Systems co-sponsored event

The NY Chapter ACP and Catholic Health Systems are co-sponsoring the Weekend Internal Medicine Board Review Course which has been scheduled for **Saturday, March 12-Sunday March 13, 2016 in Buffalo, NY.** Chapter members who are preparing to take the exam for Board Re-certification or first-time Certification can take advantage of this unique IM Board Review Course.



[Online Registration open](#) - space is limited!

- **Faculty:**
Conrad Fischer, MD, FACP
Chris Paras, DO
Niket Sonpal, MD
- **Course Content:**
This two-day course will cover pertinent topics you need to review for the upcoming exams. The topics will include: General Internal Medicine, Neurology, Cardiology, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Hematology, Oncology, Infectious Disease, Pulmonary, and Nephrology & Rheumatology.
- **Cost:**
The registration fee for this two-day program is \$375 per member or \$200 per Resident member, which includes materials, continental breakfast and lunch. *Space is limited and going quickly, so please register early.*

To Register:

- **Online:** [Register Here!](#)
- **By Mail:** Please send a check payable to NYACP or credit card information with the [Brochure](#) to:
NYACP
744 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207
- **By Fax:**
Fax [Brochure](#) with credit card information to: 518-427-1991

Need additional information?

Please contact Karen Tucker at ktucker@nyacp.org or 518-427-0366.

The Chapter's Premier Annual Educational Event

2016 NYACP Annual Scientific Meeting

Saturday, June 4, 2016

Westchester Hilton Hotel • 699 Westchester Avenue • Rye Brook, NY 10573
7.5 AMA PRA Category I CME CreditsTM • 3 SEP Sessions • 30 ABIM MOC Points

[Online Agenda](#) • [Registration](#)

Calling All Students and Residents!

NYACP Abstract Competition - *Online Abstract Submission is is Friday, March 18 at 5:00 PM!*

If you have worked on a research project or have an interesting clinical case, submit your abstract for a chance to present it at the New York ACP Poster Session at the Chapter's Annual Scientific Meeting. Separate poster competitions for residents and medical students are held for entries in the following categories:

- Research
- Clinical Vignette
- Public policy/advocacy
- Quality, Patient safety/outcomes measurement

If your abstract is chosen, you will be invited to present your poster at the Meeting on Saturday, June 4, 2016 at the Westchester Hilton Hotel in Rye Brook, NY.

To Submit Your Abstract online, please go to: [Online Abstract Submission Forms](#)
For additional information, please contact Karen Tucker at ktucker@nyacp.org

2016 Dates to Remember

District Meetings

- **Wednesday, February 10, 2016: Nassau District Meeting**
6pm Registration • 6:30pm Dinner and Educational Program
K Pacho Restaurant, 1270 Union Turnpike, New Hyde Park NY 11040
[Event Flyer](#) • [Online Registration](#)
- **Thursday, February 11, 2016: Suffolk District Meeting**
6pm Registration • 6:30pm Dinner and Educational program
610 Nesconset Hwy, Smithtown NY 11787
[Event Flyer](#) • [Online Registration](#)
- **Saturday, March 5, 2016: Hudson Valley Capital District Meeting**
8:30am Registration and Breakfast • 9:00am Educational Program
Raddison Hotel Albany, 205 Wolf Road, Albany NY 12205
More details will be posted shortly.
- **Wednesday, March 16, 2016: Syracuse District Meeting**
6:00pm Registration • 6:30pm Dinner and Educational Program
Location: TBD
More details will be posted shortly.

Online Events

- **Ending The Epidemic**
End the HIV Epidemic by the End of 2020
This online course provides 1.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™
[Online Registration](#)
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