



## BRIEF

Bi-monthly newsletter to keep you connected

**Condolences, BILHPN nominations, CMS updates, MA DPH special bulletin, Healthcare law updates, BILHPN Pharmacy news, Health plan updates, Yankee Alliance news**

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### Condolences for Lyle Micheli, MD

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Lyle Micheli, MD a long-time Physician Performance physician. You can read his obituary [here](#).



### BILHPN seeks MMPC committee nominations by Jan. 19

BILHPN is seeking nominations for a Specialist representative to the Medical Management and Policy Committee to serve the third year of a term that ends on December 31, 2026, and then be eligible for a 3-year reappointment.



If you are interested in being nominated for this committee seat, send an email to [dschoent@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:dschoent@bidmc.harvard.edu), and include your CV. Deadline for nominations is Monday, January 19, 2026. Click [here](#) for more details.

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### CMS Updates

#### Extension of telehealth flexibilities for prescribing controlled substances

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), along with the Department of Health and Human services (HHS), has issued a fourth extension of telemedicine flexibilities for the prescribing of controlled medications effective **Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2026**. [Click here for details.](#)



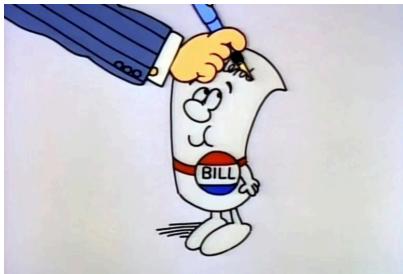
#### 2026 important changes for CMS

CMS has implemented several changes effective in 2026, in the areas of inpatient. -ASC, Part D out-of-pocket caps, and Medicare Advantage prior auth rules. To see a summary of these changes, click [here](#).



## Special Notice from MA DPH - Respiratory illness on the rise

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has provided an update about acute respiratory diseases and action steps they recommend physicians and providers consider when caring for patients. This week's [Respiratory Illness Dashboard](#) shows the percentage of emergency department (ED) visits with acute respiratory illness (ARI) was moderate and continuing to increase. For more information click [here](#).



## Massachusetts healthcare law updates

### Down syndrome treatment

Lawmakers in late 2024 [passed a bill](#) that required Massachusetts health insurers to provide coverage for Down syndrome treatment, including "speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and applied behavior analysis services." The law takes effect on Jan. 1.

Previously, insurers could decline to cover those treatments.

### The Shield Act

In August 2025, Governor Maura Healey signed into law the state's [new "Shield Act,"](#) Massachusetts' attempt to protect abortion rights and abortion providers. The law, which goes into effect **Jan. 1**, also mandates that Massachusetts hospitals provide emergency abortions if medically necessary and requires insurance companies limit access to patients' electronic medical records. It seeks to protect the identities and personal information of those who seek or administer abortion and gender-affirming care in Massachusetts. It expands on a state law from 2022 and [blocks state agencies](#) from sharing information with out-of-state investigations into those who provided or obtained care in Massachusetts.



## BILHPN Pharmacy News

BILHPN Pharmacy has published their newsletter for December. For more information, click [here](#).

## Health plan news updates

- [Point32Health](#) has published their newsletter for December
- [United Health Care](#) has published their newsletter for December



### Highlights to include:

- Implementation Delay: The Medical Policy titled Remote Physiologic Monitoring (RPM) will not be effective on Jan. 1, 2026, as previously announced; implementation of the new policy has been postponed until further notice

**02/01/2026 Coverage Rationale**

Revised coverage criteria for magnetic resonance imaging of the breast for individuals who are high risk for breast cancer:

***Updates to CPT codes go into effect on Jan 1.***

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### **Yankee Alliance contract news**

Yankee Alliance has published their contract news, including their latest purchased services.

To view the newsletter and full list of newly acquired services, click [here](#)

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**Reminder:** If you have an upcoming publication, presentation, award, or honor that you'd like to let us know about, please reach out to us at [PLLCAdministration@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:PLLCAdministration@bidmc.harvard.edu)

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Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached via email at [PLLCAdministration@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:PLLCAdministration@bidmc.harvard.edu) or leave me a message at (617) 632-9728 and I will get back to you.



**Deb Schoenthaler, Executive Director**



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