

# Twitter Chat Q&A: Investing in Medicaid IT Amid COVID-19

Editor's Note: Medicaid information technology (IT) has proven to be an essential tool to support access to health coverage, and the safe and effective evaluation, testing and treatment of COVID-19 patients nationwide. During a live Twitter chat, Manatt Health's [Patricia Boozang](#) and [Alice Lam](#), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's State Health and Value Strategies program's Heather Howard and Daniel Meuse discussed the key takeaways from their recent [issue brief](#) and corresponding [webinar](#) on state strategies for supporting and strengthening Medicaid IT amid the current public health crisis.

Below is the resulting Q&A, and you can follow the complete conversation on Twitter using [#InvestingInMedicaidITamidCOVID](#).



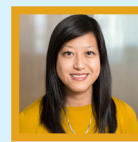
Heather Howard



What are some strategies states are considering to enhance their Medicaid IT and give healthcare providers the tools they need to respond to COVID-19?



States are updating eligibility and enrollment (E&E) systems and buying technology to support a remote Medicaid workforce; enhancing and rapidly scaling telehealth technologies; expanding information exchange capabilities; implementing the Patient Unified Lookup System for Emergencies (PULSE) System; advancing data analytics and reporting – the list goes on.



Alice Lam



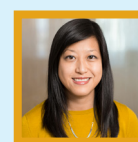
Heather Howard



How can states leverage Medicaid authorities and funds for COVID-19 and Medicaid IT?



Medicaid Enterprise Systems (MES) and Health Information Exchange (HIE) through Social Security Act Section 1903(a)(3). States can receive enhanced funding – 90% or 75% federal match – for Medicaid IT and associated activities.



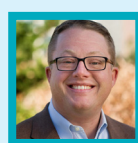
Alice Lam



To access federal funding for Medicaid IT, states must submit Advance Planning Documents (APDs) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). During emergency situations like COVID-19, states can seek expedited approval through a streamlined process.



Patricia Boozang



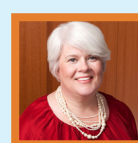
Dan Meuse



What are steps states should consider now and down the road for federal funding and flexibility for Medicaid IT solutions in responding to COVID-19?



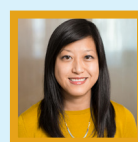
Now – states can review flexibility for immediate spending under their current APDs to serve as a “bridge” for immediate IT investments they have needed to make. They can also submit updates for approved APDs and seek emergency expedited approval for near-term Medicaid IT priorities. States should get in touch with their CMS MES State Officers if they haven't done so already.



Patricia Boozang



Later – states should secure current Medicaid IT investments by updating their APDs and discussing compliance flexibilities with CMS. They will also want to evaluate COVID-19 investments with Medicaid policy, operational, and systems teams and develop a transition/unwind plan. Lastly, states should enhance and innovate new Medicaid IT investments based on COVID-19 lessons.



Alice Lam



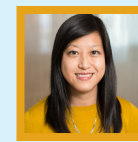
Heather Howard



What resources should states interested in learning more look to?



Check out our Manatt Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's State Health and Value Strategies program [issue brief](#), which goes into a lot more detail and has an appendix of relevant CMS guidance. Also check out [MassHealth's COVID-19 triage and care tool](#), an example initiative launched in Massachusetts that residents can use to assess COVID-19 symptoms and find the right care.



Alice Lam



And, reach out to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's State Health and Value Strategies program and Manatt Health team, we'd love to hear from you!



Dan Meuse

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### About Manatt Health

Manatt Health integrates consulting and legal expertise to better serve the complex needs of clients across the healthcare system. Combining firsthand experience in shaping public policy, sophisticated strategy insight, deep analytic capabilities and legal excellence, we provide uniquely valuable professional services to the full range of health industry players. Our diverse team of more than 160 consultants and attorneys from Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, and its consulting subsidiary, Manatt Health Strategies, LLC, is passionate about helping our clients advance their business interests, fulfill their missions and lead healthcare into the future.



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### About State Health and Value Strategies

State Health and Value Strategies (SHVS) assists states in their efforts to transform health and health care by providing targeted technical assistance to state officials and agencies. The program is a grantee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, led by staff at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. The program connects states with experts and peers to undertake health care transformation initiatives. By engaging state officials, the program provides lessons learned, highlights successful strategies, and brings together states with experts in the field. Learn more at [www.shvs.org](http://www.shvs.org).