Editor's Comment | COVID-19

Coronavirus and Health Policy: A JAMA Network Interview

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When JAMA Health Forum launched 3 months ago, our inaugural Editor's Comment welcomed readers around the world to this new web-based JAMA Network channel for health policy content. We shared our goal for the new channel “to serve as a timely, engaging, and influential venue for authors and readers to connect on the most important issues facing health care systems in the United States and other countries.” At that time, the local outbreak of a novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China, was just beginning to emerge as a focus of global concern.

Last week we joined Howard Bauchner, MD, JAMA editor in chief, for an interview on coronavirus and health policy. During the short period between the launch of JAMA Health Forum and today, many countries have been overwhelmed by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, with nearly 2.4 million confirmed cases and more than 165,000 deaths worldwide by April 19. As the pandemic has accelerated since mid-March, JAMA Health Forum has published many insightful commentaries on a broad range of health policy topics related to COVID-19, including the following widely read articles:

• Guidance for hospitals to prepare for the immense surge in demand
• Providing personal protective equipment to health care workers
• Nursing homes as ground zero for the pandemic
• Pandemic effects on the US health care economy
• Mental health needs of frontline health care workers
• Regional strategies to expand ventilator capacity and to support primary care
• Equitable food access during the pandemic
• Importance of state tracking data—including for COVID-19—to support decisions by policy makers

In our video conversation with Howard Bauchner, we discussed some of these recent JAMA Health Forum articles along with new developments in US health policy related to the pandemic. These topics included federal stimulus payments to hospitals and medical groups that have experienced steep drops in revenue, the elimination of patient cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing, and the rapid adoption of telehealth services by health care systems and medical groups to deliver virtual primary and specialty care via telephone and video visits. We also discussed the need to strengthen public health systems and integrate them more effectively with health care systems to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, we highlighted the looming stresses on health care costs and financing, including increased burdens on state budgets and the potential for greater consolidation in the health care industry.

As JAMA Health Forum moves forward, we continue to welcome prospective authors to submit novel insights that address important health policy issues in the United States and around the globe—whether on COVID-19, the ongoing US presidential election, or innovations in health care financing and delivery.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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REFERENCES


