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# CYBERSECURITY NEWS CUSTOM REPORT

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## Latest Coronavirus Updates for the Healthcare Community

*03/16/2020 12:25*

March 16, 2020 - Editors across the Xtelligent Healthcare Media network of sites will be providing ongoing coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on healthcare in the United States. Our team will be providing ongoing updates to this page to keep members of the healthcare community informed about the coronavirus outbreak.

Bookmark this page to stay informed.

### 3/16

Massachusetts Expands Telehealth Coverage for COVID-19

As part of the recent declaration of a COVID-19 state of emergency, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is mandating that all payers cover medically necessary telehealth testing and treatment for the novel strain of coronavirus.

Illinois Public Health Website Hit With Ransomware Amid Coronavirus

Hackers infected the website of Champaign-Urbana Public Health District in Illinois with NetWalker ransomware amid the Coronavirus pandemic. The attack was first discovered early last week when employees were unable to access system files.

CMS Releases Medicare Reimbursement Details for COVID-19 Tests

Following the development of new billing codes, CMS is now letting clinical laboratories know how much they will receive in Medicare reimbursement for testing patients for COVID-19.

Major NY Opioid Trial in Delayed Due to COVID-19 Concerns

A district court in New York recently announced that a major opioid trial slated to take place next week will be delayed due to COVID-19 concerns.

### 3/13

Pharmacy Benefit Managers Prepared to Tackle COVID-19

Pharmaceutical Care Management Association President and CEO JC Scott issued a letter to the Trump Administration's COVID-19 Task Force affirming pharmacy benefit managers' (PBMs) readiness to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak.

AI-Powered Smartphone App Offers Coronavirus Risk Assessment

A smartphone app coupled with artificial intelligence and machine intelligence will increase access to at-home COVID-19 risk assessments, which will help provide health officials with real-time information to better target potential COVID-19 patients, according to experts from the Medical College of Georgia.

EHR Interoperability Being Tested During the COVID-19 Outbreak

The lack of consistent and reliable EHR interoperability has been exposed when natural disasters have struck in the past. Now with COVID-19 circulating around the world and the country at an alarming rate, will EHRs be able to perform effectively?

## 3/12

Will MA Beneficiaries See Lower Healthcare Spending for COVID-19?

Despite generally having the same level of disability as Medicare beneficiaries in a traditional fee-for-service model, Medicare Advantage beneficiaries have lower spending and lower cost burden, a recent Better Medicare Alliance study found.

## 3/11

Challenges of New Medicare Telehealth Rules Amid COVID-19 Outbreak

New legislation signed last week to waive Medicare telehealth restrictions may present practical and operational challenges for seniors and medical practitioners alike, according to the Alliance for Connected Care.

FDA Provides Coronavirus Supply Chain Update

As the FDA closely monitors the coronavirus supply chain, it has uncovered a drug shortage related to a site affected by the coronavirus, or COVID-19, according to a recent statement from Stephen M. Hahn, MD.

Johns Hopkins Develops Real-Time Data Dashboard to Track Coronavirus

The Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University has developed an interactive, web-based dashboard that tracks real-time data on confirmed coronavirus cases, deaths, and recoveries for all affected countries.

CMS Targets Medicare Advantage Beneficiaries in COVID-19 Efforts

CMS has released guidance regarding how Medicare Advantage and Part D Plans can properly respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. CMS is targeting Medicare beneficiaries with this latest slew of guidance due to the seemingly strong relationship between age and severity of the disease.

## 3/10

Industry Leans on Telehealth to Tackle COVID-19 Outbreak

As the COVID-19 outbreak encroaches into communities across the US, payers, providers, and vendors are using telehealth to expand access to care.

How COVID-19 Is Impacting the Healthcare Revenue Cycle

As entire nations encourage their populations to stay inside to avoid COVID-19, healthcare providers are more active than ever in response to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. This activity is having a significant impact on the healthcare revenue cycle and provider finances.

New Phishing Campaign Targets Health, Pharma with HIV Test Results

Hackers are targeting healthcare, pharma, and insurance companies with a new phishing campaign that sends out fake HIV test results as an emotional lure. Researchers warned that hackers are also leveraging the coronavirus in phishing campaigns to lure its victims, leveraging several known malware variants.

## 3/9

How Are Payers Covering COVID-19 Testing for High-Risk Patients?

As the nation fights the spreading novel strain of coronavirus, payers must continue to be clear about which patients will receive coverage for their COVID-19 testing and which payers are providing COVID-19 testing coverage.

## 3/6

CMS Develops New Billing Codes for Coronavirus Lab Tests

CMS recently announced the development of new billing codes for coronavirus lab tests that will enable clinical laboratories and other providers to receive reimbursement for supporting patients during the outbreak and help increase testing and tracking of new cases.

## 3/5

Coronavirus Scare Gives Telehealth an Opening to Redefine Healthcare

With the coronavirus threatening to become a pandemic, health systems and telehealth vendors see this as an opportunity to bring connected health to the forefront — and reshape the future of healthcare. Providers across the country are looking at how connected care programs can be used to handle the coronavirus — also called COVID-19 — threat.

Former SARS, MERS Vaccine Could Treat COVID-19 Patients

Remdesivir is effective in treating Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), but also may be a successful vaccine for patients with coronavirus, or COVID-19, according to researchers at the University of Alberta.

Community Health Centers to Get Funding for Coronavirus Outbreak

The federal government authorized delivering funds to key stakeholders in the novel coronavirus outbreak, including community health centers. HR 6074 allocates $100 million to community health centers to support smaller health clinics in under-served urban and rural areas combat the new coronavirus outbreak.

## 3/4

Breaking: Telehealth Coverage Included in Coronavirus Spending Bill

Congressional leaders have agreed to a coronavirus response bill that will allow Medicare reimbursement for care providers using telehealth to treat seniors at home.

## 3/2

What the New Coronavirus Means for the Pharmaceutical Industry

While many countries are leveraging travel bans and quarantine to slow the spread of disease, the pharmaceutical industry plays a unique role in the world's response to COVID-19. High-quality diagnostic tests, effective treatment options, and possible vaccines need to be developed quickly if they are to curb the potential pandemic.

FDA Allows Coronavirus Diagnostic Testing in Certain Hospital Labs

In order to achieve more rapid coronavirus diagnostic testing capacity, the FDA will allow specific clinical laboratories, including some hospital labs, to use diagnostic kits developed in-house to test

their patients for COVID-19.

## 2/28

As Epidemic Fears Mount, CMS Asked to Loosen Reins on Telehealth

Telehealth and mHealth have the potential to help health systems tackle a potential COVID-19 epidemic in much the same way that the technology was used to handle SARS and Ebola outbreaks. And for that reason, providers have been low-key in talking about telehealth.

## 2/26

NIH Launches Clinical Trial for Potential Coronavirus Vaccine

The National Institute of Health (NIH) is sponsoring the first controlled clinical trial in the US at the University of Nebraska Medical Center to evaluate a possible COVID-19 vaccine. The trial will uncover the safety and efficacy of the antiviral Remdesivir in adults affected with the novel strain of coronavirus.

## 2/25

Members of Congress Demand Fair Drug Pricing for COVID-19 Vaccines

Members of Congress demand accessible, available, and affordable drug pricing for taxpayer-funded COVID-19 vaccines or treatments, according to an official letter from House Democrats to President Trump.

## 2/20

HHS, J&J Partner to Boost Vaccination Discovery for Coronavirus

Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies will expand its partnership with HHS to accelerate a vaccination discovery for the coronavirus or COVID-19. The collaboration with builds on Johnson & Johnson&rsquo;s response to the coronavirus outbreak.

## 2/18

CMS Launches New Billing Code for Coronavirus Testing

CMS announced last week that they developed a new billing code for providers and laboratories to test patients for the coronavirus. The new Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) allows providers to bill for the specific test rather than using an unspecified code.

**2/11**

HHS Launches Foundry for American Biotechnology to Spur Innovation

Secretary Alex Azar pointed to the novel coronavirus outbreak as a reminder that "protecting the health and security of the American people requires constantly investing in biotechnology innovation and partnering with the private sector.

**1/29**

CEPI Pushes for Vaccine as Coronavirus Spreads

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations launched three programs to develop vaccines for the coronavirus, including through partnerships with US-based biotechnology companies Inovio Pharmaceuticals and Moderna, Inc.

## Alphabet website for novel coronavirus screening and testing is now live



*03/16/2020 12:35*

Decades of biology go into Google's work on COVID-19 coronavirus Tiernan Ray explains that Google trained a deep learning AI network to figure out the possible structure of some proteins that may play a role in COVID-19, but it was only possible by leveraging decades of government-backed fundamental biological science. Read more: https://zd.net/2QcxQCS

Alphabet's Verily has launched a website to provide US citizens with information on COVID-19 and available screening facilities.

The website, launched under Project Baseline, offers advice for consumers who wish to be tested for the novel coronavirus.

The respiratory illness has spread in recent weeks to countries across the globe, leading to event cancellations, the ban of mass gatherings, city lockdowns, the closure of pubs and restaurants, and recommendations for self-isolation for those who think they may have contracted the virus.

**See also:** Coronavirus tech conference cancellations list: Apple WWDC, Microsoft Build, E3, NAB, Gartner, Dell World and more

Verily is Google parent company Alphabet's life sciences arm. The organization has created an online questionnaire and based on the user's responses, offers a recommendation of whether or not to be tested -- and whether they qualify for a free test.

The online screener has been generated from "guidelines from public health officials," Verily says. Questions include whether or not you are experiencing shortness of breath, fever, and other symptoms.

"Based on the responses and testing appointment availability, you will learn whether you qualify for testing through this program at this time," the company added.

**CNET:** Internet and wireless providers will waive late fees and keep Americans connected

Those who qualify for tests can book an appointment for a free test. Verily is only able to offer these services to Californian residents of the San Mateo and Santa Clara counties at present, but the organization says it is "working to rapidly expand testing in every way that we can."



At the time of writing, going through the questionnaire shows that appointments are not available, which may indicate that the testing initiative has already proven popular.

Those who report severe symptoms, however, are asked to seek medical attention rather than go down the test route with Verily.

In order to be tested, users must also be over the age of 18, they must be able to speak and read English, and they must be willing to sign authorization forms which gives Verily the right to use their information in Project Baseline clinical research.

A Google account is also required.

"Your data collected by Verily through the testing program will never be joined with your data stored in Google products without your explicit permission," the research arm says.

Information collected through the screening process is kept in an encrypted fashion and will not be shared with advertisers, insurance or medical providers.

The website is a useful tool for worried citizens, but as noted by the New York Times, US President Trump previously overinflated the concept and said that Google had 1,700 engineers working on the project. In reality, the Verily arm has closer to 1,000 engineers in total. In response, the organization said on Twitter:

"Verily is in the early stages of development, and planning to roll testing out in the Bay Area, with the hope of expanding more broadly over time."

**TechRepublic:** Apple closing all retail stores outside of China due to coronavirus spread

Microsoft, too, has launched a web portal to track COVID-19. Available at bing.com/covid, the dashboard is pulling together case numbers across the world based on data sources including the WHO, CDC, and ECDC.

At the time of writing, the platform is reporting over 170,000 registered novel coronavirus cases with countries most affected being China, Italy, Iran, and South Korea.

**Have a tip?** Get in touch securely via WhatsApp | Signal at +447713 025 499, or over at Keybase: charlie0

## Coronavirus-themed phishing attacks and hacking campaigns are on the rise

*03/16/2020 12:35* ☒ Why we're still losing the fight against phishing attacks Danny Palmer explains that it's not fair to blame users for falling victim to attacks when employers aren't doing enough to help. Read more: https://zd.net/31Oiisg ☒

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) is warning that criminals are looking to exploit the spread of coronavirus to conduct cyberattacks and hacking campaigns.

Experts at the NCSC – the cyber arm of GCHQ – have spotted a range of scams and cyber threats that look to take advantage of COVID-19 for their own malicious ends.

Attacks include phishing attacks, credential theft, bitcoin and financial fraud, ransomware campaigns and more.

In many cases, attacks are based around phishing emails containing links or attachments that claim to contain important information about the virus. Once opened, these infect the PC with malware that can be used to exploit the infected victim.

**SEE: Cybersecurity: Let's get tactical (ZDNet/TechRepublic special feature) | Download the free PDF version (TechRepublic)**

The NCSC says it has taken measures to automatically uncover and remove malicious websites run by cyber criminals running coronavirus scams and other malicious activity.

This action comes after what the security agency describes as as an increase in the registration of webpages relating to coronavirus, something the NCSC suspects to be the work of cyber criminals looking to exploit the outbreak.

The agency warns that, as the outbreak intensifies, it's likely that the volume of hacking incidents looking to exploit coronavirus will also rise.

"We know that cyber criminals are opportunistic and will look to exploit people's fears, and this has undoubtedly been the case with the coronavirus outbreak," said Paul Chichester, director of operations at the NCSC.

"Our advice to the public is to follow our guidance, which includes everything from password advice to spotting suspect emails."

Guidance offered by the NCSC includes how to spot and deal with suspicious emails and how to mitigate and defend against ransomware attacks.

"In the event that someone does fall victim to a phishing attempt, they should look to report this to Action Fraud as soon as possible," Chichester added.

Coronavirus-related cyberattacks have been identified by cybersecurity researchers at companies around the world.

**SEE: Coronavirus: Business and technology in a pandemic**

They included a Trickbot trojan malware campaign disguised as medical advice about COVID-19 as detailed by Sophos, while researchers at Proofpoint have also identified a number of coronavirus-themed hacking campaigns that install malware including Emotet, NanoCore and Azorult.

Security researchers have also warned that state-sponsored hacking campaigns are also beginning to use coronavirus as lures in attacks.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the US Federal Trade Commission have both also warned about scammers spreading coronavirus-related phishing attacks via email and social media.

## MORE ON CYBERSECURITY

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