COVID-19 Update
Agency for Health Care Administration

Acting Secretary Shevaun Harris

Senate Committee on Health Policy
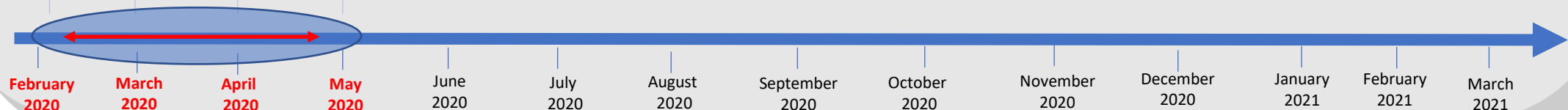**January 13, 2020**

1: Ensure Access to Care and Information

1. **Removed barriers to accessing care for Medicaid recipients and providers.**

    *   Among one of the first states to implement federal CMS approved flexibilities to remove barriers to accessing care for Medicaid recipients and providers during the public health emergency, including:
        *   Lifted service limits
        *   Waived frequency and duration limits for behavioral health services
        *   Expanded telehealth coverage to behavior analysis, therapy, specified behavioral health, and early intervention services
        *   Waived prior authorization requirements for COVID-19 related and other services
        *   Expedited provider enrollment process
        *   Made retention and advanced payments to critical home and community-based providers

| February 2020 | March 2020 | April 2020 | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | September 2020 | October 2020 | November 2020 | December 2020 | January 2021 | February 2021 | March 2021 |

1: Ensure Access to Care and Information

3. **Enhanced outbound communications/ information to providers through AHCA website.**

- Online COVID-19 information portal to provide guidance for facilities and Medicaid providers, including information on:
  - Federal provider relief funding

  - Medicaid coverage of COVID-19 testing and COVID-19 related services

  - Medicaid retention or advanced payments

  - COVID-19 reporting requirements for facilities

  - Emergency Orders and Rules issued by the State related to COVID-19
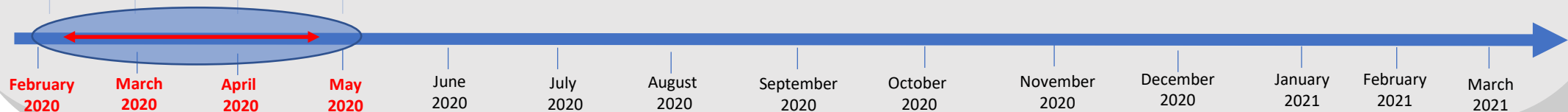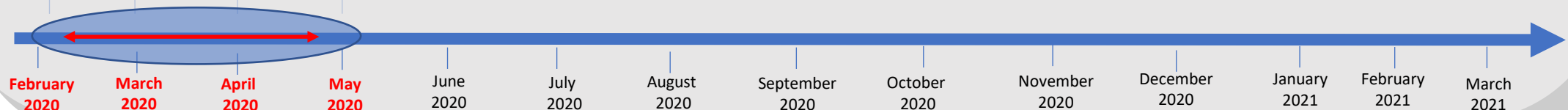
February 2020 | March 2020 | April 2020 | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | September 2020 | October 2020 | November 2020 | December 2020 | January 2021 | February 2021 | March 2021

1: Ensure Access to Care and Information

4. **Developed critical hospital data dashboard using data submitted by hospitals.**

  • Enhanced AHCA's Emergency Status System reporting to capture real time information regarding COVID-19 preparation, cases, testing, and vaccinations, including:

    • Created an ad hoc question module for quick collection of COVID-19 data

    • Launched statewide hospital bed capacity dashboard that provided up-to-date hospital bed availability by county and hospital
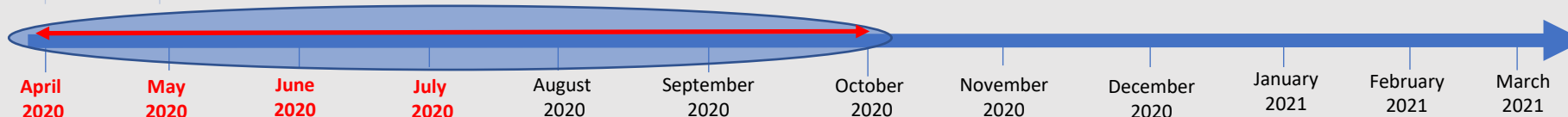
February 2020 | March 2020 | April 2020 | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | September 2020 | October 2020 | November 2020 | December 2020 | January 2021 | February 2021 | March 2021

2: Protecting the Most Vulnerable

1. **Established dedicated COVID-19 isolation nursing facilities.**

- Developed innovative model of COVID-19 isolation nursing facilities, dedicated to serving patients in need of long-term care services who were also diagnosed with COVID-19.

    - Allowed for appropriate isolation and recovery of COVID-19 positive patients

    - First group of facilities established in April 2020 – approximately 200 beds available

    - Regional resources for any COVID-19 positive patient requiring nursing facility level of care

    - Required to accept patients with any type of insurance and patients who were uninsured

- By July, the Agency had executed agreements with 23 facilities statewide with the capacity to serve up to 1,500 patients needing COVID-19 isolation.
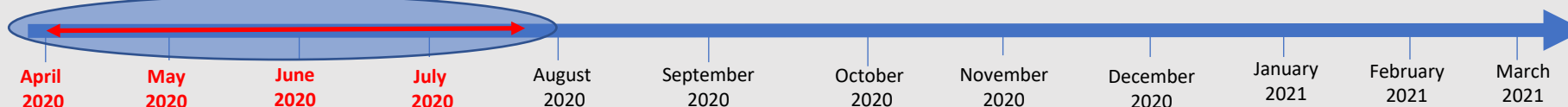
| April 2020 | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | September 2020 | October 2020 | November 2020 | December 2020 | January 2021 | February 2021 | March 2021 |

2: Protecting the Most Vulnerable

2. **Visitation protocol implemented to protect long-term care facility residents.**

- In conjunction with the Division of Emergency Management and other stakeholders, established visitation protocol for long-term care facilities, including:

  - Developed initial visitor screening toolkit in conjunction with stakeholders

  - Implemented DEM Emergency Order 20-006, prohibiting all non-essential entry into long-term care facilities except in certain limited circumstances

  - Participated in Governor DeSantis' Task Force on the Safe and Limited Re-Opening of Long-Term Care Facilities
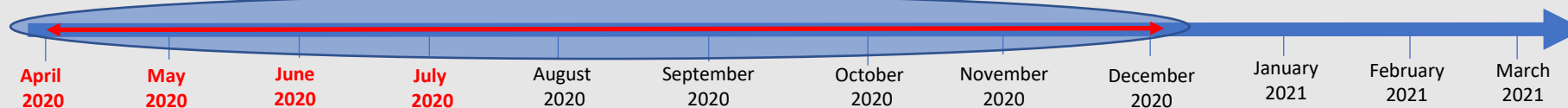
| April 2020 | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | September 2020 | October 2020 | November 2020 | December 2020 | January 2021 | February 2021 | March 2021 |

2: Protecting the Most Vulnerable

3. **Protected Residents and Patients through Infection Prevention Inspections.**

- Site visits continued during the public health emergency period to monitor facility compliance with infection control and prevention and other regulatory requirements

  - 7,322 focused infection control visits were conducted between March and December 2020

| April 2020 | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 | August 2020 | September 2020 | October 2020 | November 2020 | December 2020 | January 2021 | February 2021 | March 2021 |

2: Protecting the Most Vulnerable

4. **Facilitated conversations between hospitals and long-term care facilities to determine best practices when transferring patients.**

- Supported health care facilities when determining the path for the safe, appropriate transfer of patients. Efforts included:

  - Issuing Emergency Rule 59AER20-1 to require COVID-19 testing by hospitals of all patients, regardless of symptoms, prior to discharging to long-term care facilities

  - Allowing discharge of COVID-19 positive patients, if the LTC has a dedicated unit with dedicated staff

  - Expanding the number of COVID-19 isolation facilities across the state to provide more space for ICU and acute care patients

  - Modifying rules to recognize symptom-based approach to discharge of COVID -19 patients in addition to test-based option

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3: Preparing for a Vaccine

1. **Serve as member of the emergency response team to support State of Florida's vaccination efforts.**

   - Supporting DEM and DOH efforts to determine allocation and administration of COVID-19 vaccine. Efforts included:

     - Utilizing AHCA's Emergency Status System reporting to capture real time information regarding vaccine inventory and administration

     - Helping Florida become the first state to begin offering vaccines to staff and residents of over 4,000 long-term care facilities by activating the Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program with CVS and Walgreens

3: Preparing for a Vaccine

2. Ensure Medicaid program policy and operation align to ensure coverage of all vaccinations.

- Established broad coverage policy to ensure all recipients have access to vaccinations. Efforts include ensuring:

  - Coverage of the COVID-19 vaccine for all Medicaid recipients who have full Medicaid benefits

  - No co-payments

  - Medicaid vaccine administration fee is equivalent to Medicare vaccine administration fee

  - Medicaid health plans must have open provider networks for vaccine administration