



## Billing for COVID-19 Testing

Dear Provider:

Every day there are new developments around treating patients for the novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the illness it produces (COVID-19), as well as the preventive protocols that everyone is being asked to follow during this time of public health crisis. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana has been closely monitoring these developments so we can best meet the needs of our members and providers. With this in mind, we are making two changes to our benefit structure for all BCBSLA member benefit plans.

### Proper Billing for the Testing of COVID-19

It is important that providers bill **properly** for COVID-19 testing. BCBSLA is waiving all member cost share (copayment, deductible and/or coinsurance) for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-recommended, medically appropriate COVID-19 testing. Specifically, this change applies only to the Real-Time Reverse Transcriptase (RT)-PCR test for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The following codes are medically appropriate and align with our policy for COVID-19 testing:

- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released HCPCS code **U0002** specific to the testing for COVID-19, effective for dates of service on and after February 4, 2020.
- The American Medical Association COVID-19 related CPT® code is **87635**, effective for dates of service on and after March 13, 2020.

### Avoid Improper Testing

Some providers have been using a respiratory pathogen panel (RPP) in the diagnosis process for COVID-19. Generally, this is not medically necessary unless the patient has had the diagnosis of both influenza and COVID-19 ruled out and has significant febrile respiratory symptoms. It is not recommended by the CDC and does not specifically diagnose COVID-19. While we do cover the test through our normal claims process, we are not waiving member cost shares.

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### Authorizations for Inpatient and Outpatient Services

Please be reminded that an authorization is required for many services. While authorizations are still required for those services, we will automatically approve all services related to the diagnosis or treatment of COVID-19 without medical review. This automatic approval will be triggered by including the appropriate ICD-10 code for COVID-19:

- **B97.29** for dates of service **prior to** April 1, 2020
- **U07.1** for dates of service **on and after** April 1, 2020

Providers can electronically submit authorization requests for BCBSLA members through iLinkBlue ([www.BCBSLA.com/ilinkblue](http://www.BCBSLA.com/ilinkblue)) using our BCBSLA Authorizations tool under the "Authorizations" menu option, or you can call the number on the member ID card.

### Contact Us

If you have any questions about the billing of COVID-19, you may send an email to our Provider Relations department at [provider.relations@bcbsla.com](mailto:provider.relations@bcbsla.com). Please put "COVID-19 Billing" in the subject line.

Thank you for your help as we all work together to contain the spread of COVID-19 and keep our communities healthy.

Sincerely,



Hiral Arges  
VP, Provider Relations and Contracting  
Network Administration

HA/mdm