



May 6, 2020

Dear Providers:

Blue Advantage continues to monitor developments related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) national emergency, with a focus on lessening the administrative burden for our providers to ensure our members receive the care they need. Recently, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a memo of temporary relief provisions, of which Blue Advantage has implemented the following for our providers:

Telehealth Services  
(Effective March 6, 2020)

- Patient visits for new or established patients can be performed through telehealth, using an **audio and video** telecommunication system. Common telehealth CPT® and HCPCS codes include:
  - 99201-99215: Office or other outpatient visits
  - G0425-G0427: Telehealth consultations, emergency department or initial inpatient
  - G0406-G0408: Follow up inpatient telehealth consultations furnished to beneficiaries in hospitals or skilled nursing facilities (SNF)

For a full list of telehealth services, visit [www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes](http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes).

- Apply place of service (POS) codes that would have been reported for in-person services. Report Modifier 95 on claim lines for services provided through telehealth.

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- Telehealth services **must meet all criteria** for risk adjustment and MEAT, for each diagnosis code submitted.
  - **M** – monitor signs, symptoms, disease progression and disease regression
  - **E** – evaluate test results, medication effectiveness and response to treatment
  - **A** – assess/address by ordering test(s), discussing, reviewing records and counseling
  - **T** – treatment with medication, therapy and other modalities
- **Effective April 1, 2020**, all telehealth/virtual encounters conducted by any provider type will be covered at a \$0 cost share to members.

*Please note: In cases where audio and video technology are not available, prolonged, audio-only telehealth visits may be clinically appropriate. Audio-only visits will be paid separately, when described by codes 98966-98968 and 99441-99443.*

#### COVID-19 Testing

*(Effective March 6, 2020)*

- Member cost-sharing will be covered for claims submitted with a test for COVID-19 and additional services if COVID-19 is indicated on the claim.
- COVID-19 antibody testing will also be covered at no cost share to the member.

#### COVID-19 Treatment

*(Effective April 1, 2020)*

- Member cost-sharing will be set at \$0 for treatment of COVID-19 for all provider types.

#### Prior Authorization

*(Effective March 6, 2020)*

- In addition to the authorization changes communicated on April 8, 2020, requirements have been lifted for any claims billed with a COVID-19 diagnosis and one of the following: pneumonia, acute bronchitis, lower respiratory infection or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

#### “Surprise Billing” and Out-of-Network Coverage

*(Effective March 6, 2020)*

- In-network benefits will apply to members seeking care from out-of-network providers during the COVID-19 national emergency.

#### Prescription Drugs

*(Effective March 6, 2020)*

- COVID-19-specific refill-too-soon (RTS) overrides have been created for pharmacies to use at the point of sale, following the RTS-rejected claim.

## Ambulance Transportation

*(Effective March 26, 2020)*

- Transports may include any destination that is able to provide treatment in a manner consistent with state and local emergency medical services (EMS) protocols.
- Destinations may include any location that is an alternative site for hospitals, critical access hospitals (CAHs) or skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), community mental health centers, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), physicians' offices, urgent care facilities, ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs), any location providing dialysis services outside of the end-stage renal disease (ESRD) facility and the member's home.

## **Contact Us**

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please email Provider Relations at [provider.relations@bcbsla.com](mailto:provider.relations@bcbsla.com). Please put "Blue Advantage COVID-19" in the subject line.

Sincerely,



Hiral Arges  
VP, Provider Relations and Contracting  
Network Administration

HA/bp