

# Memorandum

To: Gold Coast Health Plan Providers

From: Steve Peiser, Senior Director of Network Management

Re: **COVID-19 Information and Resources**

Date: March 19, 2020

Dear Gold Coast Health Plan Provider:

Thank you for caring for our members during this difficult time. The purpose of this communication is to provide you with the most up-to-date information and guidance we have regarding COVID-19. We understand that there has been much information disseminated over the last week regarding COVID-19. Our goal is to consolidate relevant information for you regarding Medi-Cal guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## COVID-19 Testing, Coding and Share of Cost

1. GCHP will cover all medically necessary services required to facilitate testing and treatment of COVID-19 for eligible members, in accordance with federal and state guidance. No prior authorization is required for COVID-19 testing.
2. COVID-19 testing codes are as follows:
  - **U0001:** CDC 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Real-Time RT-PCR Diagnostic Panel.
  - **U0002:** Coronavirus (COVID-19) for non-CDC laboratory tests for SARS-CoV-2/2019.
  - **U07.1:** nCoVAcute Respiratory Disease, effective date January 1,2020
3. Providers who have high-risk cases that require faster and local testing – e.g., patients who are severely ill and those for whom a rapid decision about isolation is needed – should reach out to Ventura County Public Health Communicable Diseases at 1-805-981-5201 to coordinate testing.
4. For all other cases, testing through Quest Diagnostics is recommended.
5. Please continue to follow guidelines from the county Public Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To ensure that cost does not inhibit access to screening and testing for COVID-19, the state Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) has mandated that share-of-cost requirements be waived ([APL-20-006 COVID-19 Screening and Testing](#)). GCHP will reimburse providers for full visit costs per the provider manual. Detailed coding requirements for providers are referenced below.

This directive applies to costs associated with office and telehealth visits, associated lab tests, and radiology services at contracted hospitals, emergency rooms, urgent care centers or other provider locations where the purpose of the visit is to be screened and/or tested for COVID-19. According to DMHC, this policy will remain in effect until further notice.

This is a rapidly evolving situation. To ensure that you receive payments that include any waived cost-sharing amounts, GCHP is providing the following guidance for proper billing and other related services associated with COVID-19.

**For more information from the CDC, visit:**

- [Evaluating and Testing Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Coding encounters related to COVID-19 Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

For services NOT related to screening and testing for COVID-19, please continue to collect member share-of-cost when applicable.

In addition to the CDC-approved COVID-19 test, both Quest Diagnostics and LabCorp have recently developed tests for COVID-19. You may order COVID-19 tests at any of these approved locations. Please do not send patients to lab draw stations to be tested. Lab samples should be collected at the provider service location.

For more information on these commercial tests, visit:

- [Quest Diagnostics](#)
- [LabCorp](#)

**If you suspect you or a patient has COVID-19**

The CDC instructs providers to consult with local or state health departments to determine whether patients meet criteria for Persons Under Investigation (PUI). If the patient does not meet criteria, providers are authorized to initiate testing through any GCHP-approved location. For PUI criteria and the most recent Guidance on Laboratory Testing for COVID-19 by the county Public Health Department, please [click here](#).

Additionally, providers should immediately notify infection control personnel at their facility if they suspect COVID-19 in a patient. Please notify your state or local health department if a patient is classified as a PUI for COVID-19.

Providers should report recognized exposures, regularly monitor themselves for fever and symptoms of respiratory infection, and not report to work when ill. Providers in low-, medium-, or high-risk exposure categories who develop signs or symptoms compatible with COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to contact their established point of contact (public health authorities or their facility's occupational health program) for medical evaluation prior to returning to work.

**For more information from the CDC, visit:**

- [Healthcare Professionals: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)
- [Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Providers should report recognized exposures, regularly monitor themselves for fever and symptoms of respiratory infection, and not report to work when ill. Providers in low-, medium-, or high-risk exposure categories who develop signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to contact their established point of contact (public health authorities or their facility's occupational health program) for medical evaluation prior to returning to work.

**If you need to close your office due to exposure**

GCHP is committed to ensuring member access to care. In the event of an office closure, please direct your patients who are Plan members to another clinic location or to an after-hours service. As a backup, GCHP's Member Services Department can connect members to alternate providers who can support their continued care. The phone number is at **1-888-301-1228 (TTY: 1-888-310-7347)**.

Should you incur an office closure or any disruption in service, please notify the Provider Network-Provider Relations Department immediately at [ProviderRelations@goldchp.org](mailto:ProviderRelations@goldchp.org).

For more resources and guidance, please visit the [CDC's Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) web page](#).

GCHP is working closely with the county Department of Public Health. The Plan is monitoring updates as they are released by public health and the CDC.

## Prescription Refills

1. GCHP encourages members to be prepared by getting their prescriptions refilled now.
2. GCHP has lifted the refill-too-soon edit so that members may refill any maintenance medication early to avoid any interruption in therapy. Please advise your patients that members can secure a refill from their pharmacy. All they need to do is ask their pharmacy for a refill. GCHP is continuously evaluating the COVID-19 crisis to determine the appropriate duration for this waiver.
3. Members who are currently visiting a location outside of Ventura County may get their prescriptions refilled at any GCHP network pharmacy in California. Additionally, they may use Optum Home Delivery to have medication delivered to them. Members may contact OptumRx at 1-855-297-2870 for assistance locating a network pharmacy or to explore Optum Home Delivery.
4. In the event of a shortage of any prescription drug, GCHP will waive prior authorization and/or step therapy requirements of appropriate alternative therapy to treat the member's crisis.
5. OptumRx may override other restrictions as necessary during the COVID-19 situation. Please contact OptumRx at 1-855-297-2870 to request an override.

## Telehealth Services

To reduce potential exposure to COVID-19, GCHP has created the following guidance to address providers' questions about providing services via telehealth. The use of telehealth currently is specific to the concerns regarding COVID-19 and reducing the potential spread of the virus.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office For Civil Rights also just announced that on a temporary basis they will allow for telehealth to use alternative communication methods that are not public facing, such as Facetime and Skype, and will not have to fully comply with HIPAA rules as long as they are acting in good faith during the public health emergency. [Click here](#) for more information.

Members must consent prior to receiving telehealth and that consent must be documented. Authorization processes remain the same when requesting services, regardless of whether services are being provided in-person or via telehealth. If you need interpreter services to conduct a telehealth visit with a GCHP member, you will need to access your own language line services for an interpreter and indicate the member's preferred language. GCHP does not oversee language assistance services for telehealth.

For telehealth visits, GCHP providers may perform telemedicine visits with -95 modifier. [Click here](#) for a list of acceptable telemedicine codes.

For billing purposes, please note:

- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), Rural Health Centers (RHC), and Indian Health Centers (IHC):** You DO NOT need to specify “02” for “place of service.”
- **All other providers:** You MUST use “02” for “place of service.”

GCHP will reimburse providers for telehealth services in accordance with the reimbursement terms contained in your current agreements.

Medi-Cal Telehealth Policy updates are available [here](#).

If you need to contact a GCHP Provider Relations representative:

- For provider questions: Please email all provider-related questions or issues to [ProviderRelations@goldchp.org](mailto:ProviderRelations@goldchp.org). All inquiries are being tracked and assigned for handling.
- For the status of a submission such as an authorization, claim, dispute and/or grievance, please contact the GCHP Member Services Department at **1-888-301-1228**.

[Click here](#) for Telehealth Services FAQs.

## **COVID-19 Diagnoses Codes**

Providers should use the following codes:

- B34.2 – Coronavirus Infection, unspecified
- B97.29 - Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere
- U07.1 - nCoV acute respiratory disease
- Z20.828 - Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable diseases
- Z03.818 - Encounter for observation for suspected exposure to other biological agents ruled out

## **Language Assistance Services**

Pacific Interpreters Inc., also known as LanguageLine Solutions, will continue to provide on-demand telephonic interpreting services to GCHP’s members, staff, and providers.

Providers may continue to access services by calling the toll-free number and by providing the access code. Please refer to the details in the [Quick Reference Guide](#) on how to access an interpreter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the GCHP Provider Relations Team at [ProviderRelations@goldchp.org](mailto:ProviderRelations@goldchp.org).