



May 4, 2023

Emergency Guidance for Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plans in Response to COVID-19

Dear Provider,

The Public Health Emergency (PHE) is planned to expire at the end of the day on May 11, 2023. As the State of California responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is regularly updating and distributing guidance to the Managed Care Plans (MCPs), counties and providers. Please refer to the DHCS COVID-19 Response webpage for the most up-to-date information available.

As part of the PHE unwinding, the DHCS updated All Plan Letter (APL) 20-004. The APL addresses multiple topics including ensuring members have access to the following services:

- Cover all medically necessary emergency care without prior authorization, whether that care is provided by an in-network or out-of-network provider.
- Comply with utilization review timeframes for approving request for urgent and non-urgent covered services. MCPs are required to waive prior authorization requests for services, including screening and testing, related to COVID-19.
- Ensure members are not liable for balance bills from providers, including balance billing related to COVID-19 testing.
- Provide members with 24-hour access to an MCP representative with the authority to authorize services. Please call 1-800-391-2000, option 2, to be connected to the Advice Nurse line.

COVID-19 Testing and Treatment

Providers are encouraged to continue COVID-19 diagnostic, screening, post exposure or response testing and health care services approved or granted Emergency Use Authorization by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for COVID-19.

Suicide Prevention Practices for Providers

As the COVID-19 PHE continues, many Californians are experiencing secondary impacts on their mental health. All California medical and behavioral health providers are encouraged to ask their patients the four "Ask Suicide-Screening Questions" developed by the National Institute of Mental Health. Providers can locate the screening questions by visiting the COVID-19 response webpage under Providers and Partners-Behavioral Health on the DHCS website.

PROVIDER Bulletin



KERN HEALTH SYSTEMS

Well-Child Visits

In light of COVID-19, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has developed guidance (last updated on October 31, 2022) on providing pediatric well-care during COVID-19. Please see the AAP website below for more information, including any updates on this guidance.

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/guidance-on-providing-pediatric-well-care-during-covid-19/>

Redeterminations

With the implementation of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, the continuous coverage requirement will end March 31, 2023, and Medi-Cal redetermination processes began April 1, 2023. For more information, please reference KHS bulletin All Plan Letter (APL) 22-004 sent out February 15, 2023.

Telehealth

The DHCS released APL 23-007 regarding Telehealth Services Policy. For more information regarding telehealth, please reference link below.

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2023/APL23-007.pdf>

To learn more about the DHCS COVID-19 response, please refer to their webpage link below.

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/DHCS-COVID%E2%80%9119-Response.aspx>

KHS posts all bulletins on the KHS website, www.kernfamilyhealthcare.com, choose Provider, then Bulletins.

For any questions, please contact your Provider Relations Representative at 661-664-5000.

Sincerely,

Melissa McGuire
Deputy Director of Provider Network
Kern Health Systems