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MEDICAID INFORMATION RELEASE MA20-06

To: All Medicaid Providers

From: Matt Wimmer, Administrator

Subject: Medicaid Provider Information Resources and Reimbursement for Diagnosis and Treatment of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare continues to monitor and prepare for impacts resulting from the transmission of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Today Governor Brad Little declared a state of emergency to proactively address the COVID-19 threat. The Governor has also established the Coronavirus Working Group, led by Director Dave Jeppesen. Information regarding the working group and resources dedicated to preparing for a potential outbreak of the virus in Idaho can be found at [Coronavirus.idaho.gov](https://www.coronavirus.idaho.gov). The Division of Medicaid is working collaboratively with the Division of Public Health to stay informed on their preparation efforts.

We strongly encourage all Medicaid providers to take time to learn about how they can control infection risk and to take immediate steps to minimize risks for Medicaid participants and for your staff. To that end, we are providing some information specific to Medicaid providers in addition to the resources at the Idaho Coronavirus website.

Infection Control (Amended 05/27/2020)

Standard infection control and health and safety procedures are always important, but especially critical now to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We strongly encourage all providers to evaluate their office and field procedures and take appropriate measures.

Infection control is especially important for nursing facilities, residential assisted living facilities, intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, hospitals, and other institutional and congregate care settings where disease can spread quickly.

Good infection control includes asking patients to call ahead if they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive with Coronavirus (COVID-19) or if they are experiencing symptoms identified on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) ["Watch for](#)

[Symptoms](#)” list. A determination can be made if evaluation in the office is truly necessary (as opposed to self-quarantine) and proper preparations can be made to avoid unnecessary exposure of other patients and healthcare staff. See CDC guidance available at:

[Information for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points \(PSAPs\) for COVID-19 in the United States](#)

[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 \(COVID-19\)](#)

Telehealth Reimbursement Options (Amended 05/27/2020)

On April 23, 2020 Governor Brad Little announced the phase-out of the “Stay-at-Home” order during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Idaho is implementing a four-phase plan to re-open the state, deemed the Idaho Rebounds Plan. In order to deliver services and ensure the needs of participants are met, Idaho Medicaid encourages providers to continue to utilize telehealth options, where appropriate. Reimbursement is available for services provided for both new and established patients when provided per Information Releases [MA20-07](#) and [MA20-13](#), and the [General Information and Requirements for Providers](#), Idaho Medicaid Provider Handbook. Additional information releases may apply to specific services and can be found at [IDMedicaid.com](#).

Where the Handbook and an Information Release conflict, the Information Release takes precedence during the public health emergency.

Urgent Care Services

Effective January 1, 2020, Idaho Medicaid implemented a policy change within [Information Release MA19-17](#) to facilitate increased access to **urgent care services**, *which are defined as medical care provided for illnesses or injuries which require prompt attention but generally are not serious enough to require an emergency room visit*. Providers are encouraged to review this IR and educate participants when needed for the control of infectious diseases.

Primary Care Services (Added 05/27/2020)

Effective March 18, 2020, [Information Release MA20-10](#) was issued temporarily suspending referral requirements for Healthy Connections in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). This suspension is intended to reduce potential barriers to care for participants and reduce administrative burden for providers. During this temporary suspension, we encourage providers to be diligent in coordinating participant care by communicating the visit summary to the HC Primary Care Provider of record.

Hospital Services (Amended 05/27/2020)

Coverage is available for participants isolated or quarantined in a private hospital room due to public health reasons such as COVID-19 even though services may not meet the need for acute inpatient care. Due to the nature of this public health issue, and the need for assertive use of patient isolation, claims for use of a private room or isolation room will not require the standard claims supporting documentation (i.e. typically required supporting and medical necessity documentation). CMS has issued [FAO's and Considerations for Patient Triage, Placement and Hospital Discharge](#).

CMS has granted some temporary flexibilities in their release "[Hospitals: CMS Flexibilities to Fight COVID-19](#)" that also apply to Medicaid services where allowed by licensing and certification and Idaho statute. The changes that apply include:

- CMS Hospital Without Walls (Temporary Expansion Sites):
 - Off Site Patient Screening;
 - Paperwork Requirements;
- Verbal Orders;
- Limit Discharge Planning for Hospital and CAHs;
- Modify Discharge Planning for Hospitals;
- Medical Records;
- Utilization review; and
- Quality assessment and performance improvement program.

Laboratory and Pathology Services (Added 05/27/2020)

Idaho Medicaid has released [Information Release MA20-30](#) to define coverage of COVID-19 testing, codes and changes to laboratory and pathology services during the PHE.

Prescription Drugs

Idaho Medicaid will work with participants and providers to make sure participants have adequate drug supplies. Many maintenance drugs used for common chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension are available and payable as a 3-month supply on request at the pharmacy. A list of these drugs is available at https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=GhGhmE6Ry_0%3d&tabid=119&portalid=0&mid=1111.

Early refills can be requested by calling the Idaho Medicaid call center line at 208-364-1829. In an emergency, a pharmacy may also be able to dispense a 72-hour supply of most medications. Participants are encouraged to also check with their pharmacy as several are currently offering free delivery of medications.

Services Provided in the Home (Amended 05/27/2020)

Personal Care Providers, Home Health and Hospice Agencies, Residential Habilitation Providers, and other providers who care for Medicaid participants in their homes have frequent contact with people at risk for COVID-19. It is especially important for you to practice good hygiene and take preventive measures. **We strongly encourage you to work with your staff to ensure that they are washing their hands frequently and taking appropriate measures**

before entering and after departing from a participant’s home. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued guidance to Home Health Agencies serving Medicaid and Medicare populations in the memorandum [“Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention Concerning Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Home Health Agencies \(HHAs\)”](#). While specifically directed towards HHA’s, it provides guidance that will be helpful for other in-home service providers as well. It includes information on screening and when to transfer participants to a hospital, and monitoring and restricting agency staff.

Hospice Providers (Added 05/27/2020)

CMS has granted some temporary flexibilities in their release [“Hospice: CMS Flexibilities to Fight COVID-19”](#) that also apply to Medicaid services. The changes that apply include:

- Workforce:
 - Training and Assessment of Aides;
 - Annual Training;
 - Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI);
 - Waive requirement for hospices to use volunteers;
 - Waived onsite visits for Hospice Aide Supervision; and
- Patients Over Paperwork:
 - Comprehensive Assessments.

Nursing Homes (Added 05/27/2020)

Because your staff have frequent contact with people at risk for COVID-19, it is especially important for you to practice good hygiene and take preventive measures. **We strongly encourage you to work with your staff to ensure that they are washing their hands frequently and following all CDC protocols before entering and after departing from a participant’s room.** The CMS has issued [Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in nursing homes.](#)

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Providers

Because your staff transport people at risk for COVID-19, or who may already have COVID-19, it is especially important for you to take preventive measures. We strongly recommend that you thoroughly clean and disinfect vehicles between trips. The CDC has [helpful information](#) on cleaning practices that can help. We have asked MTM to suspend liquidated damages related to late trips resulting from time needed to take appropriate infection control and preventive measures.

Dialysis Facilities (Amended 05/27/2020)

The CMS has issued guidance to Dialysis Facilities serving Medicaid and Medicare populations in the memorandum [“Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in dialysis facilities”](#). Guidance includes the use of personal protective equipment in undiagnosed participants, home dialysis considerations, transferring care, and the screening of participants, staff and visitors.

CMS has granted some temporary flexibilities in their release [“End Stage Renal Disease \(ESRD\) Facilities: CMS Flexibilities to Fight COVID-19”](#) that also apply to Medicaid services

where allowed by licensing and certification and Idaho statute. The changes that apply include:

- Patients Over Paperwork:
 - Training Program and Periodic Audits;
 - Equipment Maintenance & Fire Safety Inspections;
 - Emergency Preparedness;
 - Ability to Delay Some Patient Assessments;
 - Home dialysis machine designation – clarification;
- Medicare Telehealth for ESRD:
 - Time period for initiation of care planning and monthly physician visits;
 - Dialysis home visits to assess adaptation and home dialysis machine designation;
- CMS Facility without Walls (Temporary Expansion Sites):
 - Furnishing dialysis services on the main premises;
- Workforce:
 - Dialysis Patient Care Technician certification; and
 - Transferability of physician credentialing.

Federal Resources (Amended 05/27/2020)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released [provider resources specifically for Coronavirus](#).

The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Partner Toolkit](#) includes stakeholder calls with CMS on issues specific to your provider type, guidance, infographics and videos for educating your employees and patients.

Another key resource is the [CDC site for this issue](#).

Questions? (Amended 05/27/2020)

If you have questions regarding the virus or CDC reporting protocols, we recommend you contact your local health district or call 2-1-1 anywhere in Idaho. If you have questions regarding provisions within this Information Release specific to Medicaid policy or reimbursement, please email the Medicaid policy team at MCPT@dhw.idaho.gov.

We will be monitoring this situation closely and following up with Medicaid providers as needed to share information that may help address COVID-19 risks in Idaho. Additional [Information Releases](#) will be published to address specific provider services and issues. We thank you for your service to Idaho Medicaid participants and appreciate your work to address this public health threat.

MW/cb/wd