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MEDICAID INFORMATION RELEASE MA20-20

To: Medicaid Providers of Children’s Habilitative Intervention Services (CHIS), Children’s Developmental Disability (DD) Services, and School-Based Services

From: Matt Wimmer, Administrator

Subject: Service Delivery Flexibilities and Best Practices in Response to COVID-19

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (Department) continues to monitor and prepare for impacts resulting from the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We are working with the Governor’s Office and other state agencies including the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, local public health districts, and healthcare providers around the state, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and other state governments.

The President of the United States and the Governor of Idaho have recommended that individuals avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people. The Department strongly encourages all providers to follow these guidelines as well as any other guidelines issued by the state and federal government.

Idaho Governor Brad Little and the Department issued a [Statewide Stay-Home Order](#) on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, for all Idahoans. The order covers the entire state and begins immediately. It will last for at least twenty-one (21) days.

- See Information Release [MA20-18](#) for COVID-19 Essential Providers

CHIS, Children’s DD Services, and School-Based Services providers face unique challenges associated with COVID-19. To support participant access to services, Medicaid is temporarily implementing the below changes for providers effective March 16, 2020 and continuing until emergency declarations are lifted.

Telehealth for CHIS, Children’s DD Services, and School-Based Services

To reduce barriers and empower providers to provide medical services for Medicaid participants and reduce administrative burden for providers during this public health emergency, Idaho Medicaid is temporarily implementing changes to telehealth which impact CHIS, Children’s DD Services, and School-Based Services providers.

- Children’s DD Services of Family Education and Family-Directed Community Supports provided by Support Brokers, all CHIS, and School-Based Services may be provided via telehealth so long as the provider has means and knowledge to complete the service

with fidelity and ensures the criteria in Information Release [MA20-07](#) for Telehealth and COVID-19 are met.

- See Information Release [MA20-13](#) for Medicaid Provider Telehealth HIPAA Guidance.
- Please send questions regarding telehealth for CHIS and Children's DD Services to ChildrensDDServices@dhw.idaho.gov.
- Please send questions regarding telehealth for School-Based Services to Angie.Williams@dhw.idaho.gov.

Service Location for CHIS, Children's DD Services, and School-Based Services

During this state of emergency, providers may, at their discretion, provide services in a participant's home, community, school, or center-based setting regardless of the setting identified on the participant's plan. Idaho Medicaid anticipates providers and families will make decisions that best suit the participants' needs and safety considerations.

When providing services in an alternate location:

- The participant's record must include documentation of the alternate service location and confirm the location was changed due to COVID-19; and
- The provider should bill the code(s) and location on the participant's plan, not the alternate location.

Signature Requirements for CHIS, Children's DD Services, and School-Based Services

Required signatures may be obtained by any of the following methods:

- Electronically via email;
- By fax; or
- By phone authorization, provided that the phone authorization is documented in the participant's record and identifies the date and time of the call and those involved in the call. Required signatures and initials must be obtained as soon as reasonably possible and kept in the participant's records.

Prior Authorization (PA) Amendments for CHIS

While school districts are closed, children's parents may elect to access community-based services from a community provider who would seek reimbursement for those services. If a community-based provider needs to increase hours of service for a child due to a school closure they can complete a [PA Amendment Form](#) (available on the [Children's DD and CHIS Provider website](#)).

- Please email PA Amendment requests or any questions regarding completion of the form to MedicaidQIO@dhw.idaho.gov.
 - Utilize the [NEW - Prior Authorization Amendment Form](#) when submitting requests to Medicaid QIO and include the following:
 - The child's Medicaid Identification Number;
 - The child's current authorization number;
 - The date ranges the request is intended for;
 - The total number of hours/units the child needs for the weeks school is out (NOT the additional hours/units they need); and
 - Write "COVID-19" in the justification box.

- Requests for increases in hours may be made for the remainder of the child's regularly scheduled school year or until school resumes, whichever comes first (all other needs for amendments must be [requested as usual](#)).
 - Should school resume via soft-closure, in-person, or virtually, providers should return to regularly authorized hours of CHIS. School-Based Services will then resume, per the guidelines in the "School-Based Services" section below.
- Authorizations may be retroactive to March 16, 2020.
- Parent signature on the PA Amendment form will not be required if not immediately available due to COVID-19. Providers are still required to discuss the requested changes to authorized hours with the parent/caregiver.
 - Phone authorizations must be documented on the signature line of the form and identify the date and time of the call and those involved in the call.
 - For example: *Verbal confirmation received from mom, Susie Smith, March 27, 2020 at 9:42am.*
- PA Amendment requests can be used for both children on transitional intervention PAs (no ACTP) as well as those who have current CHIS PAs.

Support Service Amendment Requests for Children's DD Services

- Questions regarding Children's DD Services should be sent to FACSSchoolchildrenDD@dhw.idaho.gov.

School-Based Services

If a school district remains open or chooses a soft-close:

- The school must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP. In this instance, the school district could seek reimbursement for Medicaid School-Based Services.
- The school district may provide a service via telehealth, if appropriate and in accordance with telehealth requirements.

There is no need to amend the IEP to indicate the service is provided via telehealth as this is an alternative mode of delivery and a temporary measure to seek reimbursement from Medicaid. Please use the GT modifier.

Family Directed Community Supports

- Family-Directed Community Support Workers may, at their discretion, provide community support services.
- All Support Broker activities may be completed via telehealth or teleconferencing (see Information Release [MA20-07](#)).

Quality Assurance

- Quality assurance will be suspended or completed via phone or email until further notice. Critical incidents and complaints must continue to be submitted to the Department.

Criminal History Background Checks for CHIS and Children's DD Services

Newly hired direct care staff may begin rendering services prior to a completed criminal history background check under the following conditions:

- The Criminal History Background Check application must be submitted prior to rendering services. The application is available at <http://chu.dhw.idaho.gov>.
- The provider must access the [iCourts online system](#) to complete a search of any criminal convictions or outstanding warrants associated with the direct care staff. An attestation that this search was conducted *prior* to the direct care staff rendering care must be included with the employee's file. The attestation template is attached to this information release.
- The provider must advise the Medicaid participant or legal guardian that the direct care staff has not yet completed the Criminal History Background Check to support informed decision-making.
- **This flexibility DOES NOT apply to School-Based Services providers or Independent providers.**

Best Practices

Medicaid has compiled several best practice recommendations to share with providers of HCBS. Providers are encouraged to:

- Become familiar with recommendations from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and the [Idaho Department of Health & Welfare](#) related to social distancing and personal hygiene. Two courses have been made available to Idaho agencies and direct care staff free of charge through In The Know Caregiver Training, which can be accessed here: ["Understanding Coronavirus" and "Standard Precautions."](#) Registration on the webpage is required.
- Ensure that a person-centered approach to services is maintained by communicating with people receiving services and their families and guardians to keep them updated on how they can stay safe while accessing HCBS during this state of emergency. Ensure direct care staff are familiar with the agency's emergency response plan in addition to participant-specific back-up plans.

These temporary changes took effect on March 16, 2020 and will continue through at least the end of the declared state of emergency. These changes may be rescinded or modified in the future to respond to changing pandemic conditions. To the extent practical, we strongly encourage the use of telehealth to provide services to Medicaid participants. Further guidance will be forthcoming as the situation develops.

We thank you for your service to Idaho Medicaid participants and appreciate your work to address this public health threat.

MW/am

Modified Background Check Attestation

Instructions: During the COVID 19 pandemic, modifications have been made to the Criminal History Requirements for all staff delivering service to Medicaid participants receiving Children’s Developmental Disability Services or Children’s Habilitation Intervention Services. This modification is a temporary measure.

Providers are required to conduct a record search on the Idaho Repository site @ icourt.idaho.gov prior to the delivery of any services to Medicaid participants. This form must be completed for all staff for which a records search was conducted and should be kept in the employee file.

All newly hired staff MUST complete the CHU application prior to service delivery and must complete the fingerprint process or Idaho State Police background search, within sixty (60) days of the application. The CHU application is available at chu.dhw.idaho.gov

Today’s Date		Agency Name	
Staff Last Name		Staff First Name	
Date of Search		Date of Hire	

Please enter a screenshot of the data generated from the name search