



BRAD LITTLE – Governor  
DAVE JEPPESEN – Director

# IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

MATT WIMMER - Administrator  
DIVISION OF MEDICAID  
Post Office Box 83720  
Boise, Idaho 83720-0009  
PHONE: (208) 334-5747  
FAX: (208) 364-1811

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## MEDICAID INFORMATION RELEASE MA20-37

**To:** Medicaid Providers

**From:** Matt Wimmer, Administrator

**Subject:** Safety guidelines for drivers and passengers who use Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) during the COVID 19 Pandemic

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare continues to monitor impacts resulting from the transmission of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) program continues to provide an essential service for Medicaid participants who depend on it for transportation to and from healthcare appointments. People are usually not able to practice social distancing when riding in a vehicle, so it is important to take safety precautions to protect participants and drivers from the risk of contracting coronavirus. The information below explains safety precautions DHW expects everyone to take to help keep people safe and clarifies rights and responsibilities of participants, NEMT drivers and providers who support participants at pick up and destination locations.

### **Department Expectations for NEMT Providers and Drivers**

During the COVID pandemic, DHW expects all NEMT providers and drivers to follow the safety protocols outlined below.

- Wear a mask when participants are in your vehicle.
- Wear a mask when helping a participant to or from your vehicle.
- Thoroughly clean and wipe down the vehicle with a disinfectant after each transport.
- Avoid using the recirculated air for the car's ventilation during passenger transport; use the car's vents to bring in fresh air.
- Require all passengers to wear a mask while using the service. Included with this Information Release is a flyer NEMT providers may print to post in vehicles to communicate expectations for face coverings.
- Drivers have the right to refuse to provide transportation to protect yourself and other passengers if a participant refuses to wear a mask.

- Notify MTM immediately if you refuse to provide transportation to a member due to safety concerns, so MTM can try to make other transportation arrangements for the participant.
- Drivers are not responsible for providing masks to participants, helping participants with their masks, or reminding them to keep masks in place during transportation, as this could be a distraction for the driver causing a safety risk. Participants who need assistance may have an attendant support them during a transport.
- Whenever possible, call ahead to facilities when you are 5-10 minutes from the site and let them know you are an NEMT provider dropping off a patient who will need to wait inside the building.
- Transport single participants or reduce the number of participants per vehicle whenever possible.
- Consider installing a partition between driver and passengers.
- Continue providing driver education aligned with Idaho Public Health and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

#### **Member's rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

- DHW expects all participants to wear masks or a face covering while using Medicaid transportation services for the safety of everyone in the vehicle.
- Participants have the right to refuse transportation if the driver is not taking safety precautions and to request future transportation is scheduled with a different provider.
- Participants should contact MTM at (877) 503-1261 prior to their scheduled pick up in any of the following situations:
  - They are experiencing symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19.
  - Their medical appointment has been rescheduled or cancelled due to COVID.
  - They have refused transportation because the driver is not taking safety precautions to prevent the spread of coronavirus.
  - They are at high risk of medical complications from coronavirus and will need special accommodations.
- Participants who are at high risk for contracting coronavirus are encouraged to use the gas mileage reimbursement program instead of riding with a transportation provider to reduce the risk of exposure.
- Participants who need support to travel safely may ride with an attendant. Information about transportation attendant processes can be found at [www.mtm-inc.net](http://www.mtm-inc.net). Questions should be directed to MTM at (877) 503-1261.

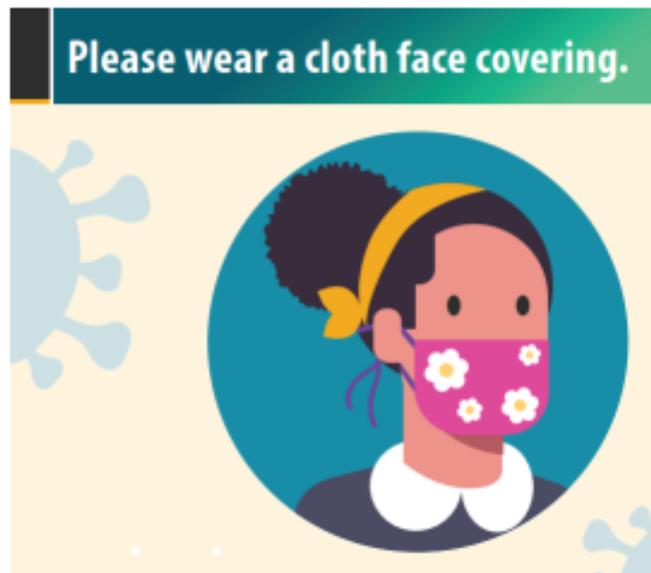
#### **Department Expectations for Providers Who Support Participants at Pick up and Destination Locations**

- Please support participants in wearing a face covering to and from healthcare appointments. NEMT drivers are not responsible for providing masks to participants, helping participants with their masks, or reminding them to keep masks in place during transportation, as this could be a distraction for the driver causing a safety risk. Participants who need assistance may have an attendant support them during a

transport. To find out more about the NEMT attendant program, contact MTM at (877)503-1261.

- If your facility is limiting the number of patients and non-patients who enter, please understand that NEMT drivers are not expected to wait outside the facility with the participant. This would prevent them from providing scheduled transportation to other participants.

MW/va



**The Department of Health and Welfare expects drivers and passengers to wear face coverings.**

**Thank you for doing your part to promote health and safety!**



**El Departamento de Salud y Bienestar espera que los conductores y pasajeros usen cubre bocas.**

**¡Gracias por hacer su parte en promover salud y seguridad!**



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)