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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

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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) guidance available at:

[What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#)

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

New Codes Specific to Coronavirus

Effective February 4, 2020, Idaho Medicaid is implementing reimbursement of CPT[®] U0001 and U0002 for diagnostic testing of the Coronavirus. Reimbursement rates will be set with an interim rate pending pricing by CMS’s local contractor, Noridian Healthcare. Once a rate is set by Noridian, claims will be reprocessed at 90% of the established rate to correspond with Idaho Code 56-265.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) clinical lab information about the testing [can be found here](#). Providers should follow the criteria established by the CDC protocol for testing and reporting [found here](#). Since influenza is still widely circulating and has similar symptoms, rapid flu tests will generally be recommended to rule out flu before proceeding with coronavirus testing.

Telehealth Reimbursement Options

In order to deliver services and ensure the needs of participants are met, Idaho Medicaid encourages providers to look to utilize telehealth options, where appropriate. Reimbursement is available for services provided under Idaho Medicaid’s telehealth policy, which has procedure codes for both new and established patients, including primary care.

All codes reimbursable via telehealth are currently listed in the code set within Information Release [MA18-007](#). Additional information on telehealth is provided in the [General Provider and Participant Handbook \(Note: the handbook name will be General Information and Requirements for Providers effective April 1, 2020\)](#).

All claims for services delivered via telehealth must be billed with the GT modifier in addition to the CPT[®].

Urgent Care Services

Effective January 1, 2020, Idaho Medicaid implemented a policy change within [Information Release MA#19-17](#) 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.

Hospital Stays

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).

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_Q%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.

Personal Care Providers, Home Health and Hospice Agencies, Residential Habilitation Providers, and other providers who care for Medicaid participants in their homes

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 at a minimum before and after entering 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.

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

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (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.

Federal Resources

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released provider resources specifically for Coronavirus. These are available at <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>.

Another key resource is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) site for this issue: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>. Providers are highly encouraged to utilize these resources.

Questions?

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

MW/cb