



March 22, 2020 Summary of Florida Medicaid Agency COVID-Related Policy Transmittals

The Medicaid Agency issued an alert on March 22nd, announcing a new website for COVID-19 accessible through this link: http://ahca.myflorida.com/covid-19_alerts.shtml.

The website has a number of policy transmittals which include direction to both fee-for-service and managed care plan providers. Significantly, the introduction to *Policy Transmittal 2020-15* states that during the state of emergency, “**managed care plans must ensure there are no gaps in care for its Medicaid enrollees.**”

Important new requirements, during the emergency, that are applicable to all of Florida’s Medicaid managed care plans, including long-term care (LTC) plans, as well as fee-for service include:

Waiver of prior authorization requirements for the following services:

- Skilled nursing facilities
- Long term acute hospitals
- Hospital services
- Physician services
- Advanced practice registered nursing
- Physician assistant
- Home health
- Durable medical equipment and supplies

Services for patients diagnosed with COVID-19:

Plans must waive limits on medically necessary services (specifically duration, frequency and scope). For example, the 45 day limit on hospital services will not apply.

Prescription drugs:

While still subject to prior authorization requirements, plans must lift all limits on early refills (except for controlled substances). Coverage will be provided for 90 day supplies when requested by the enrollee. (Emphasis added.)

Copayments: must be waived

Appeals and fair hearings:

Enrollees must be given more time to appeal through their plan or request a fair hearing if the need for an extension is due to COVID-19 impact. The policy transmittal also notes that while the Agency got permission from the federal government to delay scheduling of Medicaid fair hearings and issuing decisions (this was through the 1135 waiver granted last week and referenced in Val Greenfield’s 3/20 message to the health/senior listserv), hearing delay is limited to those

instances where the recipient is continuing to receive services pending the outcome of the fair hearing. (Emphasis added.)

Telemedicine:

AHCA is encouraging maximized delivery of services via telemedicine and has several provider specific transmittal on the website to give providers guidance.

Expansion of LTC Provider qualifications:

Given the impact that COVID-19 is having on network providers (resulting in potential closures and workforce shortages), the Agency is authorizing plans to temporarily modify services and provider qualifications during the state of emergency. The plan must ensure that the provider uses appropriately licensed staff to perform services within the individual's scope of practice, and the plan must document the reason for the temporary alteration in the plan of care.

Postponement of preadmission screening and residence reviews for nursing homes