

Special COVID-19 Letter of Direction #5

Date: April 30, 2020 (effective March 17, 2020)

To: Centennial Care 2.0 Managed Care Organizations

From: Nicole Comeaux, Director, Medical Assistance Division

Subject: COVID-19 Member and Provider Communication Protocols

Title: COVID-19 Member and Provider Communication



This Special COVID-19 LOD replaces Section 1 of LOD 30 & 31.

The purpose of this revised Letter of Direction (LOD) is to provide guidance and directives to the Centennial Care 2.0 Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) for modification of services and program standards related to the national public health emergency associated with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The purpose of these changes is to assure the continuation of essential services to Medicaid patients without disruption or delay while following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) direction to maximize social distancing for the duration of the public health emergency. Effective immediately, HSD directs the MCOs to implement the following strategies for all Medicaid members:

- 1. MCO Call Centers** - All MCO call center communications related to COVID-19 must align with messaging delivered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH), and the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD). The MCOs are expected to work collaboratively to ensure that their messaging is consistent and in alignment with these agencies.

The MCOs are expected to assure that call center staffing is adequate to meet the volume demand of MCO members and providers. This means that staffing patterns may need to be temporarily increased through the termination of the emergency declaration. HSD is aware that the DOH COVID-19 call center may experience call volume that exceeds DOH capacity for the next several weeks and months; therefore, the ability of MCOs to assist with calls and to assure alignment with federal and state messaging will remain critical during this timeframe.

- 2. Nurse Advice Lines** - The requirements above apply to the MCOs' nurse advice lines. The MCOs are expected to assure adequate staffing and training to meet the demand for members in need of direction and advice related to COVID-19 testing and treatment. Additionally, the MCOs are required to expand their nurse advice line services to operate on a 24-hour/7-day per week basis for the duration of the emergency if such functionality does not already exist.

- 3. MCO Websites and Member Materials** – The MCOs are required to maintain up-to-date information on their websites and to develop member materials related to COVID-19. Information should include where members can obtain testing services and the symptom prompts and risks that indicate when testing is warranted. Member materials related to COVID-19 do not require HSD approval through the termination of the emergency declaration; however, as directed in paragraph 1a above, all materials must align with CDC, DOH and HSD messaging.

HSD values its continued collaboration and partnership with the MCOs to implement these directives as quickly as possible to help assure the health and safety of Medicaid members and our fellow New Mexicans. Further direction will be provided as guidance and authorities become available.

This COVID-19 Letter of Direction will sunset when the Human Services Department determines that the national public health emergency associated with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has been contained.