



**Louisiana Department of Health**  
**Health Plan Advisory 20-6**  
**Revised February 22, 2021**

**Response to COVID-19**

The directives below should be considered as continuing until rescinded by LDH.

**Laboratory Testing**

For patient selection and testing procedures, please refer to the recent OPH Health Alert Network Messages, located at: <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3865>.

Effective for dates of service on or after March 5, 2020, Louisiana Medicaid covers commercial COVID-19 laboratory testing, without restrictions or prior authorization. A separate COVID-19 Laboratory Testing fee schedule is available at:  
[https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/fee\\_schedules/feeschedulesindex.htm](https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/fee_schedules/feeschedulesindex.htm).

This fee schedule contains information specific to the procedure codes, types of service, reimbursement, and effective dates of service for covered laboratory testing related to COVID-19. It will be updated as needed throughout the COVID-19 event.

Providers shall be allowed to resubmit claims if there is a date of service/procedure code conflict. To minimize administrative burden to providers, MCOs are to determine if recycling of claims is warranted.

**Laboratory Testing using High Throughput Technology**

Louisiana Medicaid covers laboratory testing that uses high throughput technology represented by the newly established HCPCS codes. Laboratory providers with this capacity and any required certification may submit claims for the tests performed. Relevant procedure codes and fees are available on the COVID-19 Laboratory Testing fee schedule.

## **Serological Antibody Testing**

Medicaid covers COVID-19 serological antibody testing for all enrollees when medically necessary. Relevant procedure codes are listed on the COVID-19 Laboratory Testing Fee Schedule. Serological antibody testing is covered for a maximum of two tests per year without prior authorization.

Providers should refer to CDC guidelines for test ordering and interpretation, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antibody-tests.html>.

All serological antibody tests must be FDA-approved or authorized; a listing is available at: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/eua-authorized-serology-test-performance>.

Serological antibody testing is only covered for enrollees:

1. For evaluation of a recent past episode of symptoms to determine if the infection was from the SARS-CoV-2 virus; or
2. To assess risk of infection in an enrollee who believes that they are immune. In this case, a negative test would demonstrate continued susceptibility and provide an opportunity for discussion about the importance of mitigation measures. Please note: By CDC guidelines, a positive test does not necessarily mean that a member is immune to infection with SARS-CoV-2.

## **Laboratory Testing that includes Respiratory Viral Panels**

Effective March 1, 2021, respiratory viral panel tests that do not include specific SARS-CoV-2 targets, represented by CPT codes 87631, 87632 and 87633, are not covered.

Commercially available respiratory viral panel tests that do contain SARS-CoV-2 targets are covered and must be billed with the appropriate procedure code, as listed on the COVID-19 Laboratory Fee Schedule. Providers should select the most appropriate test for the diagnosis of suspected COVID-19. Use of directed testing with more narrow tests as defined by procedure codes such as 87426, 87635, U0003 or U0004 may be more appropriate in many cases.

Relevant procedure code additions have been made to the published COVID-19 Laboratory Testing fee schedule. MCOs are to follow standard processes to update their files accordingly, recycle claims denied prior to the update, and notify impacted providers.

## **COVID-19 Treatments**

Louisiana Medicaid covers all COVID-19 treatments for which the Food and Drug Administration has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Treatment coverage is provided without the requirement of prior authorization and with no cost sharing for Medicaid beneficiaries.

The relevant procedure codes for treatments and treatment administration are listed on the “COVID-19 Vaccine/Treatment Fee Schedule” which will be updated as new information becomes available. Coverage is provided according to the clinical criteria listed in the EUA and is effective on the date listed on the fee schedule.

Currently, treatment medications are provided at no cost to providers by the federal government and therefore the medication codes shall be reimbursed at \$0. The MCO must edit claims to ensure that reimbursement is only made for treatment administration when performed appropriately, defined as:

1. The beneficiary meets the age requirement on the date of service
2. The medication code matches the administration code

This policy will be updated as needed for changes in medication availability and eligibility criteria.

### **COVID-19 Counseling and Evaluation and Management Services**

Under existing payment policies, physicians and other licensed practitioners furnishing counseling services related to COVID-19 may use evaluation and management visit codes, when applicable. When furnishing these services, physicians and other practitioners spending more than 50 percent of the face-to-face time (for non-inpatient services) or more than 50 percent of the floor time (for inpatient services) providing counseling or coordination of care may use time to select the level of evaluation and management visit reported.

Counseling resources:

Provider Counseling Q&A: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-provider-counseling-ga.pdf>

Provider Counseling Talking Points: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-provider-patient-counseling-talking-points.pdf>

Provider Counseling Check List: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-provider-patient-counseling-checklist.pdf>

Handout for Patients to Take Home: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/318271-A\\_FS\\_KeyStepsWhenWaitingForCOVID-19Results\\_3.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/318271-A_FS_KeyStepsWhenWaitingForCOVID-19Results_3.pdf)

### **COVID-19 Vaccination**

Louisiana Medicaid covers all COVID-19 vaccinations for which the Food and Drug Administration has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Vaccine coverage is provided without the requirement of prior authorization in both the medical and the pharmacy benefit and with no cost sharing for Medicaid beneficiaries.

For clinical guidance, the MCO can refer providers to Office of Public Health advisories on COVID-19 vaccination, located at: (<https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/4042>).

Training tools for providers can be found here: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3880>.

The relevant procedure codes for vaccines and vaccine administration are listed on the “COVID-19 Vaccine/Treatment Fee Schedule” which will be updated as new information becomes available. A separate provider notice will be issued with guidance for billing pharmacy claims. Coverage is provided according to the clinical criteria listed in the EUA and is effective on the date listed on the fee schedule.

Currently, vaccine doses are provided at no cost to providers by the federal government and therefore the vaccine codes shall be reimbursed at \$0. The MCO must edit claims to ensure that reimbursement is only made for vaccine administration when performed and coded appropriately, defined as:

1. To beneficiaries meeting the age requirements on the date of service
2. At or after the recommended dosing interval, if applicable
3. The vaccine administration code matches the vaccine code (when billed as a medical claim)
4. The vaccine administration code accurately reflects whether the dose administered was an initial or a final dose, based on claims history (when billed as a medical claim or the appropriate Submission Clarification Code is submitted on the pharmacy claim)
5. When a series is initiated, that it is completed by dose(s) from the same manufacturer

In the event that a medically necessary exception is required, the MCO must make such allowances.

This policy will be updated as needed for changes in vaccine availability and eligibility criteria.

## **Overall Telemedicine/Telehealth Policy**

Louisiana Medicaid encourages the use of telemedicine/telehealth, when appropriate, for any and all healthcare services (i.e., not just those related to COVID-19 symptoms). Louisiana Medicaid, including all Medicaid MCOs, allows for the telemedicine/telehealth mode of delivery for many common healthcare services. When otherwise covered by Louisiana Medicaid, telemedicine/telehealth is allowed for all CPT codes located in Appendix P of the CPT manual (relevant codes listed below).

### **Permissible Telecommunications Systems:**

All services eligible for telemedicine/telehealth may be delivered via an interactive audio/video telecommunications system. A secure, HIPAA-compliant platform is preferred, if available.

For the duration of the COVID-19 event, in cases where an interactive audio/video system is not immediately available at the time it is needed, an interactive audio-only system (e.g., telephone) without the requirement of video may be employed, unless noted otherwise. For use of an audio-only system, the same standard of care must be met, and the need and rationale for employing an audio-only system must be documented in the clinical record. Please note, some telemedicine/telehealth services described below require delivery through an audio/video system due to the clinical nature of these services. Where applicable, this requirement is noted explicitly.

Effective with dates of service on and after June 1, 2020, “Telephone Services” represented by CPT codes 99441, 99442, and 99443 will no longer be payable under the Professional Services or Outpatient Hospital programs. Claims for audio-only interactions must be coded using the appropriate procedure codes describing the service, for example evaluation and management services, with the telehealth modifier and place of service appended.

### **Originating Site:**

The originating site refers to where the patient is located. There is currently no formal limitation on the originating site and this can include, but is not limited to, the patient’s home.

### **Distant Site:**

The distant site refers to where the provider is located. The preferred location of a distant site provider is in a healthcare facility. However, if there is disruption to a healthcare facility or a risk to the personal health and safety of a provider, there is no formal limitation as to where the distant site provider can be located, as long as the same standard of care can be met.

#### Other Requirements:

As always, providers must maintain the usual medical documentation to support reimbursement of the visit. In addition, providers must adhere to all telemedicine/telehealth-related requirements of their respective professional licensing boards.

#### Reimbursement:

Reimbursement for services delivered through telemedicine/telehealth is at the same level as reimbursement for in-person services. This includes services delivered by an audio/video telecommunications system as well as by an audio-only system. MCOs with contracts that exclude providers from delivering services via telehealth should amend those contracts to allow it, where clinically appropriate.

Several service-specific policies are detailed below:

- Billing instructions (non-FQHC/RHC): Providers must indicate place of service 02 and must append modifier -95.
- Billing instructions for FQHCs/RHCs: Providers must indicate place of service 02 and append modifier -95 on the header and on all detailed service lines. Services delivered via an audio/video system and via an audio-only system should be coded this same way. Reimbursement for these services in an FQHC/RHC will be at the all-inclusive prospective payment rate on file for the date of service.

Relevant CPT codes covered in the overall telemedicine/telehealth policy are listed below. In addition, other services are eligible to be delivered via telemedicine/telehealth (e.g., PT/OT/SLT) and these are detailed later in this bulletin.

| Category          | Service                                                                                                                                   | CPT Code(s)                                            |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Behavioral Health | See Medicaid Health Plan Advisories posted at <a href="http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/1734">http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/1734</a> . |                                                        |
| Dialysis          | End-Stage Renal Disease Services                                                                                                          | 90951, 90952, 90954, 90955, 90957, 90958, 90960, 90961 |
| Cardiovascular    | Cardiovascular Monitoring Services                                                                                                        | 93228, 93268, 93272                                    |

|                                                                      |                                          |                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Neuromuscular                                                        | Neurostimulator Analysis-<br>Programming | 95970, 95971, 95972                  |
| Psychological,<br>Neuropsychological<br>Testing                      | Neurobehavioral Status<br>Examination    | 96116                                |
| Evaluation and<br>Management, Office or<br>Other Outpatient Services | New Patient                              | 99201, 99202, 99203,<br>99204, 99205 |
|                                                                      | Established Patient                      | 99211, 99212, 99213,<br>99214, 99215 |
| Hospital Inpatient<br>Services                                       | Subsequent Hospital Care                 | 99231, 99232, 99233                  |
| Nursing Facility Services                                            | Subsequent Nursing Facility<br>Care      | 99307, 99308, 99309,<br>99310        |

### **Telehealth Requirements for Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy**

Effective for dates of service on or after March 17, 2020, and for the duration of the COVID-19 event, Louisiana Medicaid encourages and will reimburse the use of telehealth, when appropriate, for rendering physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy to members. Telehealth can facilitate the continuation or establishment of these services while complying with the need for social distancing.

Telehealth services can be rendered for the care of new or established patients, or to support the caregivers of new or established patients. For services requiring prior authorization, a new prior authorization request does not need to meet any additional criteria to be eligible for telehealth delivery and an existing prior authorization does not need an addendum to be eligible for telehealth delivery.

Telehealth services must be rendered by licensed providers for their respective therapies, which include physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists, subsequently referred to collectively as the “therapy provider.”

### **EarlySteps Providers**

Prior to the session, the therapy provider should obtain permission from the member or caregiver to proceed with telehealth and this discussion should be documented in the clinical

record. The therapy provider should also assist the member or caregiver in setting up any technology needed. The therapy provider is responsible for all aspects of the respective care provided to a patient, including determining and documenting the extent to which the use of technology is necessary and appropriate in the provision of the rendered therapy. A member's appropriateness for telehealth should be determined on a case-by-case basis, with selections based on the judgment of the therapy provider, the member's informed choice, and professional standards of care. The therapy provider should ensure that care is provided in a secure, confidential location.

The therapy provider and member/caregiver must use an interactive audio/video telecommunications system.

#### Billing and Claims Processing Update:

The Louisiana Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS) claim processing system is being updated to allow the teletherapy place of service (02) and the procedure modifier 95 to no longer deny claims. All FFS claims submitted with a date of service on or after March 16, 2020, that were denied due to the use of these teletherapy codes will be recycled without any action required by providers as long as there were no other claim billing errors. This claims recycle is expected to occur on the remittance of April 28, 2020.

Providers must continue to include all other applicable EarlySteps procedure code modifiers (e.g., U8, TJ, or SE as applicable) on any teletherapy claims submitted. Claims submitted without the appropriate procedure code modifiers will remain in a denied status until they are corrected. Providers should correct any prior submitted claims without these modifiers in order to receive payment.

#### All Therapy Providers

A list of relevant procedure codes is included below. Providers must indicate place of service 02 and must append modifier -95.

| Physical Therapy | Occupational Therapy | Speech/Language Therapy |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 97161            | 97165                | 92507                   |
| 97162            | 97166                | 92508                   |
| 97163            | 97167                | 92521                   |

|       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 97164 | 97168 | 92522 |
| 97110 | 97530 | 92523 |
| G0151 | G0152 | 92524 |
|       |       | 92526 |
|       |       | 92610 |
|       |       | G0153 |

### **Telehealth Requirements for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)**

Effective for dates of service on or after March 17, 2020, and for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, Louisiana Medicaid encourages and will reimburse the use of telehealth, when appropriate, for rendering certain ABA services. LDH will determine upon resolution of the COVID-19 emergency if telehealth services should remain in place as part of the ABA program. Telehealth services can be rendered for the care of new or established patients or to support the caregivers of new or established patients.

An established patient is defined as one who already has an approved and prior authorized treatment plan. An existing prior authorization does not need an addendum to be eligible for telehealth delivery. All prior authorizations will be extended through ~~February 28~~ April 30, 2021. However, new patients still require approval and prior authorization for services, and subsequent new assessments and behavior treatment plans can be performed remotely via telehealth only if the same standard of care can be met. Previously approved prior authorizations can be amended to increase units of care and/or to reflect re-assessment goals. Prior authorization requests submitted after October 31, 2020 for either new or established patients must include how telehealth will be incorporated into the behavior treatment plan, when telehealth is clinically appropriate.

The codes listed below can be performed via telehealth; however, requirements for reimbursement are otherwise unchanged from the Applied Behavior Analysis Provider Manual.

Relevant CPT codes include:

97151

97152

97153

97154

97155  
97156  
97157  
97158

**Billing Instructions:**

Claims processing systems were updated by March 24, 2020. In addition to providing a CPT code, providers must indicate place of service 02 and must append modifier -95. Services delivered via an audio/video system and via an audio-only system should be coded the same way.

**Guidance for Telehealth ABA:**

Telehealth services must be based on ABA methodology and rendered or directed by a registered line technician (RLT), Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA), or Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (CaBA). The caregivers/patients and RLT/LBA/CaBA must be linked through an interactive audio/visual telecommunications system. If an audio/visual telecommunications system is not available, then the LBA/CaBA may use an audio system, without the requirement of video, as long as the same standard of care can be met. The need and rationale for an audio-only service should be documented in the medical record. The purpose of this service is to provide family adaptive behavior treatment guidance, which helps parents and/or caregivers properly use treatment procedures designed to teach new skills and reduce challenging behaviors. Given the rapidly changing conditions during the COVID-19 emergency, addenda to Behavior Treatment Plans can be made to increase the units approved.

**Interprofessional Telephone/Internet/Electronic Health Record Services (E-Consults)**

Effective for dates of service on or after March 15, 2021, Louisiana Medicaid will reimburse interprofessional assessment and management services that occur electronically through EHR, through audio/video platforms, or via telephone (e-consults).

A qualifying assessment and management service is one in which a member's treating practitioner requests the opinion and/or treatment advice of a practitioner with a specific specialty or subspecialty different from the requesting practitioner, to assist the treating practitioner in the diagnosis and/or management of the member's presenting issue. (See additional information below for CPT code 99451.)

Treating and remote/e-consultant practitioners include the following types: physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants, psychologists, and other licensed mental health professionals.

All e-consults must be conducted through a secure internet exchange between the treating practitioner and the consultant\*. The system used to complete the e-consult must, at a minimum, comply with the following requirements:

- Be in compliance with current HIPPA and other applicable security and privacy requirements;
- Enable transmission through electronic communication systems to a specialist who uses the information to evaluate the cases for the type of e-consults for which it is used; and
- Be compatible with the primary care or treating provider's electronic health records system.

\*For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, when a secure electronic exchange is not available, or the practitioners do not have a compatible electronic health record system, interprofessional assessment and management services may be rendered via audio/visual (telehealth) platforms or telephone. Practitioners must document the reason for using telehealth or telephonic communications. Documentation in the clinical records must substantiate the service.

The purpose of remote interprofessional assessment and management via e-consults, audio/visual platforms, or telephone is to replace a face-to-face evaluation and management (E/M) visits that would be performed by a practitioner with that specialty/subspecialty.

E-consult codes for interprofessional assessment and management are not reimbursable if there has been an E/M visit with the specialist/subspecialist during the time period of 14 days prior to or will be an E/M visit 14 days after the remote interprofessional assessment and management occurs (or at the next available appointment date with the specialist if that date is greater than 14 days) if:

- The E/M visit was/is related to the original issue, and
- The E/M visit is with the same specialist/subspecialist (or group) and was completed in addition to the interprofessional assessment and management.

In this circumstance, the e-consult codes shall not be billed for interprofessional assessment and management services when the specialist/subspecialist will bill for an E/M visit. In addition, e-consult codes shall not be billed for regular communication that is expected to occur between a physician and an APRN collaborating with, or a PA supervised by, the physician. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in recoupment.

All documentation for interprofessional assessment and management is to include the medical/behavioral health conclusions and any recommendations for treatment written by the specialist/subspecialist. All documentation for the interprofessional assessment and management must be retained in the member's medical record. This applies to both the treating and specialty practitioners.

Relevant CPT procedure codes are:

- 99451: Interprofessional telephone/internet/electronic health record assessment and management service provided by a consultative physician, including a written report to the patient's treating/requesting physician or other qualified healthcare professional; 5 minutes or more of medical consultative time (used by the specialist/subspecialist clinician).

### **Guidance for In-Person Services during COVID-19 Emergency**

In accordance with Healthcare Facility Notice/Order Notice #2020-COVID19 ALL 020 issued June 4, 2020, ABA services rendered by an in-person RLT, LBA, or SCABA should be converted to telehealth or postponed whenever possible. However, providers shall consider the entire clinical picture when determining if a service can be safely converted to telehealth or postponed. It is recognized that some patients may qualify as having an "emergency medical condition" that could place the health of the individual or his/her caregiver(s) in serious jeopardy. For example, patients engaging in self-injurious behaviors, injuring others, and at risk of elopement may require in-home ABA services to prevent serious harm to themselves or others.

When considering in-person services, the provider should determine: 1) if the loss of these services will result in eminent danger for the patient and 2) the risks involved in providing such services. The provider should document evidence to support that the in-person services are provided to minimize eminent or existing danger to the patient/caregiver(s) and that the services cannot be rendered via telehealth.

Telehealth supervision of in-home therapy rendered by a RLT must utilize a LBA/CaBA to provide remote supervision. Each RLT must obtain ongoing supervision as approved in the patient's plan of care. Supervision may be conducted via an interactive audio/video telecommunications system in lieu of the LBA/CaBA being physically present. The purpose of supervision is to improve and maintain the behavior-analytic, professional, and ethical

repertoires of the RLT and facilitate and maintain the delivery of high-quality services to his or her patients.

### **In-person Encounter Requirements**

IF in-person encounters between RLT/LBA/CaBA/ are considered medically necessary, and IF the RLT/LBA/CaBA AND patient/caregivers agree that such encounters are necessary and safe, all providers and patients/caregivers are strongly advised to adhere to LDH and CDC recommendations to reduce exposure to themselves, their staff, and their patients. All patients, caregivers, providers, and staff should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19, pursuant to CDC guidance. Patients (when feasible) and caregivers should wear cloth face coverings or face masks during the encounter, and providers and staff should wear surgical face masks.

### **Telehealth at Outpatient Hospital Facility**

Effective for dates of service on or after March 17, 2020, outpatient hospital facilities must bill telehealth claims using the normal revenue code and applicable procedure code with modifier 95 appended. The POS 02 telehealth guidance for professional claims does not apply for telehealth billing on the UB 04 Form. MCO systems must be configured to process telehealth claims in accordance with these requirements.

### **Secondary Claims (Third Party Liability – TPL) for Telehealth:**

If a primary insurance claim for telehealth services was submitted with a place of service equal to the primary carrier's billing requirements and modifier -95 is appended to the procedure code for a covered service, DXC will allow the secondary claims and encounters. Place of service (POS) 02 will not be required for these claims.

All secondary (TPL) claims submitted for effective dates of service (as described elsewhere in this document) that were denied due to invalid place of service that have modifier-95 appended to applicable procedure codes will be reprocessed without any action required by providers.

### **EPSDT Preventive Services Telemedicine/Telehealth Visits (Well-Child Care) during COVID-19**

Effective for dates of service on or after March 5, 2020, the use of telemedicine/telehealth to perform clinically appropriate components of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) preventive services for members older than 24 months of age will be allowed. Essential components of an EPSDT preventive service visit that are impossible to perform via telemedicine/telehealth (e.g., a complete physical exam, vision and hearing screenings, fluoride varnish, laboratory tests, and immunizations) can be performed during an

in-person interperiodic visit at a later date when limitations on non-emergent clinical care are lessened.

Coding for EPSDT preventive services completed through telemedicine/telehealth and interperiodic visits:

- Telemedicine/telehealth visit: Normal EPSDT preventive services code by age (99381-99385, 99391-99395) with telehealth modifier (95), reduced services modifier (52), and place of service (02).
- In-person interperiodic visit: Normal EPSDT preventive services code (99391-99395).

The telemedicine/telehealth visit providing partial components of the EPSDT preventive services visit is reimbursed at 75% of the normal rate. The complete in-person interperiodic visit that occurs at a later date will be reimbursed at 100% of the fee on file.

Episodic and sick care (e.g., CPT codes 99212-99215) may be delivered by telemedicine/telehealth to members of all ages, as long as the same standard of care can be met as an in-person visit. For EPSDT preventive services and episodic and sick care, the overall Medicaid telemedicine/telehealth policy applies including, but not limited to, telecommunication system recommendations, originating site, distant site, and reimbursement rates. As always, providers must maintain the usual medical documentation to support reimbursement of the visit.

## **Pharmacy**

Effective March 17, 2020, members may receive up to a 90-day supply, as appropriate, of medications that are not controlled substances. These include cardiovascular drugs (hypertension, coronary artery disease, thrombosis), diabetes drugs (oral and injectable), respiratory drugs (inhaled and oral), contraceptives, antiretrovirals, direct-acting antivirals for hepatitis C, immunosuppressives, antipsychotics, and antidepressants, among others. MCOs have been provided with a list of applicable drugs, by NDC. Prior authorization on prescribed drugs and physician-administered drugs should resume November 1, 2020. Additionally, member copays for prescribed drugs are waived, effective March 24, 2020.

To reduce exposure, providers should consider encouraging members to use pharmacies that offer free home delivery services or drive-through pickup services. To reduce contact, member signatures are no longer required.

### **Durable Medical Equipment**

Effective March 17, 2020, members may receive up to a 90-day quantity of supplies related to: incontinence, diabetes, tracheostomy care, wound care, home dialysis, parenteral and enteral nutrition, apnea/breathing monitors and other respiratory supplies, home oxygen, electric breast pumps, pulse oximeter probes and tape, and intravenous therapy. A list of applicable HCPCS codes is provided at the end of this advisory. ~~Existing prior authorizations are extended through February 28, 2021.~~ Prior authorizations previously extended due to COVID 19 should be extended a final time through April 30, 2021. To reduce contact, member signatures are no longer required for DME delivery services.

Additionally, effective for dates of services on or after March 1, 2020, Medicaid reimburses for multifunction ventilators through the durable medical equipment benefit. This addition is to allow providers flexibility in the types of ventilators that can be utilized to meet members' needs.

### **Other Prior Authorized Services**

All existing prior authorizations for services are extended through ~~February 28~~ April 30, 2021, including:

- Any necessary medical and surgical procedures.
- Home health services (EHH).
- EPSDT personal care services (PCS).
- Hospice services.
- Therapies (PT/OT/SLT).
- Pediatric Day Health Care.

### **Hospital-based Utilization Management for Medical Stays**

MCOs may resume all hospital-based utilization management (UM) for all medical hospitalizations including, but not limited to, initial service authorizations and concurrent reviews beginning March 1, 2021. This also applies to cases in which an individual is enrolled in an MCO retroactively. All efforts to conduct post-payment reviews of medical hospital stays during the event period must be approved by and coordinated with LDH to minimize disruption to hospitals.

Hospitals are expected to continue to notify MCOs about admissions so that MCOs can assist with discharge planning where possible. To maximize beds available for patients with COVID-19, hospital-based staff should be dedicated to facilitating rapid placement and discharge of currently hospitalized patients. Service authorizations for services necessary to ensure a safe discharge such as home health services and skilled nursing facility services should be lifted.

**Quarantine/Isolation**

When otherwise covered in Louisiana Medicaid, a public health quarantine or isolation order or recommendation establishes medical necessity of healthcare services. For hospital-based quarantine or isolation stays, MCOs shall not downgrade inpatient days to an outpatient level of care, and shall not deny claims for physician services, on the basis of medical necessity. In these cases, the level of care determination is at the discretion of the hospital.

**Quality Programs and Value-Based Payment Programs**

Participation in provider quality incentive programs and value-based payment programs will not be negatively affected by the disruption caused by COVID-19. When determining provider incentives and value-based payment targets, Medicaid MCOs will account for the effects of COVID-19 on the healthcare system.

**Provider Visits and Case Management**

All face-to-face provider visits by MCO staff should be discontinued. All face-to-face member case management should be transitioned to telephonic or audio/visual encounters.

**Social Distancing**

MCOs shall protect their staff, and support ongoing continuity of operations, through implementing social distancing policies within their offices.

**Submission of MCO Policies**

Effective immediately pharmacy policies should be submitted to [mcopharmacypolicies@la.gov](mailto:mcopharmacypolicies@la.gov). MCOs may resume submitting all non-pharmacy policies to [mcopolicies@la.gov](mailto:mcopolicies@la.gov) beginning March 1, 2021, in accordance with the directions provided by LDH.

Any policies that are deemed to meet the imminent peril exception in Act 319 will be immediately posted and can be enacted upon posting.

**Credentialing**

MCOs should follow the guidance issued by the National Committee for Quality Assurance, which includes:

**Practitioners Who Provide Care During a Public Health Emergency**

Organizations do not need to credential practitioners who are not part of their network or practice and are providing care to members/patients as part of a federal, state or local government emergency response team.

### **Accreditation and Certification Organizations**

For activities where challenges to timeliness may occur, NCQA is making the following changes, effective immediately:

- Extending the practitioner and provider recredentialing cycle 2 months, to 38 months.
- Extending provisional credentialing status from 60 days to 180 days.

### **Member Reassignment**

The quarterly member reassignment process outlined in [Health Plan Advisory 19-5](#) shall be resumed effective October 1, 2020.

### **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation**

The following programmatic changes are effective during the COVID-19 event only. MCOs shall notify transportation providers of these changes immediately upon the posting of this advisory:

#### **Participation Requirements**

- Providers may lease vehicles and use magnetic signage.
- Drivers may be 21 years of age or older.
- Mandated defensive driver and Passenger Assistance Safety and Sensitivity (PASS) training should be completed online. The wheelchair securement portion of PASS should be provided via a virtual platform.
- All other credentialing requirements listed in the transportation manual shall not be waived. Contracted brokers may relax requirements that are not in the transportation manual, i.e., annual training and recertification requirements.
- Virtual vehicle inspections are permitted as long as appropriate records and images are retained to document the inspection and condition of the vehicle.

#### **Trip Requirements**

- Prior to transport, the transportation broker shall verify provider offices are open, as many are closing for the purpose of social distancing and to minimize risk to susceptible individuals.
- Non-emergency medical transportation is not to be used for drive-through COVID-19 testing. Members requesting COVID-19 testing should be advised to call their healthcare provider for guidance.

- Any person scheduled for transport with a fever and respiratory symptoms or who has been exposed in the last 14 days to someone with fever and respiratory symptoms should be asked to cancel their trip as soon as possible. They should be advised to call their healthcare provider, or the Office of Public Health at 211, for guidance.
- Ground, non-emergency ambulance transportation may **not** be used to transport individuals with COVID-19. For enrollees with COVID-19, MCOs and brokers must work with NEMT providers to identify means to safely transport those enrollees, including enhanced rates to account for the proper PPE, vehicle modifications, or single rider trips.
- Enrollees shall not be required to sign transportation logs or other transport-related documents.
- Contracted brokers shall not require provider signatures on gas reimbursement claims.

MCOs may authorize the transport of enrollees to pharmacies to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and those trips are not required to be flagged as a value-added benefit (VAB). LDH will perform data analytics to verify that the enrollee did receive a vaccine on the same date of service as any pharmacy trip not flagged as a VAB. MCOs may be required to void any encounters for trips to a pharmacy without an associated vaccination.

MCOs and brokers should work with NEMT providers to ensure transportation of enrollees to obtain COVID-19 vaccines is provided regardless of the vaccination administration setting.

### **Non-Emergency Ambulance Transportation**

Signatures of healthcare providers certifying the need for transport shall not be required.

### **Treatment-in-Place by Ambulance Providers**

An enrollee who is experiencing an acute medical emergency that requires medically necessary treatment in a hospital setting shall be transported to a hospital emergency department, pursuant to applicable laws and protocols. However, for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency and for enrollees that are not experiencing such a condition, the treatment-in-place service may be rendered.

Treatment-in-place consists of ambulance dispatch followed by facilitation of a telemedicine/telehealth visit in the field with a licensed physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse. The purpose of this service is to increase the economy and efficiency of care and to increase enrollee choice in care setting. The determination of which patients and which conditions are appropriate for treatment-in-place must comply with all

state and local laws and occur under protocols established and supervised by a licensed physician serving as the ambulance provider's medical director.

The licensed physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse shall be reimbursed for professional services rendered under the general telemedicine/telehealth policy. For all services rendered, licensed physicians, physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses must adhere to all existing clinical policies, must indicate place of service 02, and must append modifier -95 to indicate telemedicine/telehealth.

A "Physician-Directed Treatment-in-Place" fee schedule is available on the Medicaid website: [https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/fee\\_schedules/feeschedulesindex.htm](https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/fee_schedules/feeschedulesindex.htm). This fee schedule contains information specific to the procedure codes and reimbursement for these services.

#### **Billing and Payment Guidelines for Treatment-in-Place by Ambulance Providers**

Telehealth services must be separately billed from ambulance service.

Ambulance providers must indicate treatment-in-place destination code "W" in the destination position of the origin/destination modifier combination. Supply codes A0382 and A0398 are payable but mileage (A0425) is not payable. Ambulance treatment-in-place claims billed with mileage (A0425) shall be denied.

If a patient being treated in place has a real-time deterioration in their clinical condition necessitating immediate transport to an emergency department, the ambulance provider cannot bill for both the treatment in place ambulance service and the transport to the emergency department. **In that case, the ambulance provider shall bill only for the emergency department transport.**

#### **Approved Ambulance Modifiers for Treatment-in-Place Services**

| <b>Modifier</b> | <b>Origination Site</b>                                                              | <b>Destination</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| DW              | Diagnostic or therapeutic site other than P or H when these are used as origin codes | Treat in Place     |
| EW              | Residential, domiciliary, custodial facility (other than 1819 facility)              | Treat in Place     |
| GW              | Hospital based ESRD facility                                                         | Treat in Place     |
| HW              | Hospital                                                                             | Treat in Place     |

|    |                                                                                        |                |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| IW | Site of transfer (e.g. airport or helicopter pad) between modes of ambulance transport | Treat in Place |
| JW | Freestanding ESRD facility                                                             | Treat in Place |
| NW | Skilled nursing facility                                                               | Treat in Place |
| PW | Physician's office                                                                     | Treat in Place |
| RW | Residence                                                                              | Treat in Place |
| SW | Scene of accident or acute event                                                       | Treat in Place |

#### **Treatment in Place MCO Encounter Submissions:**

Encounters for Ambulance Provider "A" codes must be submitted to the state's FI using .TRA file extension.

Telehealth Professional Service procedure codes must be submitted to the state's FI using .PHY file extension.

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#### **Appendix: DME HCPCS Codes Eligible for a 90-day Supply**

| <b>Incontinence Supplies</b> |       |       |       |       |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| A4310                        | A4357 | A4385 | A4405 | T4521 |
| A4311                        | A4358 | A4387 | A4406 | T4522 |
| A4320                        | A4360 | A4388 | A4407 | T4523 |
| A4322                        | A4361 | A4389 | A4408 | T4524 |
| A4326                        | A4362 | A4390 | A4409 | T4525 |
| A4327                        | A4364 | A4391 | A4410 | T4526 |
| A4328                        | A4367 | A4392 | A4411 | T4527 |
| A4331                        | A4368 | A4393 | A4413 | T4528 |
| A4332                        | A4369 | A4397 | A4414 | T4529 |
| A4335                        | A4371 | A4398 | A4415 | T4530 |
| A4336                        | A4372 | A4399 | A4416 | T4531 |
| A4338                        | A4373 | A4400 | A4417 | T4532 |
| A4344                        | A4375 | A4402 | A4418 | T4533 |
| A4349                        | A4376 | A4404 | A4419 | T4534 |

|       |       |  |       |       |
|-------|-------|--|-------|-------|
| A4351 | A4377 |  | A4421 | T4535 |
| A4352 | A4378 |  | A4422 | T4539 |
| A4353 | A4379 |  | A4423 | T4543 |
| A4354 | A4380 |  | A4424 |       |
| A4355 | A4381 |  | A4425 |       |
| A4356 | A4382 |  | A4426 |       |
|       | A4383 |  | A4427 |       |
|       | A4384 |  | A4428 |       |
|       |       |  | A4429 |       |
|       |       |  | A4431 |       |
|       |       |  | A4432 |       |
|       |       |  | A4433 |       |
|       |       |  | A4434 |       |

| Wound Care Supplies |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| A4450               | A6210 | A6245 | A6506 |
| A4452               | A6211 | A6246 | A6507 |
| A4455               | A6212 | A6247 | A6508 |
| A4456               | A6213 | A6248 | A6510 |
| A4459               | A6214 | A6250 | A6511 |
| A4461               | A6215 | A6251 | A6513 |
| A4463               | A6216 | A6252 | K0744 |
| A5120               | A6217 | A6253 | K0745 |
| A5121               | A6218 | A6254 | K0746 |
| A5122               | A6219 | A6255 |       |
| A6021               | A6220 | A6256 |       |
| A6022               | A6221 | A6257 |       |
| A6023               | A6222 | A6258 |       |
| A6024               | A6223 | A6259 |       |
| A6025               | A6224 | A6260 |       |
| A6154               | A6228 | A6261 |       |
| A6196               | A6229 | A6262 |       |
| A6197               | A6230 | A6266 |       |
| A6198               | A6234 | A6402 |       |
| A6199               | A6235 | A6403 |       |
| A6203               | A6236 | A6404 |       |
| A6204               | A6237 | A6410 |       |
| A6205               | A6238 | A6446 |       |

|       |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|-------|--|
| A6206 | A6241 | A6501 |  |
| A6207 | A6242 | A6502 |  |
| A6208 | A6243 | A6504 |  |
| A6209 | A6244 | A6505 |  |

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| <b>Apnea and Breathing Monitors</b> |
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| A4556 |
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| A4557 |
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| E0619 |
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| <b>Electric Breast Pumps</b> |
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| A4281 |
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| E0603 |
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| <b>Diabetic Supplies</b> |
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| A4224 |
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| A4225 |
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| A4230 |
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| A4231 |
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| A4233 |
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| A4234 |
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| A4235 |
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| A4236 |
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| A9274 |
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| A9276 |
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| A9277 |
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| A9278 |
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| E0607 |
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| <b>Home Dialysis Supplies</b> |
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| A4690 |
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| A4730 |
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| A4740 |
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| A4750 |
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| A4755 |
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| A4760 |
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| A4765 |
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| A4860 |
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| A4913 |
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| <b>Home Oxygen</b> |
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| A4615 |
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| A4616 |
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| A4618 |
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| E0430 |
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| E0431 |
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| E0433 |
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| E0439 |
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| E0443 |
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| E0444 |
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| E0447 |
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| E0565 |
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| E1358 |
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| E1390 |
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| K0738 |
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| <b>Tracheostomy Care Supplies</b> |
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|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| A4481 | A4627 |
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|       |       |
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| A4483 | A4628 |
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| A4611 | A4629 |
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| A4612 | A7048 |
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| A4613 | A7501 |
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| A4613 | A7502 |
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| A4614 | A7520 |
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| A4615 | A7521 |
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| A4616 | A7522 |
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| A4618 | A7524 |
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| A4618 | A7525 |
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| A4620 | A7526 |
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| A4623 | A7527 |
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| A4624 | E0600 |
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| A4625 |  |
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| <b>Parenteral and Enteral Nutrients<br/>and Supplies</b> |
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| B4034 |
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| B4035 |
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| B4036 |
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| B4081       |
| B4082       |
| B4083       |
| B4088       |
| B4100       |
| B4102-B4104 |
| B4149-B4150 |
| B4152-B4155 |
| B4158-B4162 |

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|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pulse Oximeter Probes<br/>and Tape</b> |
| A4606                                     |
| E0445                                     |

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| <b>Intravenous Therapy</b> |
| S1015                      |

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| <b>Respiratory Supplies</b> |
| A7003                       |
| A7005-A7009                 |
| A7012-A7017                 |
| E0470                       |
| E0471                       |
| E0480                       |
| E0482                       |
| E0483                       |
| E0570                       |
| E0585                       |