

To: TennCare Providers  
From: Stephen Smith, Director  
Victor Wu, Chief Medical Officer  
Date: March 17, 2020  
Re: **Novel COVID-19 Testing and Telehealth Services for TennCare Enrollees**

Dear TennCare Providers,

Thank you for all that you are doing to provide care to our TennCare members during the novel COVID-19 epidemic. TennCare and our health plans, Amerigroup, BlueCare Tennessee, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, are fully committed to supporting our members to continue receiving the high-quality care they are accustomed. We are also committed to supporting our front-line providers delivering this essential care. TennCare and our health plans are meeting frequently to identify proactive solutions and to respond to opportunities that will help serve the needs of our members and providers as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve. All of us are consistently evaluating and implementing TDH and CDC clinical treatment recommendations and guidelines around limiting the spread of disease.

To that end, our health plans are all committed to assisting providers in offering telehealth and telephonic services to TennCare members during this time. TennCare has worked with each of our health plans to align policies for telehealth services where possible while still rapidly deploying telehealth solutions immediately for providers and our members. All of our TennCare health plans will allow “home” as an originating site during the COVID-19 national emergency.

Please see the attached guidance from each health plan as it relates to telehealth and telephonic services for TennCare enrollees. The guidance includes billing, coding, and coverage procedures for telehealth services. Additionally, each health plan is following recommended federal COVID-19 diagnostic testing guidance and has provided billing references for testing as well. Lastly, each health plan will continually update their website with essential COVID-19 guidance for providers so please continue to check regularly for new information. If you have additional questions, reach out directly to your health plan provider representative. TennCare will continue to share important developing information to our providers throughout this time.

For additional public health and provider guidance from the TN Department of Health, please visit: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>

For additional TennCare notices or future guidance from TennCare, please visit: <https://www.tn.gov/tenncare/information-statistics/tenncare-information-about-coronavirus.html>

## COVID-19 information from Amerigroup Community Care

Amerigroup is closely monitoring COVID-19 developments and how the novel coronavirus will impact our customers and provider partners. Our clinical team is actively monitoring external queries and reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state specific body to help us determine what action is necessary on our part. Amerigroup will continue to follow state specific body guidance policies.

To help address providers' questions, Amerigroup has developed the following FAQ list:

### **What is Amerigroup doing to prepare?**

Our clinical teams are actively monitoring external queries and reports from the CDC to help us determine what actions are necessary on our part to further support our stakeholders. Amerigroup has a business continuity plan for serious communicable disease outbreaks, including pandemics, and will be ready to deploy the plan if necessary.

### **How is Amerigroup monitoring COVID-19?**

Our enterprise-wide business continuity program includes recovery strategies for critical processes and supporting resources; automated 24/7 situational awareness monitoring for our footprint and critical support points; and our Virtual Command Center for Emergency Management command, control and communication.

In addition, we have established a team of experts to monitor, assess and help facilitate timely mitigation and response where it has influence as appropriate for the evolving novel coronavirus threat.

### **Does Amerigroup have recommendations for reporting, testing and specimen collection?**

The CDC updates these recommendations frequently as the situation and testing capabilities evolve. See the latest information from the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>.

### **What precautions should I take in my office?**

As of March 6, 2020, the CDC recommends the following:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Finfection-control.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Finfection-control.html).

### **How should I code a claim for a patient if I believe they have COVID-19?**

The CDC recommends the following related to COVID-19 diagnostic test billing: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/ICD-10-CM-Official-Coding-Guidance-Interim-Advice-coronavirus-feb-20-2020.pdf>.

**Will Amerigroup cover the cost related to COVID-19 testing and care?**

Amerigroup will cover reasonable member health care costs related to COVID-19. Amerigroup recently announced its efforts to eliminate the burden of additional costs for members by providing coverage of the novel coronavirus screening test at no out-of-pocket-cost.

**Will Amerigroup cover the out-of-pocket costs related to the COVID-19 test?**

Out-of-pocket expenses for the focused test used to diagnose COVID-19 will be waived for members who have fully insured, individual, Medicare and Medicaid plans. Providers should continue to verify eligibility and benefits for all members prior to rendering services. Members will pay any other out-of-pocket expenses their plan requires, unless otherwise determined by state mandate or regulation.

**Does Amerigroup require prior authorization on the focused test used to diagnose COVID-19?**

No, prior authorization is not required for diagnostic services related to COVID-19 testing.

**In case of mass epidemic, how can you ensure that your contracted providers can still provide services?**

Amerigroup is committed to working with and supporting its contracted providers. Our benefits already state that if members do not have appropriate access to network providers, we will authorize coverage for out-of-network providers as medically necessary.

**Will Amerigroup cover Telehealth services in lieu of in person service due to COVID-19?**

Amerigroup will provide coverage services delivered to members via telehealth, to include telephonic visits. Providers should bill the same E&M code they would bill for an in person visit, along with Place of Service 02 (Telehealth) and submit the claim via their normal process.

**Are there any limitations in coverage for treatment of an illness that is part of an epidemic?**

Our standard health plan contracts do not have exclusions or limitations on coverage for services for the treatment of illnesses that result from an epidemic.  
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