



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



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DATE: March 18, 2020

SUPPLEMENT TO ALL PLAN LETTER 19-009

TO: ALL MEDI-CAL MANAGED CARE HEALTH PLANS

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY TELEHEALTH GUIDANCE - COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PURPOSE:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that members practice “social distancing.” However, members also need to be able to continue to have access to necessary medical care. Accordingly, Medi-Cal managed care health plans (MCPs) must take steps to allow members to obtain health care via telehealth when medically appropriate to do so as provided in this supplemental guidance.

REQUIREMENTS:

Pursuant to the authority granted in the California Emergency Services Act, all MCPs must, effective immediately, comply with the following:¹

- Unless otherwise agreed to by the MCP and provider, MCPs must reimburse providers at the same rate, whether a service is provided in-person or through telehealth, if the service is the same regardless of the modality of delivery, as determined by the provider’s description of the service on the claim. For example, if an MCP reimburses a provider \$100 for an in-person visit, the MCP must reimburse the provider \$100 for an equivalent visit done via telehealth unless otherwise agreed to by the MCP and provider.
- MCPs must provide the same amount of reimbursement for a service rendered via telephone as they would if the service is rendered via video, provided the modality by which the service is rendered (telephone versus video) is medically appropriate for the member.

MCPs are responsible for ensuring that their subcontractors and network providers comply with the requirements in this supplemental guidance as well as all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, contract requirements, and other Department of Health Care Services’ guidance. MCPs must communicate these requirements to all network providers and subcontractors.

This supplemental guidance will remain in effect until further notice.

¹ Government Code section 8550, et seq.

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If you have any questions regarding this supplemental guidance, please contact your Managed Care Operations Division Contract Manager.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by Nathan Nau

Nathan Nau, Chief
Managed Care Quality and Monitoring Division