



Department of Health Care Finance Informational Bulletin

DATE: March 17, 2020

FROM: Ieisha Gray
Director, Long Term Care Administration

SUBJECT: **Second COVID-19 Update for Long Term Care Providers**

The purpose of this informational bulletin is to provide ongoing guidance to our long-term care providers on Medicaid's response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). As you are aware, information is rapidly changing as we continue to learn more about COVID-19, and DHCF will ensure that our provider community remains informed accordingly. The following list will be updated with more specific information as it becomes available, including DHCF directives regarding documentation and claiming under these temporarily altered policies and procedures.

- **Face-to-face visits by providers' and vendor staff.** DHCF is seeking the authority to temporarily suspend routine face-to-face visits by nurses, case managers, and other provider or vendor staff. The health and safety of our beneficiaries', providers' and vendors' front-line staff are of the utmost importance. We hope to relax these requirements so visits can be conducted by phone or video communications (such as Skype), and are requesting federal approval to implement this flexibility. **Until we issue such guidance, please continue to communicate via telephonic and electronic means with your vulnerable patients in order to ensure continued monitoring of patient health status, any relevant symptom identification and referrals, and continuity of care coordination through these challenging circumstances.**
- **Organized gatherings of groups of beneficiaries.** We ask our Medicaid providers to comply with directives from [CDC](#) and [DC government](#) regarding [gatherings and social distancing](#). Any gathering of more than 10 people should be canceled, and any smaller groups should be organized in such a way to facilitate social distancing (e.g., six feet between parties).
- **Continuity of assessments, person-centered service planning, eligibility and service authorizations.** Once approved, DHCF will permit telephonic assessments and service planning meetings, and require face-to-face updates when public health emergency conditions allow. Similarly, to the extent possible, the District will offer any flexibilities approved by our federal partners to facilitate eligibility processing and service authorizations that promote continuity of services during this public health emergency.
- **Provider oversight, monitoring, enrollment & reenrollment.** DHCF will temporarily suspend Medicaid-specific monitoring and oversight survey activities occurring on-site at provider officers or within Medicaid beneficiaries' homes. Routine remote monitoring of providers' activities will continue, and providers' response to routine monitoring and oversight activities is expected to continue. New provider enrollments will continue to be processed, though site visits may be postponed. Provider reenrollment in the Medicaid program, including EPD waiver enrollments, will continue. Providers requesting emergency deferments of reenrollment will be addressed on a case-by-case basis; such requests should be directed through LTCA management.

- **Telehealth.** We understand you may have seen DHCF's emergency rulemaking regarding telehealth services. Please note that providers must be approved telehealth providers to implement the services billable under our telehealth regulations. If your agency is not so designated, we ask that you comply instead with the temporary flexibilities described above in the policies and procedures that govern routine waiver and home health provider operations.

As a reminder, the CMS guidance for home health providers can be found [here](#) as an additional resource.

Thank you all for your partnership and commitment to the care and safety of District residents in these challenging and unprecedented circumstances. Please be sure to take care of yourselves and your families as well in the days ahead.