



**State of Louisiana**  
Louisiana Department of Health  
Bureau of Health Services Financing

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 17, 2020  
**TO:** All Louisiana Medicaid Providers  
**FROM:** Erin Campbell, Acting Medicaid Director  
**SUBJECT:** Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Provider Update: 3.17.2020

The below advisory is to inform all providers rendering services to Louisiana Medicaid members, including members of all Healthy Louisiana managed care organizations (MCOs). This information will be updated as new information is available. New information is indicated by underlining.

On March 11, 2020, Governor Edwards declared a public health emergency in response to COVID-19. For current updates on the status of COVID-19 in Louisiana, please see the Office of Public Health (OPH) COVID-19 website, located at: <http://ldh.la.gov/coronavirus>.

The below information is provided in relation to COVID-19 in Louisiana.

**Laboratory Testing of Suspected Patients**

For patient selection and testing procedures, please refer to the recent OPH Health Alert Network Message, located at: [http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-CP/HANs/Han\\_20-14.pdf](http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-CP/HANs/Han_20-14.pdf)

Effective for dates of service on or after March 5, 2020, Louisiana Medicaid covers commercial COVID-19 testing, without restrictions or prior authorization, for members that have symptoms compatible with COVID-19. Reimbursement is provided at Medicare rates and this coverage is provided with no copay. Please note that the laboratory test was recently assigned a permanent CPT code and providers will be advised to change shortly. At this time, the current procedure code is:

- U0002: 2019-nCoV Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2/2019-nCoV (COVID-19) using any technique, multiple types or subtypes (includes all targets), non-CDC

Providers should immediately report positive COVID-19 commercial laboratory results to the OPH Infectious Disease Epidemiology Hotline at 1-800-256-2748.

All patients suspected (and undergoing testing) for COVID-19 should remain hospitalized if needed or isolate at home until they receive their test results. If test results are positive, patients should continue to be isolated for seven or more days from the onset of illness, or three or more

days after resolution of fever, whichever is longer AND resolution or improvement in respiratory symptoms.

Of note, commercially available respiratory viral panel tests, represented by CPT codes 87631, 87632, and 87633, are not appropriate for diagnosing suspected COVID-19 at this time. While these panels may include coronavirus targets, they do not reliably cross-react with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, because it is a novel coronavirus. False positives and false negatives can delay appropriate diagnosis and treatment. Therefore, these tests are considered not medically necessary for this purpose.

### **Testing and Treatment Coverage**

For all Medicaid members, testing is covered with no copay. In addition, clinic visits, emergency department visits, and hospitalizations related to COVID-19 testing and treatment are covered without copays.

### **Overall Telemedicine/Telehealth Policy**

Louisiana Medicaid encourages the use of telemedicine/telehealth with an interactive audio/video telecommunications system, when appropriate, to decrease the potential for patient-to-patient transmission in shared spaces (e.g., waiting rooms) and patient-to-provider transmission. Generally, when an interactive audio/video system is not available, an interactive audio-only system (e.g., telephone), without the requirement of video, may be employed unless service-specific policy indicates that only an audio/video system is permissible. 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. Telemedicine/telehealth may be used to evaluate patients who report respiratory and systemic symptoms, for example, in a non-emergency situation when a face-to-face visit is not necessary. Further, telemedicine/telehealth may be used to provide routine care for older patients, or those with chronic illnesses, for the purpose of reducing their exposure to healthcare facilities.

Louisiana Medicaid, including all Healthy Louisiana 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. These codes include, but are not limited to, new and established outpatient office visit codes.

There is currently no formal limitation on the originating site (i.e., where the patient is located) and this can include, but is not limited to, a healthcare facility, school, or the patient's home. Regardless of the originating site, providers must maintain adequate medical documentation to support reimbursement of the visit.

Providers offering services via telemedicine/telehealth must use a secure, HIPAA-compliant platform, if available. If not available, providers may use everyday communications technologies (e.g., audio/video cellular telephones) during the COVID-19 emergency. Providers must adhere to all telemedicine/telehealth-related requirements of their professional licensing board.

Several service-specific policies are detailed below in this document.

Billing Instructions (non-FQHC/RHC): Providers must indicate place of service 02 and must append modifier -95. Reimbursement for visits delivered via telemedicine is similar to face-to-face visits, subject to any terms and conditions in provider contracts with Medicaid MCOs. Providers should contact their contracted MCO for information that may affect billing procedures and reimbursement rates.

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. Reimbursement for these services in an FQHC/RHC will be at the all-inclusive prospective payment rate on file for the date of service.

**Telephone-only Evaluation and Management of Symptomatic Patients** Effective for dates of service on or after March 13, 2020, Louisiana Medicaid reimburses telephonic evaluation and management services to members who are actively experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Telephonic evaluation and management services must be rendered by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant actively enrolled in fee-for-service Medicaid or with one of the Healthy Louisiana MCOs. Services are only to be rendered for the care of established patients or caregiver of an established patient.

Telephonic evaluation and management services are not to be billed if clinical decision-making dictates a need to see the patient for an office visit within 24 hours or at the next available appointment. In those circumstances, the telephone service shall be considered a part of the subsequent office visit. If the telephone call follows an office visit performed and reported within the past seven calendar days for the same diagnosis, then the telephone services are considered part of the previous office visit and are not separately billed.

Relevant procedure codes are:

- 99441: Telephone evaluation and management service; 5-10 minutes of medical discussion
- 99442: 11-20 minutes of medical discussion
- 99443: 21-30 minutes of medical discussion

The ICD-10 diagnosis code to be reported is:

Z20.828: Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable disease

### **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 emergency, 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.”

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 Instructions: Claims processing systems will be updated by March 24, 2020. Before that date, providers should continue to submit claims and they will be recycled with no action needed by the provider. A list of relevant procedure codes is included below. Providers must indicate place of service 02 and must append modifier -95.

<u>Physical Therapy</u>	<u>Occupational Therapy</u>	<u>Speech/Language Therapy</u>
<u>97161</u>	<u>97165</u>	<u>92507</u>
<u>97162</u>	<u>97166</u>	<u>92508</u>
<u>97163</u>	<u>97167</u>	<u>92521</u>
<u>97164</u>	<u>97168</u>	<u>92522</u>
<u>97110</u>	<u>97530</u>	<u>92523</u>
<u>G0151</u>	<u>G0152</u>	<u>92524</u>
		<u>G0153</u>

**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.

Telehealth services are only to be rendered for the care of established patients or to support the caregivers of 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. Requirements for reimbursement are otherwise unchanged from the Applied Behavior Analysis Provider Manual.

Telehealth for Family ABA Treatment Guidance: Telehealth family guidance based on ABA methodology must be rendered by a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). The family/patient and BCBA must be linked through an interactive audio/visual telecommunications system. If an audio/visual telecommunications system is not available, then the BCBA 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 to properly use treatment procedures designed to teach new skills and reduce challenging behaviors.

Relevant procedure code:

- 97156 (Family Adaptive Behavior Treatment Guidance, administered by QHP (with or without patient present), face-to-face with guardian(s)/caregiver(s), each 15 minutes).

Telehealth Direction of an ABA Technician Delivering In-Home Therapy: Therapy rendered by an in-home behavior technician (BT) is discouraged while social distancing is necessary for COVID-19 containment. However, if other service delivery options are not available to meet members' needs, then this modality may be employed.

Telehealth supervision of in-home therapy rendered by a BT must utilize a BCBA to provide remote supervision. Each BT must obtain ongoing supervision for a minimum of 10% of the hours spent providing applied behavior-analytic services per visit. Supervision may be conducted via an interactive audio/video telecommunications system in lieu of the BCBA being physically present.

The purpose of supervision is to improve and maintain the behavior-analytic, professional, and ethical repertoires of the BT and facilitate and maintain the delivery of high-quality services to his or her clients. Relevant procedure code:

- 97155 (Adaptive Behavior Treatment with Protocol Modification, administered by QHP, which may include simultaneous direction of technician, face-to-face with one patient, each 15 minutes).

In-home BTs should, where possible, 1) wash their hands when entering the home and prior to leaving; 2) cough into their elbow; and 3) avoid touching their own face or the member's face.

Billing Instructions: Claims processing systems will be updated by March 24, 2020. Before that date, providers should continue to submit claims and they will be recycled with no action needed by the provider. Providers must indicate place of service 02 and must append modifier -95.

### **Pharmacy**

Effective March 17, 2020, members may receive early refills and 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. To reduce exposure, providers should consider encouraging members to use pharmacies that offer free home delivery services or drive-through pickup services.

### **Medication-assisted Treatment for Substance Use Disorders**

Prescribers are encouraged to use existing flexibility provided under federal law to ensure continuity of treatment for members with substance use disorders. Sublingual buprenorphine and buprenorphine/naloxone products, for example, are Schedule III controlled substances and prescriptions may be written for up to a 30-day supply with up to 2 refills. The benefits of ensuring continuity of treatment and resulting overdose prevention will often outweigh the risks of diversion and misuse.

Prescribers are also encouraged to educate members regarding the availability of naloxone for those who may be at risk for overdose. Naloxone is available via a statewide standing order, and naloxone is covered without prior authorization for all Louisiana Medicaid members.

### **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. Where necessary, existing prior authorizations should be extended through June 30, 2020, to accommodate a 90-day supply.

### **Vaccine**

At this time there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. When a federally-approved vaccine is available, it will be covered for all Medicaid members with no copay.

### **Quarantine or Isolation Orders**

Healthcare services provided as a result of a public health quarantine or isolation order or recommendation, when otherwise covered by Louisiana Medicaid, are always considered medically necessary.

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

Effective March 17, 2020, and for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, Healthy Louisiana MCOs have been instructed to suspend all acute care hospital-based utilization management for medical hospitalizations including, but not limited to, service authorizations and concurrent reviews. The purpose of this suspension is to ensure that all available hospital staff with clinical training can be deployed for response efforts. After the emergency period, Healthy Louisiana MCOs have been directed that all efforts to conduct post-payment reviews of medical hospital stays during the emergency period must be approved by, and coordinated with, LDH to minimize disruption to hospitals.

To maximize beds available for patients with COVID-19, Healthy Louisiana MCOs have been directed, to the maximum extent possible, to dedicate their hospital-based staff to facilitating rapid placement and discharge of currently hospitalized patients. MCOs have been directed to lift service authorizations for services necessary to ensure a safe discharge such as home health services and skilled nursing facility services.

### **Quality 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, Healthy Louisiana MCOs will account for the effects of COVID-19 on the healthcare system.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

Providers should preserve personal protective equipment for use with patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

**ICD-10 Diagnosis Coding**

To ensure proper reporting, providers should follow CDC’s Official Coding Guideline when selecting a diagnosis code.

This guideline is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/icd/icd10cm.htm>

**Resources for Patients**

For anyone with questions about coronavirus, please direct them to contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211. Or, they can text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available. They can also get answers here:

[www.la211help.org](http://www.la211help.org).

**Appendix: DME HCPCS Codes 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	

<b>Wound Care Supplies</b>			
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	

<b>Apnea and Breathing Monitors</b>
A4556
A4557



E0619
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<b>Electric Breast Pumps</b>
A4281
E0603

<b>Diabetic Supplies</b>
A4224
A4225
A4230
A4231
A4233
A4234
A4235
A4236
A9276
A9277
A9278
E0607

<b>Home Dialysis Supplies</b>
A4690
A4730
A4740
A4750
A4755
A4760
A4765
A4860
A4913

<b>Home Oxygen</b>
A4615
A4616
A4618
E0430
E0431
E0433

E0439
E0443
E0444
E0447
E0565
E1358
E1390
K0738

<b>Tracheostomy Care Supplies</b>	
A4481	A4627
A4483	A4628
A4611	A4629
A4612	A7048
A4613	A7501
A4613	A7502
A4614	A7520
A4615	A7521
A4616	A7522
A4618	A7524
A4618	A7525
A4620	A7526
A4623	A7527
A4624	E0600
A4625	

<b>Parenteral and Enteral Nutrients and Supplies</b>
B4034
B4035
B4036
B4081
B4082
B4083
B4088
B4100
B4102-B4104
B4149-B4150
B4152-B4155
B4158-B4162

<b>Pulse Oximeter Probes and Tape</b>
A4606
E0445

<b>Intravenous Therapy</b>
S1015

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