



**MassHealth**  
**Acute Inpatient Hospital Bulletin 183**  
**June 2021**

**TO:** Acute Inpatient Hospital Providers Participating in MassHealth

**FROM:** Daniel Tsai, Assistant Secretary for MassHealth 

**RE:** **Partial Resumption of Certain Utilization Management Functions  
Previously Suspended in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **Background**

To ensure that certain medical services for which MassHealth pays are medically necessary and provided in the appropriate setting, MassHealth operates the utilization-management program for acute inpatient hospitals (UMP). Through the UMP, MassHealth, using its utilization-management contractor, conducts preadmission screening, and also regularly reviews a sampling of claims, both on a prepayment and postpayment basis. For additional information, please review the regulations governing the MassHealth UMP, available at 130 CMR 450.207 through 450.209, and 130 CMR 450.237.

In response to the initial challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic posed to acute inpatient hospitals, MassHealth modified certain aspects of its UMP, by

- temporarily exempting claims with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis from utilization review;
- temporarily ceasing the initiation of new pre-pay utilization reviews; and
- temporarily suspending automatic recoupment for claims payment denied via postpayment review. This policy applied to claims in review cycles 702-758.

At the direction of MassHealth, the UMP contractor communicated these modifications to participating hospitals on April 10, 2020, via its electronic messaging system, citing specific review cycles and effective dates. This bulletin terminates certain of these temporary modifications, and revises others, as follows.

### **Revised Temporary UMP Policies**

- MassHealth will remove the exemption of claims with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis from utilization review on a prospective basis, for both pre- and post-pay reviews, starting with admission dates as of July 15.
- MassHealth will resume pre-pay utilization reviews starting July 15 on a weekly basis consistent with pre-pandemic practice.
- MassHealth will resume the recoupment process for claims payment denied via postpayment review, as follows.<sup>1</sup>
  - a) MassHealth will offer flexibility to request *reconsideration for any initial denials from cycles 702-758 (inclusive), as follows.*
    - Providers have until August 9, 2021, to request reconsideration for any initial denials from cycles 702-758 that have not already been voided. Any such provider requesting reconsideration for any denial pursuant to this flexibility must attest

<sup>1</sup> This will not impact any inpatient claim voluntarily voided by the hospital following a postpayment denial and then resubmitted by the hospital as an outpatient claim.

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that (1) it has not requested reconsideration of such denial, and (2) it has not voided such claim.

- b) MassHealth will offer providers flexibility to rebill a denied inpatient claim as an outpatient claim *as follows*.
- For any denial from cycles 702-758 (inclusive) that is upheld through the reconsideration process described above, MassHealth will void the claim and providers may rebill the inpatient claim as an outpatient claim within 30 calendar days of the final notice regarding the request for reconsideration.
  - For any initial denial for cycles 702-758 (inclusive) for which the provider does not request reconsideration pursuant to the flexibility described above, MassHealth will begin voiding such claims on August 10, 2021. Any provider seeking to rebill the claim as an outpatient claim must do so by September 9, 2021. Any provider rebilling a denied inpatient claim as an outpatient claim must do so in accordance with 130 CMR 415.414(B)(3) and 130 CMR 450.209(C)(1).
- c) MassHealth will permit hospitals that can demonstrate hardship, such as that arising from the recoupment of payments and/or the submission of requests for reconsideration, to request additional extensions of the timeframes just outlined. MassHealth will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis. Hospitals seeking extensions of the deadline to request reconsideration should submit such requests to [maur@hms.com](mailto:maur@hms.com). Hospitals seeking to establish alternative schedules for recoupment of claims payment denied via postpayment review should submit such requests to [providersupport@mahealth.net](mailto:providersupport@mahealth.net).
- d) For all cycles from cycle 759 forward, MassHealth will return to pre-pandemic UMP processes.

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### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the information in this bulletin, please contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at (800) 841-2900, email your inquiry to [providersupport@mahealth.net](mailto:providersupport@mahealth.net), or fax your inquiry to (617) 988-8974.

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