



MassHealth
Acute Inpatient Hospital Bulletin 187
December 2021

TO: Acute Inpatient Hospitals Participating in MassHealth

FROM: Amanda Cassel Kraft, Assistant Secretary for MassHealth

RE: Temporary Suspension of Requirements for Admission Screening for Admissions to Acute Inpatient Hospitals and Prior Authorization for Physician Services Rendered in Connection with Acute Inpatient Hospital Admissions

Background

Under 130 CMR 450.208(A), MassHealth requires admission screening prior to the elective admission of any MassHealth member to an acute inpatient hospital (AIH) participating in MassHealth. In addition, pursuant to Section 5.B.7 of the Rate Year 2022 Acute Hospital Request for Applications and Contract (RY22 RFA), MassHealth requires admission screening prior to the admission of any MassHealth member to any AIH Rehabilitation Unit, as that term is defined in the RY22 RFA. Finally, pursuant to 130 CMR 450.303, and other regulations promulgated thereunder, including 130 CMR 433.408, MassHealth requires providers to obtain prior authorization to provide certain medical services to MassHealth members, including certain physician services rendered in connection with an admission to an AIH.

As described in greater detail below, due to ongoing disruptions to the healthcare delivery system caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, MassHealth is temporarily suspending the admission screening requirements that apply to certain admissions to an AIH, and the prior authorization requirements that apply to physician services rendered in connection with certain AIH admissions.

Temporary Suspension of Admission Screening and Prior Authorization Requirements for Services Rendered in an Acute Inpatient Hospital

For all admissions beginning December 15, 2021, through March 15, 2022 (Temporary Suspension Period), MassHealth is temporarily suspending its policies related to admission screening for admissions to acute inpatient hospitals, and prior authorization for physician services rendered in connection with AIH admissions, as follows:

- **Admission Screening for Elective Admissions:** Notwithstanding 130 CMR 450.208(A), for all dates of admission during the Temporary Suspension Period, MassHealth will not require admission screening prior to the elective admission of a MassHealth member to an AIH.
- **Admission Screening for Admissions to an AIH Rehabilitation Unit:** Notwithstanding Section 5.B.7 of the RY22 RFA, for all dates of admission during the Temporary Suspension Period, MassHealth will not require admission screening for any admission to an AIH Rehabilitation Unit, as that term is defined in the RY22 RFA.

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- **Physician Services Rendered in Connection with an Acute Inpatient Hospital Admission:** Notwithstanding 130 CMR 450.303, 130 CMR 433.408, and Subchapter 6 of the *Physician Manual*, for all dates of admission during the Temporary Suspension Period, MassHealth will not require prior authorization as a prerequisite for payment of any physician service rendered to a MassHealth member in connection with the member's admission to an AIH. Any claim for such physician services rendered during the Temporary Suspension Period must include Place of Service (POS) Code 21.

Continued Review of Requests for Admission Screening/Prior Authorization Related to Admissions During, Prior to, and After the Temporary Suspension Period

During, prior to, and after the Temporary Suspension Period, MassHealth will review requests for admission screening for admissions to an AIH, and prior authorization for physician services to be rendered in connection with an AIH admission, as follows:

- **Requests Related to Admissions During the Temporary Suspension Period:** Notwithstanding the flexibilities described above, providers may request admission screening for admissions to AIHs with dates of admission during the Temporary Suspension Period, and requests for prior authorization for physician services to be rendered in connection with AIH admissions during that period, in accordance with all applicable MassHealth regulations and guidance. MassHealth will review a request related to an admission to an AIH during the Temporary Suspension Period only if it is received on or before December 14, 2021. In lieu of review, MassHealth will administratively approve any request related to an admission to an AIH during the Temporary Suspension Period received after December 14, 2021.
- **Requests Related to Admissions Prior to and After the Temporary Suspension Period:** Providers must continue to submit requests for admission screening for admissions to an AIH with dates of admission outside of the Temporary Suspension Period, and requests for prior authorization for physician services to be rendered in connection with an AIH admission outside of that period, in accordance with all applicable MassHealth regulations and guidance. MassHealth will continue to review any request related to an admission prior to or after the Temporary Suspension Period as it would in the ordinary course, in accordance with all applicable MassHealth regulations and guidance, regardless of whether MassHealth received the request during the Temporary Suspension Period.

Continued Applicability of Pre- and Post-Payment Review Processes

Please note that notwithstanding the flexibilities described in this bulletin, all services, including the AIH and physician services described in this bulletin, will remain subject to pre- and post-payment review, in accordance with all applicable MassHealth regulations and guidance.

MassHealth Website

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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, or fax your inquiry to (617) 988-8974.