



**MassHealth  
Acute Outpatient Hospital Bulletin 37  
February 2021**

**TO:** Acute Outpatient Hospitals Participating in MassHealth  
**FROM:** Daniel Tsai, Assistant Secretary for MassHealth  
**RE: Temporary Flexibilities for the Provision of Laboratory Services by Acute Outpatient Hospitals**

**Background**

In light of the state of emergency declared in the Commonwealth due to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, MassHealth is implementing measures to expand the COVID-19 testing capacity within the Commonwealth through Acute Outpatient Hospitals (AOHs). Specifically, MassHealth will allow AOHs to partner with laboratories that are not MassHealth providers to process COVID-19 diagnostic tests that are not processed onsite at the AOH, as further described in this bulletin.

**This bulletin shall remain effective for the duration of the Governor's March 10, 2020, Declaration of a State of Emergency within the Commonwealth due to COVID-19.**

**Laboratory Services Performed by Partners of AOHs**

AOHs provide essential services to MassHealth members, which may include clinical laboratory services. MassHealth recognizes that increasing the number of COVID-19 tests administered and processed in the state is essential to detecting and preventing the spread of the virus. Accordingly, MassHealth is temporarily allowing AOHs to partner with laboratories that are not MassHealth clinical laboratory providers but that have been approved by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to process COVID-19 tests on behalf of AOHs.

Specifically, and notwithstanding any regulation that might be construed to the contrary, AOHs may submit claims to MassHealth for COVID-19-related clinical laboratory services that are performed at laboratories outside of the AOH in accordance with this bulletin. An AOH may bill MassHealth for such offsite COVID-19-related clinical laboratory services when:

- the laboratory providing the services on behalf of the AOH is:
  - certified as an independent clinical laboratory by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS), based on the criteria set forth in the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) of 1988;
  - licensed as a clinical laboratory by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; and
  - not enrolled as a MassHealth clinical laboratory provider (such laboratories must continue to bill MassHealth directly for the clinical laboratory services that they provide); and
- EOHHS has approved the partnership between the AOH and the non-MassHealth-enrolled laboratory in accordance with the standards that follow.

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EOHHS will approve partnerships between laboratories and AOHs on a case-by-case basis. AOHs that wish to partner with a laboratory in accordance with this bulletin should contact Priscilla Portis, Director of FFS Provider Networks, via email at [priscilla.portis@mass.gov](mailto:priscilla.portis@mass.gov). The email should provide the name and location of the laboratory as well as the services that the AOH expects the laboratory to provide. The laboratory may not begin to provide services on behalf of the AOH and the AOH may not bill for such services until EOHHS provides written notice approving the partnership.

An AOH with an EOHHS-approved partnership may submit claims for COVID-19 clinical laboratory services provided by EOHHS-approved partner laboratories in the same manner as if the laboratory services were provided onsite at the AOH.

### **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](mailto:providersupport@mahealth.net), or fax your inquiry to (617) 988-8974.