

MassHealth Community Partner Information: Updates Related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Introduction

In light of the state of emergency declared in the Commonwealth due to the 2019 novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, MassHealth is introducing flexibilities for Qualifying Activities for Community Partners (CP) related to COVID-19, as further described in this guidance. This guidance is intended to provide CPs with an overview of these flexibilities, with further details to be available in the coming days.

EOHHS is coordinating with federal and local partners to respond to COVID-19. As this situation evolves, EOHHS may issue additional guidance for CPs as informed by state policy and any necessary federal approvals.

This guidance shall remain effective for the duration of the state of emergency declared via Executive Order No. 591: *Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19*. The text of Executive Order No. 591 is available at the following link: <https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-591-declaration-of-a-state-of-emergency-to-respond-to-covid-19>.

Inclusion of Text Messaging

MassHealth understands that Community Partners (CP) are working to leverage all telephone, email and telehealth technologies in an effort to continue to support Assigned and Engaged CP Enrollees. To further enhance CP efforts to support Enrollees during the state of emergency, MassHealth will allow reciprocated text messaging in addition to the other allowable modes of interaction with Enrollees for several qualifying activities (QAs) aimed at contacting, engaging and supporting Enrollees. Specifically, MassHealth will allow reciprocated text messaging for the following Qualifying Activities:

- Outreach using procedure code G9011 with modifier U3,
- Care Coordination using procedure code G9005 with modifier U3, and
- Care Transitions using procedure code G9007 with modifier U3.

CPs are encouraged to use appropriate technologies to communicate with individuals and should, to the extent feasible, ensure the same rights to confidentiality and security as provided in face-to-face services. CPs must inform members of any relevant privacy considerations. Text messaging should not be the primary or sole means of engaging with an Enrollee.

Care Transitions (Follow Up After Discharge from ED)

As a part of the Care Transitions Qualifying Activity, CPs must follow up with Enrollees within seven calendar days following discharge from an Emergency Department (ED) visit. For the duration of the state of emergency declared via Executive Order No. 591, MassHealth will allow for follow up after discharge from an ED visit to be completed using reciprocated text messages under procedure code G9007 with modifier U3, in addition to the other allowable modes of interaction with Enrollees including phone, video conferencing and email. CPs must document care transitions completed using reciprocated text messages in the Enrollee record and include the words “COVID-19”. Please note that a voicemail or an unreciprocated email or text message may not be used to meet the requirements for submission of this Qualifying Activity.

MassHealth will update the MassHealth Community Partners Manual: Qualifying Activity Reporting to reflect the appropriate reporting of the Care Transitions QA in the coming weeks. In addition, MassHealth will update the BH CP and LTSS CP Contracts to clarify the requirement that CPs follow-up after discharge from an ED visit within seven calendar days in a future amendment.

Follow Up After Discharge from an Inpatient Setting

Pursuant to Section 2.3.D.3 of the BH CP Contract and Section 2.3.A.5.b of the LTSS CP Contract, CPs must follow up face-to-face with Enrollees within three business days following discharge from an inpatient setting or transition to a community setting. For the duration of the state of emergency declared via Executive Order No. 591, MassHealth will allow for follow up after discharge from an inpatient setting or transition to a community setting to be completed using telehealth, including telephonically. CPs may submit the Follow up After Discharge Qualifying Activity using procedure code G9007 with required modifier U5 and secondary modifier U1 or U2 for follow up after discharge from an inpatient setting or transition to a community setting completed in this way. CPs must document follow up after discharge completed using telehealth in the Enrollee record and include the words “COVID-19”.

Comprehensive Assessment

For Behavioral Health (BH) CPs Only: Pursuant to Section 2.3.B.1.g of the First Amended and Restated Behavioral Health Community Partner Contract (BH CP Contract), BH CPs are required to complete the Comprehensive Assessment with the Enrollee face-to-face in a location that meets the Enrollee’s needs. For the duration of the state of emergency declared via Executive Order No. 591, MassHealth will allow for the Comprehensive Assessment to be completed using telehealth, including video conferencing and telephonically. CPs may submit the Comprehensive Assessment Qualifying Activity via procedure code G0506 with modifier U1 or U2 for Comprehensive Assessments completed in this way. CPs must document Comprehensive Assessments completed using telehealth in the Enrollee record and include the words “COVID-19”.

Enrollee Approval of Care Plans

Pursuant to Section 2.3.B.2.d.4 of the BH CP Contract and Section 2.3.A.2.a.3.e of the First Amended and Restated Long Term Services and Supports CP Contract (LTSS CP Contract), the care plan must be signed or otherwise approved by the Assigned or Engaged Enrollee (or the Assigned or Engaged Enrollee's authorized representative, if any). The Assigned or Engaged Enrollee may provide verbal approval in the absence of an accommodation need. In such circumstances, the reason a signature was not obtainable must be documented in the Enrollee record, and a signature from the Assigned or Engaged Enrollee must be obtained within three (3) months. MassHealth recognizes that it may take an extended period of time to obtain Enrollee signatures on care plans for the duration of the state of emergency declared via Executive Order No. 591. CPs should document such delays in the Enrollee record, and obtain Enrollee signatures as soon as staff are reasonably able to do so.

Additional Information

For the latest MA-specific information, visit the following link:

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>.

The latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for health care professionals is available at the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html>.