

All MCOs, All DMOs: COVID-19 MCO Notices Extension Updates

Background:

In response to COVID-19, HHSC has been posting MCO Notices to TexConnect with guidance that contains dates for which the guidance applies. Many dates on posted guidance are set to expire on Nov. 30, 2020.

Key Details:

HHSC is updating many MCO Notices with guidance dates that expire at the end of Nov. 30, 2020 to extend through Dec. 31, 2020, unless federal approval for these flexibilities ends sooner. HHSC will provide additional information, if so.

The previously posted individual notices in TexConnect will be edited the week of Nov. 30 to reflect the new extension dates.

The following flexibility is ending Nov. 30, 2020:

- **Remote Delivery:**
 - Allow FQHCs to be reimbursed as telemedicine and telehealth distant site providers. *Effective December 1, 2020, FQHCs may be reimbursed as telemedicine and telehealth distant site provider as permanent policy change per S.B. 670, Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2019.*

The following flexibilities are ending Dec. 31, 2020:

- **Electronic Visit Verification:**
 - Extend visit maintenance timeframe from 60 days to 180 days.
 - Suspend claims matching requirement with a look back to program integrity. Providers should continue to capture visits using EVV when possible.
- **Prior authorizations:**
 - Extend pre-existing authorizations for which a beneficiary has previously received prior authorization.

See attached for a list of all the updated MCO Notices. If you do not see one of these notices posted in TexConnect, then it is not relevant to your health plan. The three tables of updated notices are:

1. MCO Notices Updated with Extensions Through December 31, 2020
 - These Medicaid and CHIP flexibilities have been extended through December 31, 2020 unless the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services ends the public health emergency earlier. If the public health emergency ends earlier, HHSC will provide additional information.
2. MCO Notices with Flexibilities That Have Ended

- This includes flexibilities that have ended July 31, 2020; October 23, 2020; November 30, 2020; and flexibilities that will end December 31, 2020.

3. Information on Other COVID-19 MCO Notices

- These various notices were not updated as the guidance either remains in effect until rescinded or the extension details remain the same. Please view these notices in TexConnect for flexibility details.

Resources:

Extensions - COVID MCO Notices Tables (Attached)

Contact:

MCO_COVID-19_Inquiries@hhsc.state.tx.us

All MCOs: 90-Day Prior Authorization Extensions to End Dec. 31. 2020

This notice replaces guidance issued on April 14, April 3 and March 31.

Background:

HHSC is issuing this guidance to Medicaid and CHIP MCOs and MMPs to help ensure continuity of care during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) response and notify of the end date of a flexibility implemented during COVID.

Key Details:

HHSC directs MCOs and MMPs to extend for 90 days existing prior authorizations and service authorizations that require recertification and are set to expire through December 31, 2020, after which time the 90-day prior authorization extensions will come to an end. The extended authorizations must contain the same proportional amount and frequency as was authorized in the original authorization.

This extension does not apply to current authorizations for one-time services or new requests for authorization, or pharmacy prior authorizations. For example, a single non-emergency ambulance trip would not be extended, but a recurring non-emergency ambulance authorization for dialysis would be extended.

This extension applies to all state plan services requiring recertification, including acute care and long-term services and supports such as personal assistance services, personal care services, community first choice, private duty nursing, physical, occupational, and speech therapies, and day activity and health services.

To implement this direction, MCOs and MMPs may either create new authorizations for the 90-day extension period or extend the end date on the current authorization.

MCOs are reminded that providers currently have an option to request prior authorization time periods other than the 90-day extension. Beginning with prior authorizations

expiring on January 1, 2021, the temporary policy requiring MCOs to extend prior authorizations will no longer be in place. However, MCOs must continue to implement the flexibility on processing new and initial PA requests and recertifications of existing prior authorizations. This policy will remain in place to provide continued flexibility for providers. MCOs are referred to the [TMHP COVID-19 webpage](#) and the [COVID-19 Guidance for New and Initial Prior Authorizations](#).

MCOs may request additional information if it is deemed necessary but will not deny prior authorization requests if providers are unavailable or unable to provide required documentation on a timely basis.

It is expected that before reimbursement is requested, providers have obtained the appropriate required documentation. The services delivered may still be subject to retrospective review for medical necessity. Exceptions will be reviewed on a provider or recipient-specific basis and need.

Action:

In addition to extending current authorizations as outlined above, MCOs and MMPs must:

- Communicate with providers once the impacted authorizations have been extended.
- Allow a provider to submit an amended request to an existing, extended prior authorization, process the request, and override the 90-day extension as appropriate.
- Have a process to ensure the provider is aware of and has timely access to the new or updated authorization in order to bill appropriately.
- Notify providers that updated authorization information must be entered into the electronic visit verification (EVV) system for EVV-relevant services.
- Notify providers impacted by the PA extensions ending December 31 and provide direction about steps providers should take to resume PA processes, including a reminder of the flexibility if documentation cannot be provided timely.

Additional Information:

A provider notice was also released and is available on the TMHP website. This does not apply to nursing facility services at this time. HHSC is still considering the appropriate action for nursing facilities. HHSC will follow up with the MCOs and MMPs regarding operationalizing this for services impacted by the EVV requirements. HHSC previously released guidance directing MCOs and MMPs to extend waiver service authorizations in alignment with HHSC's extension of the individual's eligibility for the waiver.

Resources:

http://www.tmhp.com/Pages/Medicaid/Medicaid_home.aspx

Contact:

jasmin.patel04@hhs.state.gov

MCO Notices Extension Updates

Updates made November 24, 2020

MCO Notices Updated with Extensions Through December 31, 2020*

*The following Medicaid and CHIP flexibilities have been extended through December 31, 2020.
unless federal approval for these flexibilities ends sooner. HHSC will provide additional information, if so.

Title of MCO Notice:	Issued On:
Updated Guidance-Completing Initial Assessments & Reassessments for Expiring Individual Service Plan	Oct. 27
Completing Reassessments for Expiring Individual Service Plans <i>For updated guidance, see "Updated Guidance-Completing Initial Assessments & Reassessments for Expiring Individual Service Plan" notice published Oct. 27.</i>	Sept. 21
Guidance Regarding Third Party Resources for STAR Health Member	Aug. 24
Guidance for MCOs and MMPs Regarding New and Initial Prior Authorizations	June 29
COVID-19 Guidance: Temporarily Allow Verbal Consent from Members on Service Plans & Related Forms	June 17
Updated Guidance: CHIP Office Visit Co-Payments, Updated Reimbursement Process	June 8
CHIP Office Visit Co-Payments, Updated Reimbursement Process	May 18
New Guidance: THSteps Medical Checkups via Remote Delivery During Implementing COVID-19 Restrictions	May 11
COVID-19 Guidance: STAR Kids Age-Outs that Transitioned on April 1, 2020 <i>For related information, see "Supplemental Files of STAR Kids March Age-Outs that Transitioned to STAR+PLUS on April 1, 2020" notice published April 28.</i>	April 23
No Signature Required for Prescription Drug Delivery	April 20
COVID-19 Guidance: Nursing Facility MDS Authorization Extensions	April 9
Provider Enrollment Requirement Waivers due to COVID-19	April 2
Add Rural Health Clinics as Telehealth and Telemedicine Sites	March 27
COVID-19 Guidance: Face to Face Visits and Service Coordination/Case Management	March 26

COVID-19 Guidance: Amend the GR Process for Services that Exceed the Program Cost Limit	March 26
COVID-19 Guidance: Appeal and Continuation of Benefit Request Extensions	March 26
COVID-19 Guidance: Oral Requests for an Appeal	March 26
COVID-19 Guidance: Fair Hearing Request Extensions	March 26
COVID-19 Guidance: Fair Hearing Determination Extensions	March 26
COVID-19 Guidance for the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) Option	March 24
COVID-19 Guidance for MCOs regarding Durable Medical Equipment	March 24
Waiver of CHIP Copayments	March 23
Claims for Telephone (Audio-Only) Behavioral Health Services	March 20
Claims for Telephone (Audio-Only) Medical Services	March 20

MCO Notices with Flexibilities That Have Ended

Flexibilities Ending December 31, 2020

Title of MCO Notice:	Issued On:
Post EVV Communications by Oct. 26 <i>For updated guidance, see "Temporary EVV Policies for COVID-19 to end Dec. 31, 2020" notice published on Nov. 24, 2020.</i>	Oct. 12
Post Temporary EVV Policies for COVID-19 by Aug. 20 <i>For updated guidance, see "Temporary EVV Policies for COVID-19 to end Dec. 31, 2020" notice published on Nov. 24, 2020.</i>	Aug. 6
Clarification to Guidance for MCOs and MMPs Regarding Extensions for Existing Prior Authorizations <i>For updated guidance, see "90-Day Prior Authorization Extensions to End Dec. 31. 2020" notice published Nov. 24, 2020.</i>	April 14
Clarification: Guidance for MCOs and MMPs regarding Extensions for Existing Prior Authorizations <i>For updated guidance, see "90-Day Prior Authorization Extensions to End Dec. 31. 2020" notice published Nov. 24, 2020.</i>	April 3
Updated: Guidance for MCOs and MMPs regarding Extensions for Existing Prior Authorizations <i>For updated guidance, see "90-Day Prior Authorization Extensions to End Dec. 31. 2020" notice published Nov. 24, 2020.</i>	March 31

Post Temporary EVV Policies by April 6 <i>For updated guidance, see "Temporary EVV Policies for COVID-19 to end Dec. 31, 2020" notice published on Nov. 24, 2020.</i>	March 23
Flexibilities Ended November 30, 2020	
Title of MCO Notice:	Issued On:
FQHC Reimbursement for Telemedicine (Physician Deliv.) & Telehealth (Non-Physician-Deliv.) Services <i>Effective Dec. 1, 2020, FQHCs may be reimbursed as telemedicine and telehealth distant site provider as permanent policy change per S.B. 670, Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2019</i>	March 19
Flexibilities Ended October 23, 2020	
Title of MCO Notice:	Issued On:
THSteps Medical and Dental Checkups during COVID-19 <i>This notice was not updated as the flexibility ended Oct. 23, 2020. For guidance on the flexibility ending, see the notice titled, "THSteps Outreach and Education to Farmworker Children Waiver Ended" published Nov. 12.</i>	April 17
Flexibilities Ended July 31, 2020	
Title of MCO Notice:	Issued On:
COVID-19: MCO Appeal Determination Extension Reporting <i>This notice was not updated as the flexibility ended July 31, 2020.</i>	May 5
COVID-19 Guidance: MCO Appeal Determinations <i>This notice was not updated as the flexibility ended July 31, 2020.</i>	March 26

Information on Other COVID-19 MCO Notices	
Title of MCO Notice:	Issued On:
Emergency Rate Increases for NFs Effective April 1, Extended through End of Federally-approved PHE <i>This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i>	Nov. 19
New Coronavirus (COVID-19) Procedure Codes for the Introduction of Infusion of Therapeutics	Nov. 15

<i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	
Update: STAR Kids MDCP and STAR+PLUS HCBS Interest List Releases <i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	Nov. 10
Electronic Data Verification Scoring Results <i>This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i>	Nov. 5
STAR Kids MDCP Only: Process for Off-Cycle Reassessments <i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	Oct. 27
STAR+PLUS HCBS Only: Process for Off-Cycle Reassessments <i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	
Certain COVID-19 Procedure Codes Implemented Retroactively – Clarification <i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	Oct. 8
Aug. 4 MCO Notice Retracted: Updated Information on COVID-19 Medicaid Renewals <i>This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i>	Oct. 6
New Value Point of Origin for Admission of Visit Code “G,” In Use Beginning July 1, 2020 <i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	Oct. 1
Updated Information: Spell of Illness Limitation and COVID-19 <i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	Sept. 17
Updated Information: COVID-19 – Spell of Illness Limitation in STAR Health <i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	Sept. 17
Certain COVID-19 Procedure Codes Implemented Retroactively <i>For updated guidance, see "Certain COVID-19 Procedure Codes Implemented Retroactively - Clarification" posted on Oct. 8. There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i>	Sept. 10
Emergency Rate Increases for NFs Effective April 1 Extended Through End of Federally-Approved PHE <i>For updated guidance, see "Emergency Rate Increases for Nursing Facilities Effective April 1, 2020, Extended through End of Federally-approved PHE" notice published Nov. 19. This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i>	Sept. 2

<p>Guidance: STAR Health Member’s Changing Primary Care Provider During the Public Health Emergency</p> <p><i>This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	Aug. 24
<p>COVID-19 and Applicability of EPSDT for Some Adults</p> <p><i>This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	Aug. 17
<p>State Fiscal Year 2020 Texas Health Steps Timely Checkup Reports – Calculations During COVID-19</p> <p><i>This notice was not updated. As it states, timely checkup standards for SFY 2021 are reinstated starting November 1, 2020.</i></p>	Aug. 13
<p>Clarification to “Procedure Code Addition and Update for Coronavirus (COVID-19)”</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	Aug. 10
<p>Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Provider Re-credentialing – COVID-19: Revised Due Date Extensions</p> <p><i>This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same.</i></p>	July 16
<p>Procedure Code Addition and Update for COVID-19</p> <p><i>For updated guidance, see “Clarification to “Procedure Code Addition and Update for Coronavirus (COVID-19)” notice published on Aug. 10. There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	July 13
<p>Reprocessing Guidance for COVID-19 Related Claims</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	July 6
<p>Emergency Rate Increases for the Nursing Facilities Effective Retroactive to April 1, 2020</p> <p><i>For updated guidance, see “Emergency Rate Increases for Nursing Facilities Effective April 1, 2020, Extended through End of Federally-approved PHE” notice published Nov. 19. This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	July 2
<p>Leveraging Long-Term Care Hospitals (LTCHs) During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	June 27
<p>Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Provider Re-credentialing – COVID-19</p> <p><i>For updated guidance, see “Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Provider Re-credentialing – COVID-19: Revised Due Date Extensions” notice published July 16.</i></p>	June 18
<p>COVID-19 – Spell of Illness Limitation in STAR Health</p>	June 4

<p><i>For updated guidance, see "Updated Information: COVID-19 – Spell of Illness Limitation in STAR Health" notice published on Sept. 17.</i></p>	
<p>Spell of Illness Limitation and COVID-19</p> <p><i>For updated guidance, see "Updated Information: Spell of Illness Limitation and COVID-19" notice published on Sept. 17.</i></p>	June 4
<p>COVID-19 and Applicability of EPSDT for Some Adults in STAR and STAR Health</p> <p><i>This notice was not updated as the extension details remain the same and the guidance is in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	June 2
<p>Two MCO Notices Retracted: April 3, 2020 MDCP and STAR+PLUS HCBS Interest List Releases</p> <p><i>This notice was not updated. As it states, HHSC has postponed MDCP and STAR+PLUS HCBS interest list releases as of April 2020 until further guidance is provided. For updated guidance, see "Update: STAR Kids MDCP and STAR+PLUS HCBS Interest List Releases: published Nov. 10</i></p>	May 28
<p>Specialty Drug List from Quarter Four (December 2019) Remains in Effect</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	May 22
<p>Service Planning for Pregnant Women During COVID-19</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	May 22
<p>COVID-19: Service-Level Changes Resulting from Telehealth and Telephonic Visits</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	May 7
<p>Money Follows the Person Process for Nursing Facility Residents</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	May 5
<p>MCO COVID-19 Guidance: Telehealth for Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy</p> <p><i>There is not an end date on this notice and the guidance remains in effect until rescinded.</i></p>	April 10