



March 18, 2020

Dear Valued Provider,

We appreciate your partnership over the past several days as we looked for ways to increase members' access to telehealth and to help you continue to provide quality behavioral health services to your patients during this unprecedented time.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, Beacon is committed to enabling Members to remain in their homes to reduce exposure and transmission, and to preserve health system capacity for the duration of this public health emergency consistent with governmental mandates. Consistent with the California Department of Healthcare Services Information Notice 20-009, Beacon Health Options will permit providers to deliver clinically appropriate, medically necessary covered services to Medi-Cal Members via telephone or telehealth (live video conferencing). Moreover, Beacon strongly encourages providers to utilize this increased telehealth flexibility to maximize the number of services provided by telephone or telehealth.

The following changes are effective immediately (until further notice) for providers serving Medi-Cal members:

#### **Attestation (New telehealth providers)**

- No contract adjustments or signed attestation is required to provide services to Medi-Cal members.

#### **Acceptable Modalities**

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Notification of Enforcement Discretion have stated that they will not be enforcing HIPAA compliance for telehealth remote communications during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency.
  - Beacon is not imposing specific requirements for technologies used to deliver services via telehealth and will allow reimbursement for covered services delivered through telephone or telehealth so long as such services are medically necessary and clinically appropriate. Providers are reminded, however, that state confidentiality may still apply.
  - Providers are encouraged to use appropriate HIPAA compliant telehealth platforms to communicate with individuals. When leveraging widely available communication apps, such as FaceTime or Skype, to the extent feasible, ensure the same rights to confidentiality and security as provided in face-to-face services. Providers must inform members of any relevant privacy considerations.
  - There are no site restrictions on where services are performed for Medi-Cal members.
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### **Documentation of Services**

- Clinical documentation for telehealth services is the same as face to face documentation for services.

### **Reimbursement and Claims**

- Rates of payment for services delivered via Telehealth will be the same as rates of payment for services delivered via traditional in-person methods as it applies to your contract. Providers should continue normal billing practices until further notice. Providers will be able to bill Beacon for these services delivered via telephone or telehealth beginning March 16, 2020, for a period of time to be determined.
- The situation with COVID-19 is very dynamic, we will continue to monitor developments and review the proposed end date each week as we have new information.

Our focus remains on supporting our providers, customers and members during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the fluid nature of the situation we will continue to adjust our policies and procedures and provide updates to you as necessary.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to supporting individuals as we navigate this situation.

Sincerely,

Provider Relations Contact

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