

COVID-19 update: Amerigroup Community Care suspends select prior authorization rules and announces significant policy adjustments in response to unprecedented demands on health care providers

Amerigroup Community Care recognizes the intense demands facing doctors, hospitals and all health care providers in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, unless otherwise required under state and federal mandates, Amerigroup health plans will suspend select prior authorization (PA) requirements, member cost sharing, claims review and handling protocols to allow health care providers to focus on caring for patients diagnosed with COVID-19. These adjustments apply to members of all lines of business, including self-insured plan members.

Inpatient and respiratory care

- PA requirements are suspended for patient transfers: all hospital inpatient transfers to lower levels of care (by land only). Although PA is not required, Amerigroup requests voluntary notification via the usual channels to aid in our members' care coordination and management.
- The 21-day inpatient requirement before transferring a patient to a long-term acute care hospital is suspended.
- Concurrent review for discharge planning will continue unless required to change by federal or state directive.
- PA requirements are suspended for COVID-19 DME, including oxygen supplies, respiratory devices and continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) devices for patients diagnosed with COVID-19, along with the requirement for authorization to exceed quantity limits on gloves and masks.
- Respiratory services for acute treatment of COVID-19 will be covered. PA requirements are suspended where previously required.

COVID-19 testing

Laboratory tests for COVID-19 at both in-network and out-of-network laboratories will be covered with no cost sharing for members.

Claims audits, retrospective review and policy changes

Amerigroup will adjust the way we handle and monitor claims to ease administrative demands on providers:

- Hospital claims audits requiring additional clinical documentation will be limited for next 90 days, though Amerigroup reserves the right to conduct retrospective reviews on these findings with expanded lookback recovery periods. To assist providers, Amerigroup can offer electronic submission of clinical documents through the provider portal.

- Retrospective utilization management review will also be suspended during this 90-day period, and Amerigroup reserves the right to conduct retrospective utilization management review of these claims when this period ends and adjust claims as required.
- Our special investigation programs targeting provider fraud will continue, as well as other program integrity functions that ensure payment accuracy
- New payment and utilization management policies and policy updates will be minimized, unless helpful in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Otherwise, Amerigroup will continue to administer claims adjudication and payment in line with our benefit plans and state and federal regulations, including claims denials where applicable. Our timely filing requirements remain in place, but Amerigroup is aware of limitations and heightened demands that may hinder prompt claims submission.

Additional Prior Authorization changes:

Amerigroup is committed to working with and supporting providers. As of March 16, Amerigroup is removing prior authorization requirements for skilled nursing facilities (SNF) for the next 90 days to assist hospitals in managing possible capacity issues. SNF Providers should continue admission notification to Amerigroup in an effort to verify eligibility and benefits for all members prior to rendering services and to assist with ensuring timely payments. Amerigroup is also extending the length of time a prior authorization is in effect for elective inpatient and outpatient procedures to 90 days. This will help prevent the need for additional outreach to Amerigroup to adjust the date of service covered by the authorization.

Providers should watch the [Provider News](#) page for any future administrative changes or policy adjustments we may make in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.