

March 13, 2020

Dear Magellan Provider:

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak evolves, providers are inquiring about our pandemic readiness and the ability to maintain service levels. We understand that the outbreak in Pennsylvania is not yet widespread. However, we are expecting to see an increase in cases on a daily basis. Providers are understandably concerned about staff safety, retention, continuity of care for members and the financial stability of the HealthChoices behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) delivery system during this serious outbreak of COVID- 19.

We have been closely monitoring state and federal direction on best practices and will continue to communicate relevant updates. In addition, County and BH-MCO leadership from across the Commonwealth have been meeting regularly and we want to keep you abreast of the recommendations we are making to DHS leadership.

We are currently seeking approval of the following from DHS:

1. Suspension of regulatory requirements to allow for other modes of treatment intervention such as telephonic clinical and administrative intervention, as well as suspension of face-to-face requirements for service types that require it.
2. Ability to provide payment to providers based upon past aggregate revenue averages rather than current fee-for-service approaches, in order to ensure continuity of funding and as such, continuity of operations.
3. Waiver of requirements for face-to-face contact to allow engagement through phone, skype, facetime, zoom and telehealth platforms to deliver services, ensure provider staff safety and mitigate potential spread of COVID-19.
4. Flexibility with regard to complaints and grievances administrative requirements for responsiveness should barriers present themselves with an increase of work at home employees.

The intended outcome of providing base funding for providers is to assure staff that funding will continue regardless of member no shows, cancellation or inability to deliver services in the community. Staff who are ill should stay home and be reassured they will continue to be compensated per your sick leave policy.

We are sharing this information concurrent to our communication with DHS so you are aware that HealthChoices leadership are committed to supporting members and providers with tangible interventions to support the stability of the system. We intend to communicate these requests to DHS no later than Monday, March 16, 2020. Once we have received any response

on these requests, we will notify providers as soon as possible through our daily updates on the provider announcements page of the Magellan website. Please monitor our website daily as this is the quickest way for us to release current information.

In closing, we encourage providers to support employees by:

- **Knowing what your organization's plans are.** Read the business continuity plan and know your role. Talk to your team members about cross-training and covering for each other if one of you gets sick. In addition, ensure you are following proper protocols for cleaning and preventing spread. Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for helpful information. This is particularly important for behavioral health providers who may not always think about universal precautions.
- **Limit exposure to media.** Media outlets have a tendency to sensationalize stories, so it's important to consume news thoughtfully and with a critical eye.

In addition, do all the normal things to take care of yourself: eat healthy, well-balanced meals; exercise regularly; get plenty of sleep; and avoid alcohol and drugs. Doing these things can have a positive impact on your mental health and help you manage anxiety.

Sincerely,

Jim Leonard
CEO
Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania