

To: TennCare Managed Care Organizations
From: Keith Gaither, Managed Care Operations Director
Date: June 12, 2020
Subject: COVID-19 Policies Regarding DMEPOS

As you are aware, we have been considering short term administrative accommodations for durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) to help address the challenges associated with COVID-19.

The following includes steps we can take to address challenges for DMEPOS during this challenging time. The short-term accommodations described below will be in place from June 6, 2020 until September 30, 2020.

1. **Objective:** Provide coverage for short term oxygen for beneficiaries with acute conditions to ease hospital overflow issues.

Action taken: DMEPOS providers will be able to provide short term oxygen for beneficiaries with acute conditions. Our Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) will remove prior authorization (PA) for the first 90 days of service provision for newly provided services during this period, June 6, 2020 until September 30, 2020; however, notification to the MCOs will be required. PA will be required after ninety (90) days of service provision.

2. **Objective:** Allow for coverage and reimburse equipment, supplies, and services provided to patients with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis.

Action taken: MCOs will cover equipment, supplies, and services for members with a confirmed COVID diagnosis as medically necessary.

3. **Objective:** Modify prior authorization and re-authorization requirements for all DMEPOS items and repairs.

Action taken: Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) will remove prior authorization (PA) for the first 90 days of service provision for newly provided services during this period, June 6, 2020 until September 30, 2020; however, notification to the MCOs will be required. PA will be required after ninety (90) days of service provision. This applies to:

- Ventilators
- Oxygen and supporting items
- Repairs will have the PA waived (providers should use repair modifier)

4. **Objective:** Modify prior authorization requirements for exceeding quantity limitations on gloves, incontinence, urological, ostomy, oxygen, suction, ventilators, enteral, and wound care supplies.

Action taken: MCOs will waive prior authorization for requested supplies for up to a 30-day supply per month; at their discretion, MCOs may approve up to a 45-day supply per month.

5. **Objective:** Reduce paperwork requirements by allowing the standard prescription documenting any required test results to meet medical policy documentation requirements for a 270-day period.

TennCare Response: MCOs will allow the standard prescription documenting required tests to meet medical policy documentation requirements for the first 9 months of services begun or reauthorized during the period June 6, 2020 through September 30, 2020.

6. **Objective:** Waive any face-to-face requirements if prescriber couldn't or wouldn't do an office visit and allow telehealth visits to meet requirements while waiving the video component. Recent federal guidance to reduce barriers to telehealth services are a step in the right direction.

<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/downloads/medicaid-telehealth-services.pdf>

Action taken: The MCOs have waived face-to-face requirements and allowed broad flexibilities across our services. We agree that video telehealth is preferred when possible.

7. **Objective:** Allow an extension of the expiration date of written orders for an additional nine months from the date orders currently expire, for recurring medical supply orders and on-going DME rental claims.

Action taken: Physician orders that expire during the period covered by this memo will be extended by the MCOs through September 30, 2020. This accommodation will apply to DME rent-to-purchase arrangements as well.

8. **Objective:** Allow in home sleep testing through an independent testing facility (IDTF) to qualify beneficiaries for PAP devices.

Action taken: In-home sleep testing provided by an independent testing facility will be allowed for adults. MCOs will consider requests for in-home sleep testing for members under age 18 on a case-by-case basis, but will require a PA.

9. **Objective:** Allow additional oxygen, PAP, ventilator, and suction supplies for patients who become sick or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Action taken: Vendors can ensure supplies do not drop below 30 days without additional PA - order written for 30-day supply/month – may allow 45-day supply/month.

10. **Objective:** Waive signature requirements for proof of delivery on HME items; including allowance of text, email, photographic, or confirmed shipment receipt from third-party carrier evidence to validate proof of delivery during COVID-19 crisis.

Action taken: MCOs are to waive signature requirements on HME.

11. **Objective:** Add coverage without prior authorization for code A4928 (surgical masks, per 20).

Action taken: The MCOs do not require prior authorization for code A4928.

12. **Request:** Modify MCO audits of DME providers:

A. **Action taken:** MCOs will defer for 60 days with extensions as appropriate new audit/ADR requests and extend existing audits due dates by 180-days.

B. **Action taken:** MCOs will extend appeal deadlines for 60 days with extensions as appropriate

13. **Objective:** Allow any requirements for clinician and/or assistive technology professional in-person engagement for complex rehab wheelchairs and accessories to be met with remote technology.

Action taken: MCOs will allow any requirements for clinician and/or assistive technology professional in-person engagement for complex rehab wheelchairs and accessories to be met with remote technology.

14. **Objective:** Allow that DMEPOS suppliers be categorized as “essential services” to allow delivery to quarantined areas.

Action taken: MCOs will allow that DMEPOS suppliers be categorized as “essential services” to allow delivery to quarantined areas.

Thank you for your partnership and continued care of our members especially during these unprecedented times.