



Personal Care Service Agency Update

As part of our collective efforts to support our providers and ensure consistent messaging, the New Mexico Centennial Care managed care organizations (MCOs) collaborated on this notification.

The information below is current as of the date of publication, but we anticipate that guidance and directives will change as this health emergency evolves. We strongly encourage providers to check for updates to the Letter of Direction (LOD) on the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) website daily at the following link:

- <https://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForInformation/centennial-care-letters-of-direction.aspx>.

HSD issued a LOD that requires personal care service (PCS) agencies to follow the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for home-based care services. Those guidelines can be found at the following link:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

The New Mexico Centennial Care MCOs encourage providers to familiarize themselves with these recommendations and to check the website for updates on a regular basis. For updates, please check the website a minimum of once per week through the termination of the emergency declaration.

HSD, in collaboration with other state agencies, issued new guidance on background checks and fingerprints during this public health emergency (PHE). Employees must complete applications for processing through the New Mexico Employee Abuse Registry / Consolidated Online Employee Abuse Registry (EAR/COR). If approved, then these employees can start working immediately.

New employees are granted flexibility for submission of fingerprints and do not have to submit fingerprints prior to starting to work. All employees must submit fingerprint cards within 30 days of the termination of the PHE. Employees who fail the background check or fail to submit a fingerprint card within 30 days of the termination of the PHE must be removed from employment immediately.

Agencies should also grant flexibility for employees who are unable to renew their NM Driver's License or ID during the PHE, as MVD offices are closed. All employees should be allowed to renew their DL or ID within 30 days of the termination of the PHE.

Caregiver Shortages

We are aware that many of our PCS agencies have had staffing challenges because of the PHE. This has been especially challenging but not specific to rural areas of the state. If an agency believes it may not be able to provide a caregiver for a high-risk member, then it is imperative that the agency contact the member's care coordinator.

Critical Incident Reporting

PCS agencies should submit Critical Incident Reports (CIRs) for members who are refusing services due to COVID-19. Please document the primary incident type/subcategory as Neglect/Self Neglect (refusing services) and ensure that COVID-19 is documented as the reason in both the Narrative and the Diary Entries to support the Incident Narrative. PCS agencies should also document actions taken with the MCO related to the refusal for services (i.e., "forwarded to care coordinator for follow up, member is temporarily stating they do not want services due to COVID-19"). PCS agencies may submit one CIR per week in the event a member is refusing services due to COVID-19, or the agency is unable to provide a caregiver for authorized services related to COVID-19.

Backup Plan




Agencies should ensure that they deploy their backup plan to members, as needed. If your agency has not yet developed a backup plan, please ensure the following risk stratification is considered when identifying which members will receive paid caregiver services:

- The availability of natural supports.
- The acuity/needs of the member (i.e., those requiring total assistance should be prioritized first, etc.)
- Other resources/community benefits accessed by the member. This includes resources such as meals on wheels, senior center supports, adult day habilitation, etc.

In accordance with current New Mexico Department of Health guidelines for testing, each agency must have protocols in place to assist and direct caregivers who display COVID-19 symptoms to COVID-19 testing sites. Agencies should **not** report an individual's test results to the MCOs. Agencies must have protocols in place to ensure backup plans are implemented in the event a member's caregiver tests positive for COVID-19.

Agencies are required to continue to use the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) system. If a member receives PCS services at an alternative location(s) for an extended period of time, then please notify the EVV contact at the respective MCO to avoid potential claim delays.

Each Centennial Care MCO developed a webpage dedicated to keeping providers informed of the COVID-19 health crisis. The MCOs encourage all providers to familiarize themselves with the information available on these webpages and to check for updates at least weekly throughout the crisis. Please see the following table for website links for each MCO's COVID-19 page.

MCO COVID-19 Resource Websites	
 BlueCross BlueShield of New Mexico	www.bcbsnm.com/provider/covid-19-preparedness.html
 PRESBYTERIAN Centennial Care	www.phs.org/providers/Pages/coronavirus-covid-19.aspx
 western sky community care.	www.westernskycommunitycare.com/members/medicaid/covid---19-resources.html

New Mexico Human Services Department

To maintain proper dissemination of information regarding the New Mexico Medicaid program during the COVID-19 health crisis, a new page was added to the New Mexico Medicaid Portal. The New Mexico Medicaid COVID-19 page will be updated with information and resources to ensure Medicaid services are delivered efficiently and without interruption to New Mexico Medicaid members statewide.

During this crisis, HSD, as the administrator of the New Mexico Medicaid program, has requested waiver authority from our federal partners to enact temporary emergency alterations to our Medicaid program. All waiver requests and the current state of approval can be found on the New Mexico Medicaid COVID-19 page at the following link:

- <https://nmmedicaid.portal.conduent.com/static/covid.htm>

This page also includes any special guidance, billing codes, provider supplements and MCO LODs that were issued in response to the pandemic. A link to the New Mexico Department of Health Coronavirus web page is also available at the following link:

- <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

If you have any questions regarding this communication, please contact your provider representative for any MCO. Thank you for your adherence to this request as we continue to support providers through this crisis.