

To: Medi-Cal Network Providers
From: Hugo Florez 
Vice President, Network Management

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Subject: **Department of Health Care Services COVID-19 All Plan Letters – APL 20-021 and APL 20-022**

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has issued several All Plan Letters (APLs) to Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs) in response to the current COVID-19 crisis. Recently, APL 20-021 and APL 20-022 were issued to provide additional guidance. We are sharing a summary of these APLs with you to ensure you are aware of the information.

Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan (Blue Shield Promise) also publishes other [COVID-19 information](#), some of which pertains to network Medi-Cal service providers.

APL 20-021

Acute Hospital Care at Home

For the duration of the [Acute Hospital Care at Home program](#), launched November 25, 2020 by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), hospitals that apply for and receive CMS waiver approval may provide approved acute care inpatient services to eligible members at home. Program requirements include:

- Members will only be admitted to the Acute Hospital Care at Home program from emergency departments and inpatient hospital beds, and an in-person physician evaluation is required prior to starting care at home.
- Participating hospitals will be required to have appropriate screening protocols before care at home begins to assess both medical and non-medical factors, including working utilities, assessment of physical barriers, and screenings for domestic violence concerns.
- A registered nurse will evaluate each member once daily, either in-person or remotely, and two in-person visits will occur daily by either registered nurses or mobile integrated health paramedics, based on the member's nursing plan and hospital policies.
- It is the member's choice to receive these services in the home or in the traditional hospital setting, and members who do not wish to receive them in the home will not be required to do so.

Managed care plans (MCPs) such as Blue Shield Promise are responsible for tracking each participating hospital's waiver status and authorizing acute care inpatient services at home for members. MCPs must reimburse hospitals providing care through the Acute Hospital Care at Home program at the same rate as if the services were provided in a traditional hospital. MCPs must also report the number of members receiving services in the program to DHCS on a monthly basis.

Hospitals wishing to participate in the Acute Hospital Care at Home program must apply for a waiver through the CMS online portal at <https://qualitynet.cms.gov/acute-hospital-care-at-home>. For a list of approved hospitals and more information, visit <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/Acute-Hospital-Care-at-Home-Program.aspx>.

[APL 20-022](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Administration

This APL outlines how COVID-19 vaccines will be delivered at no cost to all Medi-Cal beneficiaries and administered by DHCS and MCPs.

Providers will be required to:

- Sign an agreement with the U.S. government to receive free supplies of Covid-19 vaccines.
 - Providers must agree to vaccinate individuals regardless of existing health coverage or the type of coverage, and are prohibited from balance billing or otherwise charging vaccine recipients.
- Obtain an immunization information system (IIS) ID before enrolling in California's Covid-19 Vaccine Program.
- Provide vaccine recipients with emergency use authorization fact sheets about the vaccines and vaccination cards identifying the brand of vaccine administered and the date of their second vaccination (if applicable).
- Administer the vaccines in accordance with the CDC and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices requirements; they must also meet storage and recordkeeping requirements, including recording the administration of the vaccines to patients in their own systems within 24 hours and to public health data systems within 72 hours.
- Bill Medi-Cal fee-for-service (FFS) for COVID-19 vaccine administration using the claim forms and electronic media used today.

MCPs are responsible for:

- Member communication providing relevant and current information on the COVID-19 vaccines.
- Case management and care coordination, which may involve assisting members with accessing COVID-19 vaccine administration locations, including providing non-emergency medical transportation and non-medical transportation as needed, and helping members receive the required number of doses for the COVID-19 vaccines in a timely fashion.
- Ensuring that network providers are following guidance issued by DHCS related to the administration of the COVID-19 vaccines.

This summary is only meant as a brief description of the APLs. Please see the entire APLs for the complete requirements. The full text of all DHCS managed care APLs may be found at this URL: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Pages/AllPlanLetters.aspx>. (Links to the DHCS.ca.gov website will take you off of the Blue Shield Promise website.)

If you have questions about applying any of the information in this notice to Blue Shield Promise members, please call our Provider Customer Care Department at **(800) 468-9935** from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.