



BlueCross BlueShield of New Mexico

# BLUE REVIEW<sup>SM</sup> SPECIAL EDITION: COVID-19 (April 2020)

## **A Message from Our Chief Medical Officer: In the Face of COVID-19, We're Standing by You and Our Members, Your Patients**

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has tested our health care delivery system, economy and culture in ways that many of us did not imagine, just a few months ago. Both our heroism and human frailty as health care providers during this pandemic has been undeniable. The tension between personal and family safety while delivering life preserving care has been prominent in our minds. And despite the modern advances of health care, we are reminded of the critical importance of public health and the interwoven nature of our health as one community.

In between the chasms in our health care system, each of you have helped bridge the gap – overcoming fears, innovating in the face of equipment shortages, enduring back-to-back clinical shifts, and comforting patients and families during a time of uncertainty. On behalf of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM), thank you for your service to our community.

As we continue to monitor and make changes in response to the rapidly evolving pandemic, I wanted to take a moment to personally let you know how BCBSNM is holding true to our purpose – to do everything in our power to stand with our members in sickness and in health. We took several early actions to complement your efforts to prepare for the surge of COVID-19 patients:

- Care management team members are available on the weekends to support providers and members
- Accelerated proactive outreach to members at greatest risk for COVID-19 infection to address their social needs
- Proactively worked with hospital providers to facilitate patient transfers to post-acute care
- Relaxed some benefit preauthorization requirements in support of the rapidly evolving diagnostic and care protocols for COVID-19
- Expanded access to telemedicine and telehealth services to help promote continuity of care for members and mitigate transmission of COVID-19 for some clinical interactions

We're also contributing to collaborative community grant funds to help local non-profits in their efforts to further support providers and members with essential needs.

Now more than ever, communication is critical. With this Special Edition of our *Blue Review*, we wanted to pull together some recent COVID-19 communications, all in one place for your convenience. There's also a [COVID-19 Preparedness page](#) on our Provider website, if you'd like a quick overview of the latest updates. As a reminder, I encourage you to watch the [News and Updates](#) for additional announcements, which will be posted as soon as more information becomes available.

Lastly, I welcome communication from you on how BCBSNM can further collaborate and provide support.

Dr. Wei-Ann Bay, M.D.  
Chief Medical Officer  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico

The above material is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for the independent medical judgment of a physician or other health care provider. Physicians and other health care providers are encouraged to use their own medical judgment based upon all available information and the condition of the patient in determining the appropriate course of treatment. The fact that a service or treatment is described in this material is not a guarantee that the service or treatment is a covered benefit and members should refer to their certificate of coverage for more details, including benefits, limitations and exclusions. Regardless of benefits, the final decision about any service or treatment is between the member and their health care provider.

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### Stay informed on COVID-19

During these continuously changing times, please always check our [News & Updates](#) section on the BCBSNM provider website for the most recent information on the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read More](#)

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### **Provider Information on COVID-19 Coverage**

BCBSNM is covering **testing to diagnose** the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for most members with no prior authorization needed and no member copays or deductibles.

BCBSNM is waiving member cost-sharing, including deductibles, copayments and coinsurance related to **treatment** for COVID-19. The waiver applies to costs associated with COVID-19 treatment at in-network facilities and treatment for out-of-network emergencies. For BCBSNM insured, IBAC, and Medicaid members, the waiver of COVID-related cost-share applies to all out-of-network services, and not just emergencies

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### **Using Telemedicine and Telehealth in Response to COVID-19**

BCBSNM continues to cover behavioral health and medical inquiries through telemedicine and telehealth visits. We are also giving our members access to clinically appropriate medical and behavioral health services delivered through telemedicine with **no copays or deductibles for in-network visits through April 30, 2020** in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

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### **BCBSNM Waives Customer Cost-Sharing for COVID-19 Treatment**

BCBSNM is waiving member cost-sharing, including deductibles, copayments and coinsurance related to **treatment** for COVID-19. The waiver applies to costs associated with COVID-19 treatment at in-network facilities and treatment for out-of-network emergencies.

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### **BCBSNM Waiving Prior Authorization for Transfer to Post-Acute Care**

BCBSNM is waiving prior authorization requirements for transfers to in-network, medically necessary alternative post-acute facilities **until April 30, 2020**.

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## Credentialing Process Simplified for COVID-19

BCBSNM is temporarily updating our credentialing policy and processes in response to the COVID-19 emergency. This complies with emergency state and federal regulations and is effective April 3, 2020. The temporary modifications are only in place during the COVID-19 emergency and subject to change based upon state and federal action. Otherwise, standard credentialing and processes will apply.

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## Additional Information for Providers

- [Temporary Changes for In-Home Services, Community Benefits, and Nursing Facility Level of Care Determination](#)
- [Medicare Advantage Provider Call Center Lines Experiencing Longer Hold Times](#)
- [A letter to Behavioral Health Providers from HSD Director of Behavioral Health Services Division Neal Bowen](#)
- [New Mexico Human Services Department Issues Letter of Direction #31 – COVID-19 Guidance for Centennial Care 2.0 Managed Care Organizations Repeal & Replace LOD #30](#)

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## Do you have additional questions for our Provider Representatives?

[Contact your BCBSNM Provider Relations Representative](#) with any additional questions regarding this communication.

## BCBSNM Website

It's important for you to stay informed about news that could affect your practice. BCBSNM offers many ways to stay informed via our website, [bcbsnm.com/provider](https://bcbsnm.com/provider), and our provider newsletter, *Blue Review*. [Signing up is easy](#).

## Medical Policy Updates

Approved new or revised medical policies and their effective dates are usually posted on our website the 1st and 15th of each month. These policies may impact your reimbursement and your patients' benefits. These policies are located under the [Standards & Requirements](#) tab at [bcbsnm.com/provider](https://bcbsnm.com/provider).

## Clinical Payment and Coding Policies

BCBSNM has adopted additional clinical payment and coding policies. These policies are based on criteria developed by specialized professional societies, national guidelines (e.g. Milliman Care Guidelines (MCG)) and the CMS Provider Reimbursement Manual and are not intended to provide billing or coding advice but to serve as a reference for facilities and providers. These policies are located under the Standards & Requirements tab at [bcbsnm.com/provider](https://bcbsnm.com/provider).

## Claims Inquiries

Our Provider Service Unit (PSU) handles all provider inquiries about claims status, eligibility, benefits and claims processing for BCBSNM members. For the BCBSNM BlueCard® PSU, call 800-222-7992. For out-of-area claims inquiries, call 888-349-3706.

## [Network Services Contacts and Related Service Areas](#)

## Do We Have Your Correct Information?

Maintaining up-to-date contact and practice information helps to ensure that you are receiving critical communications and efficient reimbursement processes. Please complete our quick and easy [online form](#) for any changes to your contact or practice information.

## Member Rights and Responsibilities

[BCBSNM policies](#) help address the issues of members participating in decision making regarding their treatment; confidentiality of information; treatment of members with dignity, courtesy and a respect for privacy; and members' responsibilities in the practitioner-patient relationship and the health care delivery process.

## [bcbsnm.com/provider](https://bcbsnm.com/provider)

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