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COVID-19

AAP & Local Payer Updates

Update #4 from the NYS AAP - Chapter 2 & 3

PEDIATRIC COUNCIL

Your Pediatric Council addresses billing and payment issues with insurers. We strive to facilitate better working relationships between pediatricians and health insurance plans, and to improve quality of care for children.

Dear NYS AAP - Chapter 3 Member,

As we continue to deal with the effects of the National Health Emergency on our patients and our practices, it remains our goal to keep our members updated with information from the payers in our region.

The National AAP has released a statement about continuing to provide essential preventive and diagnostic services during the pandemic. It specifically discusses the need to continue well visits and immunization services, and calls for insurers to cover well visits done virtually via telemedicine. While doing this will necessitate a second visit to complete the elements of the visit which cannot be done virtually (measurements, labs, immunizations), many screenings and assessments can be performed remotely. See:

- <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/04/14/ambulatory041420>
- <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/guidance-on-providing-pediatric-ambulatory-services-via-telehealth-during-covid-19/>

The AAP has also posted an excellent summary of the advocacy efforts that the Academy is undertaking on behalf of all pediatricians. There is a huge amount of effort on the part of Academy leaders and staff at national, state and local levels. **Read the AAP's advocacy efforts summary here:** <https://downloads.aap.org/DOFA/COVID-19%20Advocacy%20Report%20April%2015%202020.pdf>

We have been unable to confirm rumors that UHC will cover telehealth well care visits at this time, and Aetna thus far does not cover such visits. However, **New York State law requires an insurer to pay for any service which would ordinarily be covered if performed in-office when that same service is delivered by telehealth:**

https://www.dfs.ny.gov/industry_guidance/coronavirus/telehealth_ins_prov_info

This would seem to indicate that ALL insurers must cover well visits performed virtually, even though those services may not be on the insurer's list of covered services. Should a telehealth well visit be denied by an insurer, the above resource can be used in an appeal to the insurer.

New York State Medicaid posted guidance for online registration to participate in Medicaid to help care for COVID-19 patients. The registration can be made retroactive to March 1, 2020. The *Medicaid Update Special Edition* is available on the [Medicaid Update webpage](#).

HealthFirst Medicaid Managed Care issued the following guidance:

The Telehealth billing guidelines posted on the HealthFirst site instruct providers to bill using place of service '02', **however during this emergency period bill using Place of Service '11' with Modifier 95 for Telehealth services to ensure payment at the usual office reimbursement rate.** After the emergency period ends providers will no longer be allowed to bill Telehealth services with POS 11; that's assuming they filled out the application/assessment and have been approved to offer continued telehealth services after the public emergency is over. **An application to continue to be a telehealth provider for HealthFirst after the emergency ends can be found [here](#).**

If you are aware of any written guidance, ideally from an insurer's website, giving additional information on this or any other topic, please share that information with us, your Pediatric Council Co-Chairs, and we will make it available to the NYS AAP membership.

With our best wishes,

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Share Your Billing Guidance & Payment Issues

We are creating a spreadsheet listing specific coding and billing requirements by insurer for all the companies that cover children in NY State and adjacent to our borders. In addition, since many insurers are local, practices should consider constructing a spreadsheet of billing instructions for submitting telehealth claims, as many insurers have particular requirements for the claims.

PLEASE EMAIL US THE BILLING GUIDANCE YOU RECEIVE FROM INSURERS FOR TELEHEALTH AND COVID-19 RELATED ISSUES. We already have guidance from Emblem, United Health Care and Cigna.

In addition, please let us know if you are having payment issues, as we may be able to offer help.

Useful Info from the National AAP

There is a vast trove of useful information available from the National AAP. CEO Mark Del Monte shared information on many AAP initiatives in a recent email, available [here](#).

The Payer Advocacy Advisory Committee, chaired by Sue Kressly of PA, is dedicated to helping pediatricians address all manner of issues with insurance companies and other payers, including Medicaid. PAAC recently posted the following resources available through the National AAP:

- Payment Advocacy for Telehealth: https://downloads.aap.org/DOPA/Telehealth_2_rev.pdf
- State Notices about Telehealth in responses to COVID-19: <https://downloads.aap.org/DOCCSA/State-Telehealth-Notices.pdf>

- FAQs for Medicaid and CHIP responses to COVID-19: <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/covid-19-faqs.pdf>
- Coding and Billing for Non-direct care: <https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/COVID%202020.pdf>

The AAP Coding Hotline is available to answer coding questions via email at aapcodinghotline@aap.org. In addition, a recording of a webinar on Coding During the COVID-19 Pandemic is available for viewing [here](#).

The NYS AAP - CHAPTER 3 is YOUR Local AAP Chapter

The New York State American Academy of Pediatrics (NYS AAP) is comprised of three local AAP Chapters, Chapters 1, 2, and 3, who work together as a coalition.

Your Chapter, the NYS AAP - Chapter 3, has over 1,700 members in 8 counties: Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island, Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange and Dutchess.

To learn more about Chapter 3, please view our [Member Value Flyer](#), which describes the value of Chapter membership.

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