



We care about Iowa's health

April 6, 2020

Via Email Only

Hon. Michael Randol
Director
Iowa Medicaid Enterprise
611 5th Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319
mrandol@dhs.state.ia.us

Re: Request for Additional Regulatory Waivers Under Medicaid

Dear Director Randol:

We appreciate your continued willingness to work with Iowa's health care stakeholders to ensure that Iowans are provided with adequate testing and treatment for COVID-19. We look forward to our continued cooperation while navigating this public health emergency.

We are writing to request additional regulatory relief on behalf of all 118 Iowa hospitals. Specifically, we are asking you to provide additional regulatory relief under Medicaid. We ask for these waivers in light of strain that this public health emergency is putting on our hospital's resources. While we appreciate the regulatory relief Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME) has provided health care providers so far, hospitals require more flexibility from IME at this time to serve Medicaid members.

The requests in this letter are meant to supplant the regulatory relief IHA requested in its March 24, 2020 letter to you, and Directors Garcia and Johnson. IHA is also making these requests pursuant to the March 30, 2020 [guidance](#) issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which explicitly states that state Medicaid regulators may request such waivers under Section 1135. Finally, we have reviewed IME's April 1, 2020 informational letter No. 2125-MC-FFS-CVD. We appreciate IME requesting the waivers from CMS outlined in that letter.

Prior Authorizations

As stated in our March 24, 2020 letter to you, Director Garcia, and Director Johnson, IHA asks IME to make a request to CMS to waive prior authorization requirements for fee-for-service and managed care services. As you are aware, health care workers are providing services as quickly as possible to patients who may have COVID-19, but also patients who do not have the virus. During this unprecedented viral outbreak, allowing providers to treat patients without the burden of having to request authorization for necessary medical care will allow those providers to focus on—as CMS has stated—“patients over paperwork.”



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Pre-Admission and Annual Screening Requirements for Nursing Home Residents

As you are aware, the nation's nursing home residents are of the most vulnerable in this pandemic. In order to ensure that nursing home residents are still served, IHA requests that IME request a waiver from CMS to allow pre-admission and annual screenings for nursing home residents to be conducted via telehealth or telephone, and that if such screenings are unable to occur at all due to the public health emergency, that IME allow nursing home staff to conduct such screenings under the telephonic supervision of a provider authorized to conduct such screenings.

Waiver Participants in Acute Care Hospital

IHA requests that IME request that CMS grant it a waiver to temporarily allow for payment for Medicaid services to waiver participants in an acute care hospital or short-term institutional stay when necessary supports (including communication and intensive personal care) are not available in that setting, or when the individual requires those services for communication and behavioral stabilization and such services are not covered in those settings. This waiver will allow hospitals to ensure that those patients who are on a waiver and in an acute care hospital are able to obtain the services they need during the public health emergency. Such patients may not be able to be easily transferred due to the public health emergency, so such services may need to be provided at the location where the waiver participant is.

Again, we thank you for your continued service to the state during this public health emergency. We look forward continuing our work together to ensure Iowa's hospitals can serve their communities in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Should you have any questions about our requests, please contact us at your convenience at murphyk@ihaonline.org and keehnlem@ihaonline.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K. M. Murphy'.

Kimberly Murphy
Vice President and Asst. General Counsel
Iowa Hospital Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Maureen Keehnle'.

Maureen Keehnle
Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Iowa Hospital Association

Cc (via email): Paige Thorson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds