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UnitedHealthcare Prior Authorization Program Changes – COVID-19

This announcement is applicable to all Arizona in-network hospitals and all in-network Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) statewide.

In recognition of the persistence of COVID-19 cases in your area, UnitedHealthcare is extending the temporary program suspensions outlined below. These provisions are now effective from **Nov. 27, 2020 – Jan. 11, 2021**. (They were set to expire on Dec. 27, 2020.)

UnitedHealthcare is continuing to temporarily suspend select prior authorization requirements for in-network hospitals and in-network SNFs statewide due to an overwhelming increase in Emergency Department visits, admissions and transfers. We chose to take these steps to help Arizona in-network hospitals and SNFs that have experienced a sharp increase in admissions. The suspended requirements and dedicated support resources are being communicated directly to you as one of the impacted hospitals or facilities.

The specific adjustments to our medical management program in Arizona apply to UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage, Medicaid and Individual and Group Market health plan members effective **Nov. 27, 2020 – Jan. 11, 2021**, and to individual Exchange health plan members from **Jan. 1, 2021 – Jan. 11, 2021**. These adjustments include:

- **SNF prior authorization:** We're suspending prior authorization requirements for admission to in-network SNFs.
- **Transfer prior authorizations:** We're suspending prior authorization requirements when a member transfers to a new provider.

- As a reminder, for orders involving **COVID-19-related oxygen requests**, oxygen can be delivered without prior authorization and does not need to meet current clinical criteria.
- **Discharge and post-care assistance:** If your team needs assistance with discharge planning or finding post-acute care for patients with complex needs, please email COVID-19dischargeplanning@uhc.com.

After Jan. 11, 2021, we may conduct selective retrospective reviews for services rendered during this time period. **Admission notification is still required during this time**, in alignment with the current protocol to support you in arranging post-admission care or other support services. Any admissions occurring after Jan. 11, 2021 are subject to standard utilization review processes, including the application of medical necessity. If an admission occurs during the prior authorization suspension period and the member still remains inpatient after Jan. 11, 2021, the inpatient days after the suspension is lifted are subject to standard utilization review processes, including the application of medical necessity.

In most cases, notification of inpatient admission is provided to UnitedHealthcare by the hospital or facility via Link or an EDI 278N transmission that requires no intervention on the part of your staff.

For questions, please contact Tom Biuso, M.D., UnitedHealthcare Market Chief Medical Officer, at thomas.biuso@uhc.com or 763-361-4671. For the most up-to-date information surrounding our other efforts related to COVID-19, please visit UHCprovider.com/covid19.

We will continue to monitor guidance issued by regulatory authorities and keep you posted as the COVID-19 crisis continues to evolve. As dedicated workers on the front lines of this pandemic, we deeply appreciate your efforts to fight this virus. Thank you for all you're doing.

Sincerely,



Ed Lagerstrom
President, UnitedHealthcare Networks



Anne Boland Docimo, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer, UnitedHealthcare

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