

# Optum: COVID-19 Updates on Prior Authorization Requirements UnitedHealthcare Members for Residential Treatment, IOP, and PHP Programs

Last update: May 6, 2020

The health of our members and the safety of those who deliver care are our top priorities. Optum is taking action and providing resources to support UnitedHealthcare members and our providers during this challenging time. Optum is working to help people access health care to the fullest extent possible as we come together to address this national emergency. We're adopting measures that will reduce administrative burden for physicians and facilities, helping members more easily access the care they need under their benefit plan, and adjusting programs and services, as needed, to protect members and help limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus in communities.

To support this temporarily, prior authorization requirements for admissions of UnitedHealthcare members to a post-acute care setting are suspended from March 24, 2020 through May 31, 2020. This includes admissions for Residential Treatment, Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) and Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP) that provide mental health and SUD treatments. This updated policy applies to members of Medicare Advantage, Medicaid and Individual and Group market health plans issued by UnitedHealthcare. Even with this policy change, providers are encouraged to confirm member benefits provided by their health plan at the time of service due to the rapidly changing situation. Actions include:

- Optum will not perform prior authorization reviews for any Residential, IOP or PHP treatment plans
- Optum will continue to perform concurrent reviews to support care plans unless in jurisdictions where temporary policy change may direct otherwise
- Optum will actively engage providers for the purpose of discharge planning and care coordination post-discharge.
- While prior authorization for Residential Treatment, IOP, and PHP treatment plans is not required, providers are required to notify Optum of patient admissions within 48 hours.

Upon notification of admission, we will be able to assist you with:

- Supporting connecting members to available telehealth services
- Assisting with after-care appointments
- Assisting with community resources
- Enrolling members in care coordination programs

Upon notification of admission, we will be available to assist you to obtain the following information:

- Confirmation of Contact information
- Dates of follow up appointments, names of providers - need for tele-psychiatry/virtual visits
- Prescribed medications/name of prescriber/pharmacy
- Release of Information requested/obtained
- Support system
- Is member in agreement with treatment plan and understands
- Barriers to compliance
- What gaps were identified in prior discharge plan
- Assessment of social determinants
- Member's current medical status/symptoms – fever, cough, difficulty breathing, body aches
- Does member have co-morbid medical conditions?
- Has member been tested for COVID-19? Date of test: Was result positive/negative/pending

This change in policy is effective until May 31, 2020, but we may extend that date as necessary and will communicate through all appropriate channels.

Optum remains committed to supporting you, our network of behavioral health providers, during this unprecedented and challenging time. We want to thank and commend you all for the difficult work you are doing to support the delivery of care to our members as you also work to ensure your personal safety and wellbeing and that of your loved ones.

Optum and UnitedHealthcare are continually monitoring this situation and if any further modifications to our normal processes are necessary to accommodate individuals impacted by COVID-19 we will communicate immediate updates on Provider Express [here](#).



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