



Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
David R. Scrase, M.D., Secretary
Nicole Comeaux, J.D., M.P.H., Director

Special COVID-19 Letter of Direction #20

Date: February 19, 2021

To: Centennial Care 2.0 Managed Care Organizations

From: Nicole Comeaux, Director, Medical Assistance Division 

Subject: MCO Guidance for COVID-19 for Surveillance Testing

Title: COVID-19 Surveillance Testing

The purpose of this Letter of Direction (LOD) is to provide guidance and directives to the Centennial Care 2.0 Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) for modification of services and program standards related to the national public health emergency (PHE) associated with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The purpose of this change is to assure the continuation of essential services to Medicaid patients without disruption or delay while following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) direction to maximize social distancing and use of personal protective equipment for the duration of the PHE.

Surveillance for COVID-19 includes ongoing systematic activities, including collection, analysis, and interpretation of health-related data that are essential to planning, implementing, and evaluating public health practices. Surveillance testing is generally used to monitor for a community- or population-level occurrence, such as an infectious disease outbreak, or to characterize the occurrence once detected, such as looking at the incidence and prevalence of the occurrence. Surveillance testing is used to gain information at a population level, rather than an individual level, and results of surveillance testing can be returned in aggregate to the requesting institution. Surveillance testing may sample a certain percentage of a specific population to monitor for increasing or decreasing prevalence and to determine the population effect from community interventions, such as social distancing. An example of surveillance testing is a plan developed by a state public health department to randomly select and sample a percentage of all individuals in a city on a rolling basis to assess local infection rates and trends.

The MCOs should reimburse Medicaid enrolled facilities for specimen collection, including specimen collected by Department of Health staff.

COVID-19 tests performed in the following centers shall not require the recipient to be symptomatic nor do they require a provider referral:

- a. Adult and youth homeless shelters
- b. Domestic violence shelters
- c. Community Homes
- d. Residential Treatment Centers

HSD values its continued collaboration and partnership with the MCOs to implement this directive as quickly as possible to help assure the health and safety of Medicaid members and our fellow New Mexicans. Further direction will be provided as guidance and authorities become available.

This COVID-19 Letter of Direction will sunset when the Human Services Department determines that all associated payments have been appropriately reimbursed.