FAQ – Government Clients – States

v. 4/17/2020

Are you operating at full capacity right now?

Yes. Our entire team has been working remotely since Tuesday, March 10. Over the last three weeks, we’ve met our obligations to you, your members, and our network providers. At this point, we anticipate continuing to meet our high standards as well as our contractual and regulatory requirements. We will continue remote working arrangements through at least May 15.

In the unlikely event that there is a change to normal business operations, your Strategic Client Partner, Shanna Madden, will be in touch with you.

If you have specific questions about your contract, please reach out to Shanna by email or telephone.

Are there any changes in your organization, including percent of staff working remotely or other impacts due to the coronavirus pandemic?

Today, 99.95 percent of our staff is working from home. Before March 10, 36 percent of our staff worked from home either on a full- or part-time basis.

We have not experienced any unusual absences related to COVID-19.

Any concerns about meeting contractual metrics?

We have no concerns about meeting contractual metrics.

There may be an issue with the accuracy of our provider directories. The ADA (American Dental Association) and AOA (American Optometric Association) have issued guidance to dental and eye care providers that they should only be providing emergent and urgent care treatment during the public health emergency. Certain states have further ordered or advised practices to close practices to non-essential care during the public health emergency.

Premier and Access Dental Plan have reached out to our provider networks to identify those providers who are still providing services and at what level of care (routine, urgent or emergent) and to identify those providers who are using telehealth to service members. However, as many providers have closed their offices to comply with state and/or trade
association guidance, we are not receiving responses to our inquiries. As a result, our provider directories may not be accurate during the public health emergency.

We are updating notices on our website regarding the information we have about provider availability for telehealth, urgent and emergent care. Further, we have provided notice on our website and on the online provider directory page alerting members that some provider offices may be closed. Should a member need help locating a provider, they are always welcome to contact our customer service department and our representatives will be happy to assist the member with finding a provider.

Can you please provide an update on utilization trends?

As expected, we’re seeing a natural decline in utilization as a result of federal, state and industry guidance to discontinue all non-essential medical, dental and eye care. We are preparing financially and operationally for the expected increase in utilization that will occur with the re-opening of provider offices for non-emergent care.

How are you helping us respond to regulatory changes, like Medicaid 1135 waivers or telehealth guidance?

While it’s “business as usual” for our team, we recognize these are extraordinary times that may affect regulatory requirements. We’re committed to making sure the benefits we manage for you remain compliant with state and federal requirements for government programs.

We have put regulatory changes regarding the use of teledentistry during the public health emergency into effect in both California and Utah. We have put 1135 waiver rules that pertain to dental into effect in California and are doing the same in Utah.

As we adapt processing guidelines, we’re communicating changes to our participating dentists through our secure web portals.

What questions are you hearing from dentists? How are you addressing them?

Network dentists are primarily interested in ensuring the emergency services they deliver are compliant with temporary changes to the environment (e.g., telehealth, prior authorization timelines). As operational changes are announced by the state, we are communicating them to providers through our secure web portal.

Can you please provide copies of communication with providers?

Yes. We are regularly updating FAQ for providers. You can see a copy on this website.
What are you doing to help our members access emergency care?

We’ve asked our network providers to tell us if they are available to provide emergency care during the pandemic. Members can call our Customer Service Center for assistance finding a network provider during this period. As always, our Call Center team can help your members secure transportation and interpretation assistance upon request. In addition, we can help them make appointments using our three-way call capacity.

Provider office hours

We’re suggesting that provider offices follow the direction of their state officials and/or industry leaders regarding their office schedule.

If a practice decides to change their office hours, we’re asking them to provide appropriate notice to their patients.

In addition, we’re asking network practices to tell us their plans for treating patients by completing an online practice availability survey.

Does your company rely on critical third parties (i.e., your own vendors) to deliver normal operations and business processes relative to servicing our plan? If so, what are their relevant BC/DR plans?

Yes. We have assessed the readiness of our critical vendors and they’re all operating without incident. We’re conducting daily check-ins with these vendors to stable operations during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and the coronavirus pandemic.

Has your company reviewed your BCP/DRP protocols relative to the pandemic?

Yes. Our Business Resiliency Program consists of crisis management, business continuity, disaster recovery, and pandemic response. Through this program, we’re maintaining capabilities to ensure that critical records are protected, and essential business operations can continue with minimal interruption. This plan specifically addresses:

• Management of high levels of absenteeism for an extended period.
• Management plan for key decision-makers.
• Vendor support processes.
• All critical processes.

We’ve reviewed and tested our Pandemic Response Plan and are implementing protocols in an agile and dynamic manner, applying an abundance of caution to ensure the safety of our employees while maintaining our ability to continue serving you in an effective and timely manner.
Does your company have specific contingency plans to minimize disruptions to services due to employee illness and/or absenteeism in the event of a pandemic? If so, please provide the details.

Yes. We have shared CDC guidance to raise awareness of the coronavirus, COVID-19, and steps to take to protect oneself, one’s family, and one’s community from the virus. To help our employees stay healthy, we:

- Moved nearly 100% of our workforce to work-from-home arrangements and canceled, postponed, or restructured corporate events to enable virtual participation.
- Halted all business travel.
- Introduced enhanced office cleaning efforts in our corporate office locations (i.e., Phoenix, AZ, Sacramento, CA, Owings Mills, MD).

We are also requiring employees to self-report personal travel, exposure to an individual with a confirmed case, and flu-like symptoms. If an employee reports traveling to a Level 2 or higher location, is symptomatic, or has been exposed to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (the illness caused by the novel coronavirus), they’re required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Has your company provided relevant communications and training to your employees as it relates to a pandemic and its potential disruption of business activities?

Yes. We are sharing information with our employees daily to help them understand that their health and safety is one of our top priorities. In addition to providing health-related updates, we are also providing access to tools for managing the potential disruption and isolation some associate with remote work, including strategies for staying in regular contact with their managers and team members while working from home.

Who is the primary BC/DR point of contact at your company as it relates to a potential pandemic occurrence?

If you have any questions about our BC/DR capacities, please reach out to your Strategic Client Partner, Shanna Madden, first. If she can’t answer your questions, she will access the business leaders who can help.