



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAID COVID-19 PUBLIC ADVISORY

Governor DeWine Announces Additional Health Measures to Address COVID 19

Highlights Ohio Medicaid Federal Waiver Submission

Governor DeWine announced Tuesday additional health care measures the state is seeking through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The Ohio Department of Medicaid submitted special requests to CMS known as Appendix K and 1135 waivers to allow additional flexibility in how the state responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These requests fall outside of the traditional process states use when seeking exceptions to federal rules and regulations regarding Medicaid services. They typically require less time for approval and authorize the state to expedite emergency provisions to ensure millions of Ohioans have access to care needed during the crisis.

Ohio Medicaid already has taken steps to help increase access to care for Ohioans. Working collaboratively with managed care plans, providers, and stakeholders, emergency measures include waiving prescription copays, removing in-network and out-of-network pharmacy distinctions, and relaxing prior authorization requirements.

“Today, Ohio took another step to remove barriers to care during this pandemic,” said Governor Mike DeWine. “Ohio Medicaid submitted its first federal waiver application to help ensure providers the flexibility needed to see and care for patients in secure environments with fewer administrative obstacles.”

Among other things, these federal applications will allow Ohio to:

- Bolster telehealth and other technology to be used to do health assessments and care planning;
- Waive signature requirements for a variety of providers to ensure safe distancing without compromising access to care;
- Ease obstacles to access nursing home care;
- Allow services to be provided at alternative locations; and
- Remove staffing level requirements to give providers more flexibility.

Upon CMS approval, waivers will be retroactively applied from March 1.

Removing restrictions like these during the COVID pandemic allows health care workers to focus on meeting the needs of Ohioans.