



# PROVIDER ALERT

## Information on Telehealth and Controlled Substance Prescribing Related to COVID-19

March 18, 2020

**Alert Summary:** This alert contains information on HIPAA and remote prescribing for controlled substances published by the federal government as a result of emergency authorities related to COVID-19. It also contains COVID-19 guidance for healthcare professionals and facilities.

Dear Provider,

The COVID-19 outbreak continues to be a fluid situation nationally as well as in Idaho. As a result of federal government emergency authorities related to COVID-19, several agencies announced flexibilities to support member access to care.

When reviewing claims submitted by providers Optum considers the rapidly evolving state and federal guidelines published as part of our nation's response to COVID-19 as applicable. Optum recently distributed communications from [Optum](#) and [Medicaid](#) to the provider network on March 16 & 18, 2020 containing additional information about telehealth, including the process for providers to offer telehealth in the IBHP, billing guidance and resources for providers.

Given the significant and evolving changes, Optum is providing this information as a courtesy for your agency's review and application as you deem appropriate.

### HIPAA

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) Office of Civil Rights "will exercise its enforcement discretion and will not impose penalties for noncompliance with the regulatory requirements under the HIPAA Rules against covered health care providers in connection with the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency. This notification is effective immediately." The complete HHS [Notification of Enforcement Discretion for telehealth remote communications can be found here.](#)

### Prescribing Controlled Substances via Telehealth

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) published [information on the exception related to the COVID-19 public health emergency and prescribing controlled substances via telehealth.](#)

### COVID 19 Guidance for Healthcare Professionals & Facilities

The following COVID-19 resources for healthcare professionals and facilities are available from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

- [CDC Information for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [CDC Information for Healthcare Facilities](#)
- [SAMHSA Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)

## Member Access & Crisis Line

The Optum Idaho Member Access & Crisis Line will continue to be a resource to members who need assistance. It is available 24 hours per day 7 days per week at 1-855-202-0973 TDD/TTY dial 711.

## Additional Resources

- Official State of Idaho Resources for the Novel Coronavirus: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>
  - Please see the “For Providers” tab for provider-specific information on testing for COVID-19 as well as other provider resources.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Thank you for your continued partnership to serve Idahoans.

Thank you,

The Optum Idaho Team