

Medicaid Policies Regarding Hospital Services During Public Health Emergency

Early in the public health emergency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that it was allowing states to temporarily waive certain federal requirements to help ensure Americans could access care and help hospitals deal with patient surges due to COVID-19. The waiving of rules is called issuing “blanket waivers” of federal requirements. Arkansas Medicaid was among the state Medicaid programs that began operating under these temporary blanket waivers while still subject to all Arkansas Department of Health licensure requirements. These waivers allow hospitals to use beds as needed and still get reimbursement from Medicaid with the following changes:

- Waive the requirements that Critical Access Hospitals limit the number of beds to 25 and that the length of stay be limited to 96 hours
- Allow acute care hospitals with excluded, distinct inpatient psychiatric units that, as a result of a disaster or emergency, need to relocate inpatients from the excluded distinct part psychiatric unit to an acute care bed and unit
- Allow acute care hospitals with excluded distinct inpatient rehabilitation units that, as a result of a disaster or emergency, need to relocate inpatients from the excluded distinct part rehabilitation unit to an acute care bed and unit
- Allow acute care hospitals to house acute care inpatients in excluded distinct part units
- Allow hospitals that do not have either a hospital based- skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit to use their acute care beds to provide a skilled nursing facility-level care.

In addition to those changes through the blanket waivers, on April 28, 2020, Arkansas Medicaid also temporarily suspended the Medicaid Utilization Management Program review requirement for patients over age 1 after four days of inpatient care. Now, all hospital stays, regardless of length are subject only to retrospective review. This includes transfers between hospitals.

Hospital-Based Post-Acute Services

Currently, Medicaid does not cover recuperative care or swing beds in Acute care hospitals; however, we do pay Medicare co-insurance on dually eligible beneficiaries. Medicaid does cover Long-Term Acute Care services provided in hospitals. There are currently seven (7) LTAC locations for Medicaid clients:

- Christus Dubuis Hospital of Hot Springs
- Select Specialty Hospital Fort Smith
- Christus Dubuis Hospital of Fort Smith
- Regency Hospital of Northwest Arkansas, LLC



Fact Sheet

- Cornerstone Specialty Hospital of Little Rock
- Advance Care Hospital of White County
- Baptist Health Extended Care Hospital - Little Rock

Medicaid also will cover non-emergency transportation between two facilities by an Ambulance Service. The facility has up to 21 days post transport to submit the certification in accordance with the Medicaid policy that permanently updated in August 2020.

For questions regarding payment or review of claims, please contact DMS Utilization Review at (501) 682-8340 or email Kimberly Wilmot, PA/UR nurse manager, at Kimberly.Wilmot@dhs.arkansas.gov.