

Update on COVID-19 and the Novel Coronavirus

Community Health Choice expands access to testing and treatment

HOUSTON, TX (March 11, 2020) — Community Health Choice (Community) announces COVID-19 updates in its commitment to Member health and well-being. These actions are consistent with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for identifying and treating COVID-19 and helping reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19.

“Member health and wellbeing is at the heart of our mission as a community-based health insurer,” said Catherine Mitchell, Interim CEO for Community Health Choice, a nonprofit health insurer headquartered in Houston and covering hundreds of thousands of children and adults with access to medical care. “We are working closely with public health authorities and safety net partners to help provide resources and options for vulnerable people and families in our service area.”

Community is implementing the following actions to support the timely evaluation, testing, and treatment for COVID-19 related illnesses, and prevent of the spread of the disease.

Optimize access and remove potential barriers to member screening and diagnostic testing for COVID-19:

- Provide access to testing without prior authorization;
- Waive copays and member cost-sharing on FDA-approved testing for COVID-19.

Increase access to outpatient services for COVID-19:

- Encourage use of telemedicine services and ensure Members are aware of telemedicine benefits as well as the availability of Community’s nurse advice line;
- Waive copay and Member cost-share for telemedicine services of any modality for any reason for 90 days, including
 - Marketplace and DSNP Members: Continue zero cost telemedicine services;
 - Marketplace, DSNP and CHIP Members: Waive Member copay / cost-share for telemedicine services provided by network providers;
 - STAR Members – Access to and coverage of telemedicine services provided by network providers.

Promote disaster planning and preparedness:

- Increase accessibility to maintenance medications;
- Waive early medication refill limits on maintenance medications.

“We will continue to keep our Members and community partners first and foremost during these emerging public health needs,” said Mitchell. “Community was started by the Harris County Hospital District (Harris Health) more than twenty years ago to help cover our neighbors with access to care, and that remains the driving force of our mission.”

Community recommends all persons follow CDC guidelines for public health and safety, and to call a health care provider with any concerns about COVID-19. Public health updates can be found online through these local, state and national resources:

- Harris County: www.ReadyHarris.org
- Texas Department of State Health Services: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>
- Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov>