



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH & WELFARE

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Dear Behavioral Health Provider,

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare continues to monitor and prepare for the ongoing impacts resulting from the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The public health emergency directly impacts your ability to serve your patients. The Divisions of Behavioral Health and Medicaid are working together to reduce barriers to behavioral health services and administrative burden for providers. We strive to be good partners to you and your frontline staff during these challenging times.

The effects of this public health emergency are wide reaching, across financial, emotional, and physical domains. The Division of Behavioral Health has established a COVID-19 Behavioral Health Hotline, offering anonymous and confidential assistance for all Idahoans (see [enclosure](#)). This hotline aims to meet any individual where they are in this time of crisis and provide an opportunity to process with a professional the emotional distress they are experiencing. In addition, the Division of Behavioral Health has recently released a [COVID-19 website](#) with extensive provider resources.

During this time, it is vitally important that patients receive services and get their needs met. Behavioral health services are essential and necessary, and we want to empower providers to serve patients where they are during this public emergency. The following policy changes have been temporarily implemented and apply to all behavioral health providers:

- Prescription drug refill guidelines have been clarified ([Medicaid Information Release MA20-06](#))
- Ability to use telehealth has been expanded ([Medicaid Information Release MA20-07](#))
- Collection of co-payments from Medicaid participants has been suspended ([Medicaid Information Release MA20-12](#))
- Providers will not be sanctioned for using telehealth technology that would otherwise be noncompliant with the HIPPA rules around technology ([Medicaid Information Release MA20-13](#))

Though your services are essential, **we do ask all providers to use their best clinical and professional judgment to minimize the risk of contracting COVID-19 for their patients by using telehealth options and postponing or delaying care that increases the risk of transmission whenever possible.** We ask providers to thoughtfully weigh risks against benefits for services to patients delivered in group settings and routine wellness services. The CDC has provided some [helpful guidance](#) for healthcare facilities to help control these risks.

The Department of Health and Human Services has released a [topic collection](#) on COVID-19 behavioral health resources, including clinical guidance and specific resources for providers and patients.

We thank you for your service and the excellent care you continue to offer your clients during this public health emergency.

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