



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 10, 2020

HMSA announces steps to help members prepare for COVID-19

The Hawai'i Medical Service Association (HMSA) announced that it's taking proactive measures to improve member access to care as it monitors the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in the Islands.

"The health and safety of our members is a top priority," said HMSA President and Chief Executive Officer Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S. "During this time of increased anxiety and concern, we want to reassure our members and make it as easy as possible for them to have access to the health care providers and medications they need to stay healthy."

As a member of the national Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA), HMSA joined its network of 36 independent and locally operated BCBS companies in a commitment to waive prior authorizations, increase coverage for services related to COVID-19, increase access to prescription drugs, and enhance telehealth and other clinical support systems. HMSA is making these changes to ensure members can swiftly access the right care in the right setting during the outbreak.

The full details of HMSA's coverage commitment include:

- **HMSA will waive prior authorizations for diagnostic tests and for covered services that are medically necessary and consistent with CDC guidance for members diagnosed with COVID-19.**
HMSA will also make dedicated clinical staff available to address inquiries related to medical services, ensuring timeliness of responses related to COVID-19.
- **HMSA will cover medically necessary diagnostic tests that are consistent with CDC guidance related to COVID-19 at no cost share to members.**
HMSA will cover, with no cost share to members, appropriate medically necessary diagnostic testing for COVID-19, where it is not covered as part of the Public Health Service response, and ensure patient testing and any subsequently needed care are done in close coordination with federal, state, and public health authorities.

- **HMSA will increase access to prescription medications by waiving early medication refill limits on 30-day prescription maintenance medications (consistent with a member's plan benefits) and/or encouraging members to use their 90-day mail-order benefit.**
HMSA will also ensure formulary flexibility if there are shortages or access issues. Members will not be liable for additional charges related to obtaining a non-preferred medication if the preferred medication is not available due to shortage or access issues.
- **HMSA will expand access to telehealth and nurse/provider hotlines.**
Given the nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, seeking in-person medical care may lead to further spreading of the virus. HMSA will encourage the use of virtual care and facilitate member access and use of nurse/provider hotlines.

HMSA's Online Care: HMSA members and anyone in Hawaii can register and download the HMSA's Online Care® app on their mobile device or visit hmsaonlinecare.com from their computer. Online Care providers are available 24/7 at little to no cost for members.

Increasing access to medications: To help our members get the medications they need, HMSA will allow early refills for maintenance medications for its members on all islands as long as there are refills available on their prescription. Members should call our Customer Care line for approval at one of these toll-free numbers:

- 1 (855) 479-3659 for Medicare Part D members.
- 1 (855) 479-3656 for HMSA QUEST Integration members.
- 1 (855) 298-2491 for all other HMSA members (those who get their health insurance from their employer or buy it on their own).

About HMSA

Caring for the people of Hawaii is our promise and our privilege. Working together with employers, partners, and physicians and other health care providers, we promote well-being; develop reliable, affordable health plans; and support members with clear, thoughtful guidance.

HMSA is the most experienced health plan in the state, covering more than half of Hawaii's population. As a recognized leader, we embrace our responsibility to strengthen the health and well-being of our community.

Headquartered on Oahu with centers and offices statewide to serve our members, HMSA is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Media Contact

Robyn Kuraoka, HMSA
(808) 354-1350 (mobile)
robyn_kuraoka@hmsa.com

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