



**State of Louisiana**  
Louisiana Department of Health  
Bureau of Health Services Financing

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 27, 2020  
**TO:** Louisiana Medicaid NEMT Providers  
**FROM:** Erin Campbell, Acting Medicaid Director  
**SUBJECT:** Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Update for Medicaid NEMT Providers: 3.27.2020

The below advisory is to inform **Louisiana Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) providers** rendering services to Louisiana Medicaid members, including members of all Healthy Louisiana managed care organizations (MCOs). This information will be updated as new information is available. New information is indicated by underlining.

For current updates on the status of COVID-19 in Louisiana, please see the Office of Public - Health (OPH) COVID-19 website, located at: <http://ldh.la.gov/coronavirus>.

Beginning April 1, transportation brokers will begin paying providers an enhanced rate. This enhanced rate is specific to the COVID-19 event. Please reach out to your contracted broker(s) for additional information about any rate enhancements available.

The below information is provided in relation to COVID-19 in Louisiana.

COVID-19 is most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Uncovered coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

You can help protect yourself, your clients, and others by taking a few simple steps to help prevent the spread of the disease at home and at work:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) when you cannot wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with your hands.
- Stay home when you're sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of the tissue right away.

- Clean frequently-touched surfaces and objects in the office and at home. A list of suitable cleaning products is available at: <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>
- Clean and disinfect vehicles after each ride, with a focus on high touch areas such as seats and door handles.

#### **Updated Participation Requirements for COVID-19 Event**

- Providers may lease vehicles and use magnetic signage.
- Providers are not required to obtain for-hire license plates.
- Drivers may be 21 years of age or older.
- Mandated defensive driver training may be accomplished online.
- All other credentialing requirements listed in the transportation manual may not be waived. Brokers may relax requirements that are not in the transportation manual, i.e., annual training and recertification requirements.

#### **Trip Requirements for COVID-19 Event**

- Effective 3/27/2020, providers may transport enrollees to the following services **only**:
  - Dialysis
  - Radiation
  - Chemotherapy
  - Physical therapy
  - Occupational therapy
  - Speech therapy
  - Substance use disorder treatment
  - Counseling
- Prior to transport, the transportation broker shall verify provider offices are open, as many are closing for the purpose of social distancing and to minimize risk to susceptible individuals.
- Prior to transport, the transportation broker shall verify providers have approved and recommended receipt of the service and that it cannot be postponed.
- Non-emergency medical transportation is not to be used for COVID-19 testing. Members requesting COVID-19 testing should be advised to call their healthcare provider for guidance.

- Any person scheduled for transport with a fever and respiratory symptoms or who has been exposed in the last 14 days to someone with fever and respiratory symptoms should be asked to cancel their trip as soon as possible. They should be advised to call their healthcare provider, or the Office of Public Health at 211, for guidance. If an appointment cannot be postponed or if a provider calls to request their patient be present for services, then the transport request is to be honored even if outside of the list of services referenced above.
- Ground, non-emergency ambulance transportation may be used to transport individuals with COVID-19.
- Enrollees may not be required to sign transportation logs or other transport-related documents.

When scheduling, brokers should prioritize certain members for solo trips, where possible. If not possible, members should be spaced at least two seats apart or with a row in-between members. These include:

- Members in high risk categories as listed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Heart disease
  - Lung disease
  - Diabetes
  - Age  $\geq$  50 years old is an increased risk and age  $\geq$  60 years old is the highest risk
- Members being transported to/from group settings including, but not limited to:
  - ~~Adult day health care~~
  - Renal dialysis facilities
  - Opioid treatment programs
  - Substance use disorder treatment residential facilities
  - Psychiatric residential treatment facilities
  - Therapeutic group homes

Brokers should screen for any of the above by asking members at the time of scheduling.

Non-government entities needing personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing kits are advised to use the following protocols:

- To the extent possible, continue to use the vendor/supply chain you would normally to request such supplies.
- The Louisiana Department of Health is maintaining a list of unique vendors (as they are made known to us) on our website ([www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus)). See the “PPE Requests” button at the top of the page. You may be able to receive supplies more quickly through direct purchase from those vendors.

- If you know of someone that wants to be added to this vendor list, have them email EOCPE@la.gov with detailed information about their resources.
- You can call the State Supply Hotline at 225-325-5900 to be added to the state's list as supplies become available. This line is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week.

As noted above, these guidelines are for non-government entities only. Additionally, this is not a guarantee that you will receive PPE. Supplies are prioritized for distribution based on need. It is possible you will receive a portion of your request, rather than the entire request at once. We ask for your patience and understanding at this time as supplies are limited, as they are everywhere across the state and the nation.

**COVID-19 Information**

For anyone with questions about coronavirus, please direct them to contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211. Or, they can text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available. They can also get answers here: [www.la211help.org](http://www.la211help.org).