

COVID-19 information from Wellpoint (March 30 update)

Wellpoint is closely monitoring COVID-19 developments and how they will impact our customers and our healthcare provider partners. Our clinical team is actively monitoring external queries and reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Maryland Department of Health to help us determine what action is necessary on our part.

To help address care providers' questions, Wellpoint has developed the following frequently asked questions:

What is Wellpoint doing to prepare?

Wellpoint is committed to help provide increased access to care to help alleviate the added stress on individuals, families, and the nation's healthcare system.

These actions are intended to support the protective measures taken across the country to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and are central to our commitment to remove barriers and support communities through this unprecedented time.

Wellpoint is committed to help our members gain timely access to care and services in a way that places the least burden on the healthcare system. Our actions should reduce barriers to seeing a doctor, getting tested, and maintaining adherence to medications for long-term health issues.

COVID-19 testing and visits associated with COVID-19 testing

Wellpoint will cover reasonable member healthcare costs related to COVID-19. Tests samples may be obtained in many settings including a doctor's office, urgent care, ER, or even drive-thru testing once available. While a test sample cannot be obtained through a telehealth visit, the telehealth provider can connect members with testing.

Telehealth:

Wellpoint is following the communication on telehealth visits per Maryland Department of Health **COVID-19 #1** and **COVID-19 #4a**. <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

Telephonic-only care

Wellpoint is following the communication on telehealth visits per Maryland Department of Health **COVID-19 #1** and **COVID-19 #4a**. <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

Prescription coverage

Wellpoint is also providing coverage for members to have an extra 30-day supply of medication on hand. We are encouraging that when member plans allow, they switch from 30-day home delivery to 90-day home delivery.

Frequently asked questions:

What services are appropriate to provide via telehealth?

- Wellpoint covers telehealth (in other words, video and audio) services for providers who have access to those platforms/capabilities today.
- Wellpoint is following the communication on telehealth visits per Maryland Department of Health **COVID-19 #1** and **COVID-19 #4a**. <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

Will Wellpoint cover telephone-only services in addition to telehealth via video and audio?

Wellpoint is following the communication on telehealth visits per Maryland Department of Health **COVID-19 #1** and **COVID-19 #4a**. <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

What codes would be appropriate to consider for a telehealth visit with a patient who wants to receive health guidance related to COVID-19?

Wellpoint is following the communication on telehealth visits per Maryland Department of Health **COVID-19 #1** and **COVID-19 #4a**. <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

How is Wellpoint monitoring COVID-19?

Wellpoint is monitoring COVID-19 developments and what they mean for our associates and those we serve. We are fielding questions about the outbreak from our customers, members, providers, and associates. Additionally, our clinical team is actively monitoring external queries and reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help us determine what, if any, action is necessary on our part to further support our stakeholders.

Wellpoint has a business continuity plan for serious communicable disease outbreaks, inclusive of pandemics, and will be ready to deploy the plan if necessary.

Our enterprise-wide business continuity program includes recovery strategies for critical processes and supporting resources, automated 24/7 situational awareness monitoring for our footprint and critical support points, and the Virtual Command Center for Emergency Management command, control, and communication.

In addition, Wellpoint has established a team of experts to monitor, assess, and help facilitate timely mitigation and response where it has influence as appropriate for the evolving novel coronavirus threat.

Does Wellpoint have recommendations for reporting, testing and specimen collection?

The CDC updates these recommendations frequently as the situation and testing capabilities evolve. See the latest information from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>.

What diagnosis codes would be appropriate to consider for a patient with known or suspected COVID-19?

The CDC has provided coding guidelines related to COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/ICD-10-CM-Official-Coding-Guidance-Interim-Advice-coronavirus-feb-20-2020.pdf>.

How is Wellpoint reimbursing participating hospitals that are performing COVID-19 diagnostic testing in a drive-thru testing setting?

Based on standard AMA and HCPCS coding guidelines, for participating hospitals with a lab fee schedule, Wellpoint will recognize the codes 87635 and U0002, and will reimburse drive-thru COVID-19 tests.

Does Wellpoint require a prior authorization on the focused test used to diagnose COVID-19?

No, prior authorization is not required for diagnostic services related to COVID-19 testing.

Is Wellpoint making any additional changes to its prior authorization requirements to assist providers during the COVID-19 national emergency?

Wellpoint is committed to working with and supporting providers. As of March 16, Wellpoint is removing prior authorization requirements for skilled nursing facilities (SNF) for the next 90 days to assist hospitals in managing possible capacity issues. SNF Providers should continue admission notification to Wellpoint in an effort to verify eligibility and benefits for all members prior to rendering services and to assist with ensuring timely payments.

In addition, Wellpoint is also extending the length of time a prior authorization is in effect for elective inpatient and outpatient procedures to 90 days. This will help prevent the need for additional outreach to Wellpoint to adjust the date of service covered by the authorization.

In case of mass epidemic, how can you ensure that your contracted providers can still provide services?

Wellpoint is committed to working with and supporting its contracted providers. Our benefits already state that if members do not have appropriate access to network doctors, we will authorize coverage for out-of-network doctors as medically necessary.

Are you aware of any limitations in coverage for treatment of an illness/virus/disease that is part of an epidemic?

Our standard health plan contracts do not have exclusions or limitations on coverage for services for the treatment of illnesses that result from an epidemic.

Does Wellpoint expect any slowdown with claim adjudication because of COVID-19?

We are not seeing any impacts to claims payment processing at this time.

How can members get in touch with Wellpoint if they have health questions?

Wellpoint members also can call the 24/7 Nurse HelpLine at the number listed on their Wellpoint ID card to speak with a registered nurse about health questions.