

TO: Managed Care Executives

FROM: Joshua D. Baker, Director 

DATE: March 28, 2020

SUBJECT: Utilization Management During COVID-19 Response

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is expected to tax health care resources across the country and South Carolina in ways that are both unprecedented and unpredictable. As we continue to work every day to ensure that South Carolina's Medicaid beneficiaries have access to care that is essential to maintain their health and safety, we expect the need to modify utilization management and continuity of care provisions.

For the remainder of public health emergency declared by Secretary Azar, Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO) are directed to waive or modify any prior authorization requirements that interfere with the treatment of COVID-19, that are likely to delay the discharge of Medicaid members for inpatient hospital care, or that otherwise create undue burden due to circumstances surrounding COVID-19 response. MCOs should also review any authorizations scheduled to expire during the period of the public health emergency and either extend those authorizations or proactively engage in the collection of the information necessary to review for continued authorization.

These provisions should be implemented by each of your organizations in a manner consistent with your current infrastructure and operations and should be applied in good faith. SCDHHS is not requiring a suspension of all utilization management activities but is rather directing MCOs to exercise the reasonable flexibility and judgement warranted by the current COVID-19 public health emergency.

We will continue to schedule regular calls to facilitate the ongoing exchange of information with your respective organizations. SCDHHS has submitted a Section 1135 waiver application and will continue to update you as CMS acts on the requests contained in that waiver application.

Thank you for your continued support of the South Carolina Medicaid program.