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MassHealth Payment Methodology for COVID-19 Testing in Nursing Facilities

Overview:

In accordance with recent revisions to the [DPH LTC surveillance testing guidance](#), effective July 1st, 2022, LTC facilities must continue to conduct weekly testing of all staff. If individual staff are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, LTC facilities must conduct twice-weekly testing on these staff. This testing should occur on two non-consecutive days during the 7-day testing period established by the facility. Updates to the DPH LTC surveillance testing guidance have removed the requirement that only PCR tests be used for surveillance testing, providing more flexibility to facilities to meet DPH surveillance testing requirements.

MassHealth will continue to provide financial support to facilities for the purposes of staff surveillance testing conducted in accordance with DPH LTC testing guidance. However, this financial support will be provided under an amended methodology to simplify the process and reduce administrative burden for facilities.

Payment Methodology:

MassHealth will update nursing facility payment rates by replacing the existing COVID-19 staff surveillance testing methodology with a new COVID-19 testing supplemental payment methodology through forthcoming amendments to 101 CMR 206.10(4)(b), proposed to be effective July 1, 2022. This new COVID-19 testing supplemental payment methodology will reimburse facilities prospectively on a monthly basis and will consider three metrics to determine payment amount per facility. The methodology will assume a certain testing need per month for each of the following metrics and multiply total tests needed by \$12.

1. A facility's average total monthly staff whose COVID-19 vaccination status is up to date, calculated based on the average monthly total from the prior quarter;
2. A facility's average total monthly staff whose COVID-19 vaccination status is not up to date, calculated based on the average monthly total from the prior quarter; and
3. A facility's average total monthly resident census, calculated based on the average monthly total from the prior quarter.

The data used to determine these metrics will be pulled from the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network reporting tool (NHSN), into which all nursing facilities are currently required by the federal

government to report. The data will be pulled on a quarterly basis and the monthly payments to each facility will be updated based on the average monthly total from the prior quarter.

Reporting:

Beginning July 1st, 2022, facilities will no longer be required to report staff and resident testing results to the Center for Health Care Information and Analysis (CHIA) therefore reducing administrative burden. However, facilities must continue to report positive antigen test results and all molecular point of care test results to DPH's Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences (BIDLS). Facilities must also complete the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network Weekly COVID-19 Vaccination Module for Healthcare Personnel¹.

A nursing facility must procure and facilitate all COVID-19 staff testing required by DPH and must ensure that the testing is conducted at no cost to the staff members who must be tested. Surveillance testing does not need to be conducted onsite at the facility; however, facilities must develop and maintain policies to document staff surveillance testing is being conducted in accordance with DPH guidance.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/index.html>