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Provider Alert

To: Sharp Health Plan Providers and Provider Office Staff
From: Sharp Health Plan
Date: July 13, 2020
Subject: Screening Protocols for COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing — ACTION REQUESTED

Attention Provider Partner:

Thank you for all you do to keep our communities healthy and safe, and for your prompt attention to this matter regarding patients’ access to care. Sharp Health Plan has been advised that some members have been refused medically necessary diagnostic testing for COVID-19 because the member may have had a workplace exposure to the virus. As noted in the Sharp Health Plan Member Handbook, Sharp Health Plan will advance covered benefits such as COVID-19 testing at the time of need, even if it is suspected that the member has a work-related illness or injury. If the covered benefits received by the member are found to be covered by workers’ compensation, the Plan will pursue reimbursement through workers’ compensation. This requirement is consistent with state law, which prohibits delaying or refusing to provide covered benefits because the member may be entitled to other coverage.¹

Please review your screening protocols to confirm that Sharp Health Plan members are not denied medically necessary diagnostic testing for COVID-19 due to possible workplace exposure. Guidance for medical necessity includes the following:

- People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported — ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms include:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches, including headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- Testing of all contacts in proximity to someone with a COVID-19 infection, or all individuals in a shared setting.
- Older adults and people with severe underlying medical conditions, like heart or lung disease or diabetes, seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

For questions, please contact our Provider Relations Team at 1-858-499-8330. We are continuing to monitor and follow guidance from all state and federal agencies and local public health officials. Our COVID-19 resource center at sharphealthplan.com/for-providers/covid19 is updated regularly as we receive new information.

Sincerely,

Cary B. Shames, DO, CHCQM, FABQAURP
 Vice President, Chief Medical Officer

1. California Code of Regulations § 1300.67.13 (a)(2) and (3)

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