

# UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

## New Flexibilities in the GAFC Program due to COVID-19

A bulletin has been issued for MassHealth LTSS Providers in response to COVID-19, outlining new flexibilities that MassHealth is implementing to their programs. Of particular interest to assisted living providers is the introduction of new flexibilities in the Group Adult Foster Care Program, summarized below.

- Initial evaluation can be conducted by phone, to include assessment of possible symptoms of COVID-19.
- Previously required signatures on Physician Summary Forms and member signature requirements may be waived, with proper documentation.
- Member signature requirements on reassessments are waived during this time to allow for reassessments to be conducted via telehealth (including telephone and live video).
- A GAFC Provider Agency may conduct any care management activities (previously required to be done in person) via telehealth (including telephone and live video) as determined necessary by the GAFC Provider Agency, with the performance and delivery of those activities being clearly documented in the member's record and providers bill the same procedure codes as appropriate for services delivered face-to-face.
- Initial Evaluations Prior to conducting an initial evaluation of a Member for Group Adult Foster Care services, a Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency should administer screening questions by telephone in order to assess the Member for symptoms of COVID-19.
  - o If the Member is determined to be asymptomatic, the Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency should administer the initial evaluation for Group Adult Foster Care services according to normal procedure.
  - o If the Member is determined to be symptomatic (i.e. has a fever higher than 100.3 degrees, or new respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat, or has been diagnosed with COVID-19) or the Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency is unable to perform the evaluation either face to face or through video conferencing, they should refer the Member to their PCP who will

determine the most appropriate action. o Required signatures on Physician Summary Forms and Member signature requirements may be waived. Providers should document the date, time, and verbal attestation from the Member, and include the note 'Covid-19' on required documents for record keeping purposes.

- Reassessments A Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency may conduct a reassessment to an existing authorization for Group Adult Foster Care services via telehealth (including telephone and live video), in accordance with the standards set forth in the All Provider Bulletin 289 located on the MassHealth website (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/masshealth-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-providers#provider-bulletins->), and as determined necessary by the Group Adult 6 Foster Care Provider Agency. Member signature requirements are waived. Providers should bill the same procedure codes for services delivered via telehealth as appropriate for services delivered face-to-face.
- Care Management Activities A Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency may conduct any required in-person care management activities, via telehealth (including telephone and live video) in accordance with the standards set forth in the All Provider Bulletin 289 located on the MassHealth website (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/masshealth-coronavirusdisease-2019-covid-19-providers#provider-bulletins->), as determined necessary by the Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency. The performance and delivery of care management activities via telehealth must be clearly documented in the Member's record. Providers should bill the same procedure codes for services delivered via telehealth as appropriate for services delivered face-to-face.
- Direct Care Aide Activities Prior to providing Direct Care Aide Services, the Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency should administer screening questions via telephone in order to assess the Member for symptoms of COVID-19. o If the Member is determined to be asymptomatic, Direct Care Aides should continue to provide care to Members in the home. The Group Adult Foster Care Provider Agency should evaluate the needs of each Member in order to determine the daily need and frequency of visits. o If a Member becomes symptomatic, the Agency should refer the Member to their PCP for the most appropriate course of action.

These flexibilities are to be applied in accordance with the standards set forth in the All Provider Bulletin 289 located on the MassHealth website. The bulletin, in its entirety, can be found at:

[MassHealth LTSS Provider Information: Updates Related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

**Unless otherwise stated, information provided in this document**

is effective for the duration of the state of emergency declared via Executive Order No 591. 2

**Additional Information For the latest MA-specific information, visit the following link: <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid19>**

***Please contact us if you have any questions, [MassALA@mass-ala.org](mailto:MassALA@mass-ala.org).***

*Mass-ALA will continue to keep you informed on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Stay tuned for more updates.*

*\*The information provided in this COVID 19 update is solely for general informational purposes to assist in understanding the evolving guidance regarding the current COVID 19 public health threat. It is not intended to be a primary public health or medical resource, but is provided as a clearinghouse for or compilation of various guidance issued by official and related sources.*

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