

March 6, 2020

Excellus BCBS statement to employer-groups on the use of telemedicine for COVID-19 screening

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield is monitoring developments involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) and what it may mean for those we serve.

Given that the COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov) website remains the best resource for up-to-date health information. Information about COVID-19 can also be found at the [New York State Department of Health's website](https://www.health.ny.gov). Your local county health department is also a resource to check.

Employees who feel sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing should first call their health care provider for care, according to the CDC. If the health care provider is not available, telemedicine is an option to enhance access to care. Telemedicine services are covered by health insurance in New York state.

MDLIVE, a telemedicine provider, is following current guidelines from the CDC regarding appropriate screening for COVID-19. MDLIVE providers can provide initial screening for COVID-19 but cannot currently order the specific laboratory test for COVID-19. The use of telemedicine is growing in response to the current environment, which is creating significant demand on the system, and could result in longer wait times.

Excellus BCBS is closely monitoring all local, state and federal guidelines and recommendations. Current guidelines and recommendations may change as the situation evolves. We'll share updates as needed.

Excellus BCBS' updated public statements on coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found here: <https://news.excellusbcbs.com/news-room/releases>

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, is a nonprofit health plan with 1.5 million upstate New York members. The company's mission is to help people live healthier and more secure lives through access to high-quality, affordable health care. Its products and services include cost-saving prescription drug discounts, wellness tracking tools and access to telemedicine. With more than 3,500 employees, the company is committed to attracting and retaining a diverse workforce to foster innovation and better serve its members. It also encourages employees to engage in their communities by providing paid volunteer time off as one of many benefits. To learn more, visit ExcellusBCBS.com.