

Payment Policy | Temporary Coronavirus (COVID-19) Laboratory Testing



EFFECTIVE DATE: 03|06|2020

POLICY LAST UPDATED: 03|26|2020

OVERVIEW

Diagnostic laboratory testing related to COVID-19 is covered by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (BCBSRI) under the members laboratory benefit for those members that meet the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines/indications for testing.

During the time-period of heightened concern over the COVID-19 outbreak, BCBSRI has determined that it will temporarily waive cost-share (e.g. co-pays and/or deductibles) for the laboratory test(s) that are used to screen/test for COVID-19.

This policy applies to BCBSRI participating providers, including, but not limited to the Rhode Department of Health Laboratory as well as non-participating or Out-of-Network providers with BCBSRI. However, providers should refer to an in-network laboratory when possible.

BCBSRI reserves the right to implement and revoke this policy and/or make a change to the waiver of member cost share without the contractual sixty-day (60) notification for a change in policy that is normally required under BCBSRI contracts with its providers. This would apply both for the effective date, due to the urgent and emergent nature of a pandemic, as well as for the withdrawal of the policy.

Notice of the implementation and withdrawal of this policy will only be communicated to BCBSRI providers via a notice on BCBSRI's provider website/portal under Alerts and Updates.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercials Products

During the time period of heightened concern over the COVID-19 outbreak, BCBSRI will temporarily waive cost share for diagnostic laboratory testing related to COVID-19 (see Coding Section for applicable HCPCS codes) when the following criteria are met:

- Testing is consistent with and members meet the guidelines set forth by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and
- Testing must be processed by an FDA-approved lab.

BCBSRI Cost Share Waiver

BCBSRI will waive all member cost share for BCBSRI members for laboratory testing related to COVID-19 as outlined in this policy. Providers should NOT collect cost share from a member in accordance with this policy.

COVERAGE

Benefits may vary between groups and contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Benefit Booklet, Evidence of Coverage, or Subscriber Agreement for applicable laboratory services benefits/coverage.

BACKGROUND

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has developed Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) billing codes, U0001 and U0002 to bill for tests and track new cases of the virus. Code U0001 may be used for CDC testing laboratories. Code U0002 may be used for tests established by laboratories that develop their own validated COVID-19 diagnostics when submitting claims to Medicare or health insurers.

Effective March 13, 2020, the American Medical Association (AMA) created a new CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) code, 87635, that will streamline coronavirus testing offered by hospitals, health systems and laboratories in the United States. It is intended as industry standard for reporting of novel coronavirus tests across the nation's health care system.

CODING

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products

87635 - Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), amplified probe technique

U0001 - CDC 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-ncov) real-time rt-pcr diagnostic panel

U0002 - 2019-ncov coronavirus, sars-cov-2/2019-ncov (covid-19), any technique, multiple types or subtypes (includes all targets), non-cdc

REIMBURSEMENT

BCBSRI reserves the right to audit medical and/or any administrative records related to adherence to all the requirements of this policy.

RELATED POLICIES

Not applicable

PUBLISHED

BCBSRI's website under Medical and Payment Policies

REFERENCES

Not applicable

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