https://dss.sd.gov/docs/COVID19/4.2.20_Medicaid_flexibilities.pdf

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Medicaid adds flexibility to help patients during COVID-19 emergency

South Dakota Medicaid has implemented temporary programmatic changes that will help recipients deal with the effects of the COVID-19 health emergency in South Dakota.

Governor Kristi Noem issued Executive Order 2020-07 on March 23 which allowed these changes for providers and patients.

“As people across the state take steps to deal with the long-term COVID-19 health emergency, we want to make sure they have access to the health care resources they need,” said Department of Social Services Cabinet Secretary Laurie Gill. “The flexibilities will make sure we are taking care of South Dakotans who need it most while helping to prevent exposure to greater risk.”

Wider use of telemedicine services and the ability to refill prescriptions sooner are key elements of South Dakota Medicaid’s response to COVID-19.

South Dakota Medicaid added flexibility to allow care providers to utilize telemedicine services for patients in the same city – flexibility that helps South Dakotans observe advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to practice social distancing and stay home when they are ill. It also gives occupational and physical therapists the ability to work with patients through video components. Audio-only services provided by community mental health centers, substance use disorder providers, and independent mental health practitioners are now permitted when there is no other audio and visual technology available to the patient. Coverage for audio-only services provided by physicians, certified nurse practitioners, and physician assistants is also available.

“In this time when social distancing is so critical to preventing the spread of disease, patients and providers having ready and convenient means to communicate is vital,” Gill said. “This need goes beyond physical health to include behavioral health as well.”

South Dakota Medicaid is also allowing patients greater flexibility when it comes to filling prescriptions and obtaining medical supplies. Patients now can get a 60-day medication prescription rather than 30 days and will be allowed to refill prescriptions sooner. Patients will also be allowed to increase their diabetic and oxygen supplies to a 60-day supply.

Medicaid has also extended authorizations for prescriptions that are set to expire between now and May 31, 2020, to reduce administrative burden on health care professionals as they respond to the COVID pandemic.

“The Department of Social Services is dedicated to making reasonable and efficient accommodations that will protect the health and well-being of South Dakotans,” Gill said. “We appreciate the governor’s leadership in providing these flexibilities and know that they will be extremely helpful for patients and providers in the state.”