John Bel Edwards
GOVERNOR

Dr. Courtney N. Phillips
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Health
Office of the Secretary

To: **The Honorable John Bel Edwards, Governor, State of Louisiana (Via Email)**
The Honorable Jeff Landry, Attorney General, Louisiana Department of Justice (Via Email)
The Honorable Patrick Page Cortez, President, Louisiana Senate (apa.senatepresident@legis.la.gov)
The Honorable Clay Schexnayder, Speaker, Louisiana House of Representatives (apa.housespeaker@legis.la.gov)
Catherine Brindley, Editor, *Louisiana Register* (reg.submission@la.gov)
Senate Health and Welfare Committee (apa.s-h&w@legis.la.gov)
House Health and Welfare Committee (apa.h-hw@legis.la.gov)

From: **Dr. Courtney N. Phillips, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Health**

Date: **June 24, 2020**

Re: **Justification of Promulgation of Emergency Rule**
Amendments to Programs and Services Due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Statewide Public Health Emergency

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MEMORANDUM

In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (La. R.S. 40:950 *et seq.*) as amended, the Louisiana Department of Health is submitting the following emergency rule that amends Programs and Services Due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Statewide Public Health Emergency.

Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Katzman, at Jennifer.Katzman@la.gov or (225) 342-5166.

Attachments: Emergency Rule – Amendments to Programs and Services Due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Statewide Public Health Emergency

Cc: Jennifer Katzman, Medicaid Deputy Director, LDH
Veronica Dent, Medicaid Program Manager, LDH
Anita Dupuy, Legislative Liaison, LDH
Allen Enger, Rulemaking Coordinator, LDH
Catherine Brindley, *Louisiana Register* Editor, Office of the State Register

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Health
Bureau of Health Services Financing

Programs and Services Amendments Due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of international concern and on January 31, 2020, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the United States, effective as of January 27, 2020, in response to the recent coronavirus disease 2019 (hereafter referred to as COVID-19) outbreak. On March 11, 2020, Governor John Bel Edwards declared a statewide public health emergency to exist in the State of Louisiana as a result of the imminent threat posed to Louisiana citizens by COVID-19. Likewise, the presidential declaration of a national emergency due to COVID-19 has an effective date of March 1, 2020.

In response to these public health emergency declarations and the rapid advancement of COVID-19 throughout Louisiana, the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing, the Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS), the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), and the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) promulgated Emergency Rules which amended the provisions of Title 50 of the Louisiana Administrative Code in order to adopt temporary measures to

provide for the continuation of essential programs and services to ensure the health and welfare of the citizens of Louisiana in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:953(B)(1) et seq. (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 46, Number 4). The department has now determined that additional amendments to Title 50 of the Louisiana Administrative Code are necessary due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This Emergency Rule shall be in effect for the maximum period allowed under the Act or the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration, whichever comes first.

The Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing hereby amends Title 50 of the Louisiana Administrative Code to enact the following provisions throughout the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration:

Medicaid Eligibility (LAC 50:III.Subpart 1)

For the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration, the following requirements for coverage under the Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) will be relaxed:

§101.C. General Provisions - Fair Hearings

The 30 day requirement for the applicant and enrollee to request a fair hearing shall be waived.

Applicants and enrollees must request a fair hearing within 120 days of the date of the adequate and/or timely decision notice issued by the Medicaid Program or its designee.

§301. Asset Verification Program - General Provisions

Asset verification for aged, blind, and disabled applicants will be performed through a post-eligibility review following the certification.

Chapter 23. Eligibility Groups and Medicaid Programs

The department shall provide coverage under the Medical Assistance Program for uninsured individuals described at section 1902(a)(10)(A)(ii)(XXIII) and 1902(ss) of the Social Security Act as follows:

In accordance with section 1902(a)(10)(XVIII) of the Social Security Act, the medical assistance made available to uninsured individuals (as defined in subsection 1902(ss)) eligible for medical assistance only because of subparagraph (A)(ii)(XXIII) is limited to medical assistance for any in vitro diagnostic product described in section 1905(a)(3)(B) administered during the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration (and the administration of such product) and any visit described in section 1916(a)(2)(G) furnished during the emergency period.

Services for Special Populations - Hospice Recipient Eligibility - Waiver of Payment for Other Services (LAC 50:XV.3503)

During the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration, the department waives the provisions requiring daily visits by the hospice provider to all clients under the age of 21 in order to

facilitate continued care while maintaining the safety of staff and beneficiaries. Visits will still be completed based on clinical need of the beneficiary and family, and availability of staff as requested by the family. The use of telemedicine visits as an alternative is allowed.

Medical Transportation Program - Emergency Medical Transportation - Ground Transportation Reimbursement (LAC 50:XXVII.325)

For the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration, reimbursement will be allowed for ambulance providers for allowable services on site without transport. Services provided by the ambulance provider shall be within established treatment protocols, under the direct supervision of a licensed physician.

Pharmacy - Copayment and Maximum Quantity (LAC 50:XXIX.111 and 119)

During the period of state or federal declared emergency, member co-pays may be waived and select pharmacy edits may be revised to encourage recipients to get all necessary maintenance medications during one pharmacy visit.

Members are able to start receiving up to a 90-day supply, as appropriate, of maintenance medications that are not controlled substances. These include cardiovascular drugs (hypertension, coronary artery disease, thrombosis), diabetes

drugs, respiratory drugs (inhaled and oral), contraceptives, antiretrovirals, direct-acting antivirals for hepatitis C, immunosuppressives, antipsychotics, and antidepressants, among others.

Implementation of the provisions of this Rule may be contingent upon the approval of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), if it is determined that submission to CMS for review and approval is required.

Interested persons may submit written comments to Ruth Johnson, Bureau of Health Services Financing, P.O. Box 91030, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9030. Ms. Johnson is responsible for responding to inquiries regarding this Emergency Rule. A copy of this Emergency Rule is available for review by interested parties at parish Medicaid offices.

By Cindy Rives for

Dr. Courtney N. Phillips

Secretary

6/24/20