

Memo

To: Southern California Hospitals
From: Karen P. Wells, V.P., Network Development & Administration
CC: Dr. John Shohfi, Regional Assistant Medical Director, Outside Medical Services
Date: February 16, 2021
Re: Extension of Temporary Changes to Certain Prior Authorization Requirements in Connection with COVID-19

Kaiser Permanente understands the continued challenges Southern California hospitals are facing related to COVID-19 positive cases and hospitalizations. We reiterate our commitment to reduce administrative burdens, as necessary and in accordance with regulatory directives, to allow the efficient admission, transfer and/or discharge of our members and patients in need of medical services during this unprecedented time. Accordingly, we are issuing this communication to notify you of the extension of certain temporary changes to prior authorization requirements and other administrative changes.

Extension of Temporary Issuance of Global Authorizations for Post Stabilization Care

On a case-by-case basis, we will continue the temporary process of issuing global authorizations for inpatient episodes of post-stabilization care, rather than managing care day-by-day. Under this policy, your hospital staff must continue to notify Southern California Outside Utilization Resource Services (OURS) upon admission by contacting us at (800) 225-8883. Additionally, we request that you fax clinical documentation to us at (562) 658-4101 at the time of initial notification. Once we receive your notification, we will either (i) commence the process to transfer the member to a designated Kaiser Permanente plan facility or (ii) issue a global authorization letter that will define the inpatient level of care and the authorization period through discharge. Notwithstanding any global authorization for inpatient episodes of post-stabilization care, we reserve the right to initiate the process to transfer members to designated Kaiser Permanente plan facilities as capacity becomes available. We will continue issuing global authorizations on a case-by-case basis for admission dates through and including February 28, 2021, unless we notify you otherwise in writing.

Extension of Temporary Suspension of Prior Authorization for Covered Post-Acute Skilled Care

Effective January 11, 2021, through and including February 28, 2021 (the "Suspension Period"), Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc. ("Health Plan") is temporarily suspending prior authorization requirements for the following services for which Health Plan is responsible to

pay under the applicable membership services agreement: (i) transportation following in-patient discharge and (ii) the first 48 hours of skilled nursing care, including any professional services (collectively, the "Covered Post-Acute Care Services"). Under this temporary policy, your hospital staff is permitted, without prior authorization, to directly transfer Health Plan members meeting the criteria for discharge to medically appropriate, contracted skilled nursing facilities. You must continue to contact us to obtain prior authorization for all other post-acute care, including, without limitation, long-term acute care hospital care, sub-acute care, inpatient rehabilitation facility care, home health services, hospice services, and durable medical equipment (DME).

We expect you to first use all reasonable efforts to place members at one of our contracted facilities to provide Covered Post-Acute Care Services. Please refer to the updated list of contracted facilities attached to this communication.

If none of the listed contracted facilities are available to provide the necessary Covered Post-Acute Care Services and you must transfer the member to a non-contracted facility, we request that you contact us immediately at (562) 658-4100, so that we can coordinate the post-acute care services for the member at the non-contracted facility.

If you have a contract with Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, you must continue to comply with all terms and conditions of your contract during the Suspension Period, except to the extent any contractual obligation conflicts with this communication.

The temporary suspension of prior authorization for Covered Post-Acute Care Services will expire at 11:59 (Pacific Time) on February 28, 2021, unless you receive further written notice from Kaiser Permanente.

Expedited Discharge Planning

To expedite discharges of members, we will continue to proactively fax you a cover page requesting your discharge planning needs. Once you identify a discharge planning need that is not subject to the temporary suspension of prior authorization discussed above, please fax us the order for continuing care and the corresponding discharge summary at (562) 658-4101.

We appreciate the care you are providing to our members and thank you for your continuing service during this extraordinary time.

Sincerely,

KAISER FOUNDATION HEALTH PLAN, INC.
Southern California Region

KAISER FOUNDATION HOSPITALS
Southern California Region

By: 

Karen P. Wells
Vice President, Network Development and Administration, Southern California Region