

Strategies to support primary care practices through the COVID-19 pandemic

The Oregon CPC+ Payer Group recently met to discuss how organizations are supporting primary care practices through the COVID-19 pandemic. Summarized below are strategies that payers are implementing to support providers. While this list is not exhaustive and not every payer is taking the same approach, there is significant alignment. As the COVID-19 crisis evolves, payers will continue to consider and evaluate a variety of approaches to support primary care.

Expanding Telehealth Policies

- Reimbursing services provided via telehealth at parity with in-person services
- Expanding code sets, specialties and communication methods eligible for telehealth billing
- Providing technical guidance to practices on telehealth and quality measures

Providing Interim Payments

- Sending one-time interim payments to primary care providers, based on claims history

Accelerating Bonus Payments

- Paying out quality and risk-sharing payments 3-6 months earlier than in prior years, depending on contract provisions
- Pausing reporting programs and suspending adjustments to quality bonus payments in risk-sharing contracts

Offering Cash Loans

- Extending offers of cash loans to practices at favorable terms

Advancing Value-Based Payment

- Extending offers to expand the use of value-based payments

Reducing Administrative Burden

- Absorbing 100% of member cost share for COVID-19 testing and treatment
- Eliminating or reducing referral and pre-authorization requirements
- Reducing credentialing requirements