

From: DMHC Licensing eFiling

Subject: APL 23-027 - Hospitalization Surge in Fresno County

Date: Thursday, December 21, 2023 2:44 PM

Attachments: APL 23-027 – Hospitalization Surge in Fresno County (12.21.23).pdf

Dear Health Representative,

The Department of Managed Health Care (Department) issues this All Plan Letter (APL) 23-027, due to Fresno County experiencing a surge in hospitalizations. The DMHC urges health plans to take immediate steps to reduce or remove administrative barriers on hospitals in the Fresno County area during this time.

Thank you.



Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California
Health and Human Services Agency
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGED HEALTH CARE
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Sacramento, CA 95814
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ALL PLAN LETTER

DATE: December 21, 2023

TO: All Health Plans Operating in Fresno County

FROM: Jenny Phillips
Deputy Director
Office of Plan Licensing

SUBJECT: APL 23-027 (OPL) Hospitalization Surge in Fresno County

Fresno County is experiencing a surge in hospitalizations due to a rise in numerous respiratory viruses, causing hospitals in Fresno County and the immediate surrounding areas to meet or exceed their capacity to serve patients, jeopardizing the health and lives of these patients. Accordingly, to provide appropriate care to all patients, it is imperative to maximize the capacity of hospitals in the Fresno County area by removing all unnecessary barriers to the efficient admission, transfer, and/or discharge of patients, allowing for the expeditious transfer of patients to other hospitals with more available capacity or to lower levels of care, including skilled nursing facilities.

Pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 1367(e) all enrollee services must be readily available at reasonable times to each enrollee, consistent with good professional practices. The DMHC urges health plans to take immediate steps to reduce or remove administrative barriers on hospitals in the Fresno County area during this time. Such steps may include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing the number of health plan staff available to respond as quickly as possible to hospitals' requests to admit, transfer, or discharge plan enrollees.
- Increasing the number of health plan staff available to respond to hospital requests during non-business hours.
- Working with durable medical equipment suppliers, pharmacies, and other suppliers to ensure they are available to quickly provide needed equipment, medications, and services to plan enrollees who are being discharged from a hospital.
- Waiving or decreasing prior authorization requirements or providing blanket pre-authorizations in certain circumstances, such as inpatient admissions.
- Taking all steps necessary to protect enrollees from ground ambulance balance billing related to hospital transfers for lack of hospital capacity.

If you have questions regarding this APL, please contact your plan's assigned reviewer in the DMHC's Office of Plan Licensing.

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