



ALASKA NATIVE MEDICAL CENTER



TO: TMO Customers
FROM: Carol Dunn-Hale, Director, ANMC Travel Management Office
RE: Medicaid Travel during COVID-19
DATE: April 28, 2020

The following outlines key highlights from the most recent mandates from the State of Alaska regarding Medicaid travel dated April 27, 2020.

Highlights from State of Alaska Medicaid Travel Necessity & Letters of Medical Necessity

As of Monday, April 27, 2020, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Travel Management Office (TMO) received updated guidelines for completing Letters of Medical Necessity (LOMN) for all Medicaid travel during this time of restricted travel – this includes all ground transportation (taxi's).

Medicaid travel is limited to only those services that cannot be postponed for eight weeks. This decision follows Governor Dunleavy's [Health Mandate 015: Services by Health Care Providers](#).

Travel will be authorized based off of medical necessity and the recommendation from the receiving provider that the travel needs to occur now and should not be delayed. In addition to the standard letter of medical necessity (LOMN) criteria, the LOMN must include the following:

- Can the service(s) be provided via telehealth? If no, why not?
- Has the medical provider reviewed the risks of traveling during this time?
- Does the member understand these risks?
- Does the member understand they may be responsible for their own lodging and meals for travel extensions unrelated to the member's medical needs
- ***A provider can sign the note electronically –physical signature not required.***
- ***If this is an emergent situation – the referring provider is able to furnish the LOMN***
 - **Example 1:** member thinks they broke a bone, member goes to clinic, and gets referred to the hub, the receiving provider does not need to provide the LOMN, and this would be the referring provider responsibility to provide the LOMN.
 - **Example 2:** member had surgery 6 months ago for a broken bone and they want to do a follow up appointment, the referring provider would need to provide LOMN with all justification.

Attached is a LOMN template for your use. Hopefully, this will make things easier for all of you.

If a travel ban is in place in the member's community of residence and a request is received for urgent travel, request a letter from the village leaders allowing the member to return to the village once medical services are complete. If this cannot be received, the travel request should be submitted to DHCS for review

Frequently asked questions:

1. Can travel be approved for elective services?

Travel may be approved if services cannot be delayed as recommended by the receiving provider's LOMN. This means that services cannot be delayed without significant impact to life, health, livelihood, or quality of life.

2. If a member is approved for Medicaid travel and, while away from their home community, meets CDC guidelines and state mandates for self-isolation, will Medicaid reimburse for the additional lodging and meals?

Yes, if the self-isolation is recommended by a medical professional, and for only the length of time that is medically necessary.

3. If a member is currently in travel status and medical services have concluded, but the member's community of residence has subsequently implemented a travel ban, will Medicaid pay for lodging and meals until the travel ban is lifted?

- If the member is showing no signs or symptoms of COVID-19:
 - This request will be denied per [Mandate 12 Attachment B](#) a community may not restrict a person from returning home if there are no signs or symptoms of COVID- 19.
- If the member is showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, see [Question #2](#)

4. If a member is in travel status and their village is no longer allowing residents to return home, even after self-isolation period, will Medicaid cover lodging and meals until the village reopens?

- If the member is showing no signs or symptoms of COVID-19:
 - This request will be denied per [Mandate 12 Attachment B](#) a community may not restrict a person from returning home if there are no signs or symptoms of COVID- 19.
- If the member is showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, see [Question #2](#)

5. If a member no longer meets Medicaid guidelines for lodging and meal services, but they cannot return to their home community due to a travel ban, will Medicaid authorize the return flight home when they are allowed to return to their home even though the lodging and meals were not authorized the entire stay?

- Yes, if the member was brought to a location for medical services and cannot return home due to the community travel ban, Medicaid will allow the return home once the ban is lifted or community says the member can return, which ever happens first.

6. **If a member has been tested for COVID-19 while away from their home community, will Medicaid reimburse for lodging/meals until the results come back?**

Yes, Medicaid will cover lodging and meals until the member's results come back.

7. **Hospitals and doctors' offices are restricting escorts from entering the facility with a patient. Will Medicaid authorize extra taxi units for the escort to return to the hotel and then back to pick up the member?**

Medicaid will approve extra taxi units for the escort to leave the premises and return to pick up the member if

- The wait will exceed 3 hours, or
- The facility will not allow escorts to wait inside for the member

8. **Will Medicaid travel for dental emergencies?**

Medicaid will only approve travel for dental services listed on the [Temporary Dental Coverage Limits during Covid-19 Public Health Emergency](#) publication. Reference the [fee schedule](#) to determine if a dental SA is required before travel can occur. If a prior authorization is required for any of the approved limited dental codes, the dental SA must be approved in the system. Dental providers must submit a LOMN with the travel request in accordance with this policy.