



**TO**

All Providers, HMOs and Other Managed Care Programs

**REGARDING**

COVID-19 Unwinding: Urgent Prior Authorization Requests

## COVID-19 Unwinding: Urgent Prior Authorization Requests

During the federal COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), the federal government allowed the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to implement temporary changes to some policies to facilitate the protection of member health. ForwardHealth Alert [008](#), "Temporary Change for Urgent Prior Authorization Requests," outlined temporary COVID-19-related allowances for urgent prior authorization (PA) requests for providers.

The federal government has announced that the COVID-19 PHE will end on May 11, 2023. **As of May 12, 2023, expedited urgent PA requests for fee-for-service members will no longer be accepted through Provider Services. This does not apply to PA requests for managed care organizations.**

All phone consultations for urgent services should be directed to the Service Authorization section at 608-267-9311. For more information on urgent PA requests, providers may refer to the Urgent Services topic ([#430](#)) of the ForwardHealth Online Handbook.

## Assisting Members During Unwinding

During routine operations, DHS asks members to provide updated information about themselves once a year and renew their participation in Medicaid if they still qualify. During the COVID-19 PHE, temporary policy was enacted so states would keep people enrolled unless they died, moved out of state, or asked to be removed from their program. The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, passed in December 2022, ended that policy.

In April 2023, Wisconsin began a year-long process of updating information from each member and determining if they meet the rules for their current program or if they will need to transition to another kind of coverage. This is called a renewal. Members received a letter in March or April telling them when

their renewal is due in the next 14 months. Then, 45 days before their due date, they will get a renewal packet with further instructions.

Note: Members should not renew until they receive their renewal packet. Under federal guidelines, DHS must keep members covered until their next renewal. Renewing early could result in members losing coverage earlier than their assigned renewal date.

The [COVID-19 Unwinding Resources for Providers](#) Portal page includes resources for providers to share with members during the renewal process.

Providers are encouraged to check this page often for up-to-date information regarding the member renewal process.

## **COVID-19 Unwinding Resources**

For more information regarding COVID-19 Unwinding, refer to the following resources:

- ForwardHealth Update [2023-14](#), “Important Information Regarding the End of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency”
- The [COVID-19: ForwardHealth News and Resources](#) page of the ForwardHealth Portal (will include all Unwinding provider communications)
- The [COVID-19 Unwinding Resources for Providers](#) page of the Portal (provider resources for assisting members through Unwinding)