

Washington Apple Health (Medicaid)

COVID-19 Testing Clinical Policy Billing Guide

January 1, 2024

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure this guide's accuracy. If an actual or apparent conflict arises between this document and a governing statute or Health Care Authority (HCA) rule, the governing statute or HCA rule applies.

Billing guides are updated on a regular basis. Due to the nature of content change on the internet, we do not fix broken links in past guides. If you find a broken link, please check the most recent version of the guide. If this is the most recent guide, please notify us at askmedicaid@hca.wa.gov.

About this guide¹

This publication takes effect **January 1, 2024**, and supersedes earlier versions of this guide.

HCA is committed to providing equal access to our services. If you need an accommodation or require documents in another format, please call 1-800-562-3022. People who have hearing or speech disabilities, please call 711 for relay services.

Washington Apple Health means the public health insurance programs for eligible Washington residents. Washington Apple Health is the name used in Washington State for Medicaid, the children's health insurance program (CHIP), and state-only funded health care programs. Washington Apple Health is administered by the Washington State Health Care Authority.

Refer also to HCA's [ProviderOne billing and resource guide](#) for valuable information to help you conduct business with HCA.

How can I get HCA Apple Health provider documents?

To access providers alerts, go to HCA's [provider alerts webpage](#).

To access provider documents, go to HCA's [provider billing guides and fee schedules webpage](#).

Where can I download HCA forms?

To download an HCA form, see HCA's [Forms & Publications](#) webpage. Type only the form number into the Search box (Example: 13-835).

¹ This publication is a billing instruction.

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Confidentiality toolkit for providers

The [Washington State Confidentiality Toolkit for Providers](#) is a resource for providers required to comply with health care privacy laws. To learn more about the toolkit, [visit the HCA website](#).

What has changed?

The table below briefly outlines how this publication differs from the previous one. This table is organized by subject matter. Each item in the Subject column is a hyperlink that, when clicked, will take you to the specific change summarized in that row of the table.

Subject	Change	Reason for Change
Entire guide	Grammar/punctuation changes	To improve usability and clarity
Laboratory testing	Removed section and added a reference to HCA's Physician-Related Services/Health Care Professional Services Billing Guide	Moved procedure codes and policy to HCA's <i>Physician-Related Services/Health Care Professional Services Billing Guide</i>
Specimen Collection	Removed section	This was discontinued on May 12, 2023.
Antibody Testing for SARS-CoV-2	Removed section and added a reference to HCA's Physician-Related Services/Health Care Professional Services Billing Guide	Moved procedure codes and policy to HCA's <i>Physician-Related Services/Health Care Professional Services Billing Guide</i>

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COVID-19 Testing

Overview

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Care Authority (HCA) is aware that usual and customary ways of providing and billing/reporting services may not be feasible. HCA also understands that different providers have different capabilities. Therefore, in the interest of public health, HCA's Apple Health (Medicaid) program is being as flexible as possible by creating new policies allowing you to provide medically necessary services and bill/report the encounter with the most appropriate code you determine applicable, using the guidance in this document.

Provider requirements

Qualified providers are those who are eligible to bill HCA for reimbursement, such as health care providers, pharmacists, and dentists as listed in [Chapter 182-502 WAC](#).

Providers that perform Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing are expected to meet the [Washington State Department of Health Reporting Requirements](#) and have the appropriate credentials to perform testing.

Telehealth policy, billing, or coding questions

[Email](#) HCA with any telehealth policy, billing, or coding questions.

Client Eligibility

Most Apple Health clients are enrolled in an HCA-contracted managed care organization (MCO). This means that Apple Health pays a monthly premium to an MCO for providing preventative, primary, specialty, and other health services to Apple Health clients. Clients in managed care must see only providers who are in their MCO's provider network, unless prior authorized or to treat urgent or emergent care. See HCA's [Apple Health managed care webpage](#) for further details.

It is important to always check a client's eligibility prior to providing any services because it affects who will pay for the services.

How do I verify a client's eligibility?

Check the client's Services Card or follow the two-step process below to verify that a client has Apple Health coverage for the date of service and that the client's benefit package covers the applicable service. This helps prevent delivering a service HCA will not pay for.

Verifying eligibility is a two-step process:

- Step 1. **Verify the patient's eligibility for Apple Health.** For detailed instructions on verifying a patient's eligibility for Apple Health, see the Client Eligibility, Benefit Packages, and Coverage Limits section in HCA's [ProviderOne Billing and Resource Guide](#).

If the patient is eligible for Apple Health, proceed to Step 2. If the patient is not eligible, see the note box below.

- Step 2. **Verify service coverage under the Apple Health client's benefit package.** To determine if the requested service is a covered benefit under the Apple Health client's benefit package, see HCA's [Program benefit packages and scope of services webpage](#).

Note: Patients who are not Apple Health clients may apply for health care coverage in one of the following ways:

- **Online:** Go to [Washington Healthplanfinder](#) - select the "Apply Now" button.
- **Mobile app:** Download the [WAPlanfinder app](#) – select "sign in" or "create an account".
- **Phone:** Call the Washington Healthplanfinder Customer Support Center at 1-855-923-4633 or 855-627-9604 (TTY).
- **Paper:** By completing an *Application for Health Care Coverage (HCA 18-001P)* form. To download an HCA form, see HCA's Free or Low Cost Health Care, [Forms & Publications](#) webpage. Type only the form number into the Search box (Example: **18-001P**).
- **In-person:** Local resources who, at no additional cost, can help you apply for health coverage. See the [Health Benefit Exchange Navigator](#).

Are clients enrolled in an HCA-contracted managed care organization (MCO) eligible?

Yes. Most Medicaid-eligible clients are enrolled in one of HCA's MCOs. For these clients, managed care enrollment will be displayed on the client benefit inquiry screen in ProviderOne.

All medical services covered under an HCA-contracted MCO must be obtained through the MCO's contracted network. The MCO is responsible for:

- Payment of covered services
- Payment of services referred by a provider participating with the plan to an outside provider

Note: A client's enrollment can change monthly. Providers who are not contracted with the MCO must receive approval from **both** the MCO and the client's primary care provider (PCP) prior to serving a managed care client.

Send claims to the client's MCO for payment. Call the client's MCO to discuss payment prior to providing the service. Providers may bill clients only in very limited situations as described in WAC [182-502-0160](#).

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Note: HCA continues to pay for the following through fee-for-service (FFS):

- Professional fees for dental procedures using CDT® codes
- Professional fees using CPT® codes only when the provider's taxonomy starts with 12

See the [Dental-Related Services Billing Guide](#) or the [Physician-Related Services/Health Care Professional Services Billing Guide](#), or both, for how to bill professional fees.

Managed care enrollment

Most Apple Health (Medicaid) clients are enrolled in HCA-contracted MCO the same month they are determined eligible for managed care as a new or renewing client. Some clients may still start their first month of MC eligibility in the FFS program because their qualification for MC enrollment is not established until the month following their Medicaid eligibility determination. Providers must check eligibility to determine enrollment for the month of service.

New clients are those initially applying for benefits or those with changes in their existing eligibility program that consequently make them eligible for Apple Health managed care.

Checking eligibility

- Providers must check eligibility and know when a client is enrolled and with which MCO. For help with enrolling, clients can refer to the Washington Healthplanfinder's [Get Help Enrolling webpage](#).
- MCOs have retroactive authorization and notification policies in place. The provider must know the MCO's requirements and be compliant with the MCO's policies.

Clients' options to change plans

Clients have a variety of options to change their plan:

- **Available to clients with a Washington Healthplanfinder account:**
Go to the [Washington Healthplanfinder website](#).
- **Available to all Apple Health clients:**
 - Visit the [ProviderOne Client Portal website](#):
 - Call Apple Health Customer Service at 1-800-562-3022. The automated system is available 24/7.

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- Request a change online at [ProviderOne Contact Us](#) (this will generate an email to Apple Health Customer Service). Select the topic “Enroll/Change Health Plans.”

For online information, direct clients to HCA’s [Apple Health Managed Care webpage](#).

Clients who are not enrolled in an HCA-contracted managed care plan for physical health services

Some Medicaid clients do not meet the qualifications for managed care enrollment. These clients are eligible for services under the fee-for-service (FFS) Medicaid program. In this situation, each Integrated Managed Care (IMC) plan will have Behavioral Health Services Only (BHSO) plans available for Apple Health clients who are not in managed care. The BHSO covers only behavioral health treatment for those clients. Eligible clients who are not enrolled in an HCA-contracted managed care plan are automatically enrolled in a BHSO, except for American Indian/Alaska Native clients. If the client receives Medicaid-covered services before being automatically enrolled in a BHSO, the FFS Medicaid program will reimburse providers for the covered services. Some examples of populations that may be exempt from enrolling into a managed care plan are Medicare dual-eligible, American Indian/Alaska Native, Adoption support and Foster Care alumni.

Integrated managed care (IMC)

Clients qualified for enrollment in an integrated managed care plan receive all physical health services, mental health services, and substance use disorder treatment through their HCA-contracted managed care organization (MCO).

For full details on integrated managed care, see HCA’s [Apple Health Managed Care webpage](#) and scroll down to “Changes to Apple Health managed care.”

Integrated Apple Health Foster Care (AHFC)

Children and young adults in the Foster Care, Adoption Support and Alumni programs who are enrolled in Coordinated Care of Washington’s (CCW) Apple Health Foster Care program receive both medical and behavioral health services from CCW.

Clients under this program are:

- Under the age of 21 who are in foster care (out of home placement)
- Under the age of 21 who are receiving adoption support
- Age 18-21 years old in extended foster care
- Age 18 to 26 years old who aged out of foster care on or after their 18th birthday (alumni)

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These clients are identified in ProviderOne as
“Coordinated Care Healthy Options Foster Care.”

The Apple Health Customer Services staff can answer general questions about this program. For specific questions about Adoption Support, Foster Care or Alumni clients, contact HCA’s Foster Care Medical Team at 1-800-562-3022, Ext. 15480.

Fee-for-service Apple Health Foster Care

Children and young adults in the fee-for-service Apple Health Foster Care, Adoption Support and Alumni programs receive behavioral health services through the regional Behavioral Health Services Organization (BHSO). For details, see HCA’s [Mental Health Services Billing Guide](#), under *How do providers identify the correct payer?*

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Clients

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) clients have two options for Apple Health coverage:

- Apple Health Managed Care
- Apple Health coverage without a managed care plan (also referred to as fee-for-service [FFS])

If an AI/AN client does not choose a managed care plan, they will be automatically enrolled into Apple Health FFS for all their health care services, including comprehensive behavioral health services. See the Health Care Authority’s (HCA) [American Indian/Alaska Native webpage](#).

What if a client has third-party liability (TPL)?

If the client has third-party liability (TPL) coverage (excluding Medicare), prior authorization must be obtained before providing any service requiring prior authorization. For more information on TPL, refer to HCA’s [ProviderOne Billing and Resource Guide](#).

Laboratory testing

See HCA's [Physician-Related Services/Health Care Professional Services Billing Guide](#).

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Over the Counter (OTC) Testing

Coverage

HCA covers over the counter (OTC) COVID-19 tests with or without a prescription for clients.

Limitations

HCA limits OTC COVID-19 tests to a total of two tests, per client, per month.

Note: If additional tests are needed, pharmacy providers may submit a prior authorization (PA) request to HCA. See HCA's [Prescription Drug Program Billing Guide](#) for information on how to obtain PA.

Payment

HCA requires an adjudicated pharmacy claim to reimburse pharmacies for an OTC COVID-19 test.

Billing

- Pharmacies must bill claims through the point-of-sale system.
- Pharmacies may not bill for test administration of an OTC COVID-19 test; these tests are to be used by the patient in the home setting.
- To bill for OTC COVID-19 tests, pharmacies must follow the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) standard and use the national drug code (NDC) or universal product code (UPC) found on the package.
- Pharmacies may submit claims with single packs (1 test) or multi-pack test kits (2 tests), equaling a total of 2 OTC COVID-19 tests per month. For example:
 - 1 Single pack kit (1 test) – 2 kits per calendar month allowed
 - 1 Multi pack kit (2 tests) – 1 kit per calendar month allowed

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No Prescription

When there is no prescription:

- For clients in managed care, contact the client's managed care plan for billing instructions.
- For fee-for-service clients, pharmacies must use the following prescriber information:
 - Prescriber ID Qualifier (466-EZ): 01
 - Prescriber ID (407-D7): 5123456787
 - Prescriber last name: OTC PRODUCT

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Antibody Testing for SARS-CoV-2

See HCA's [Physician-Related Services/Health Care Professional Services Billing Guide](#).

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