

To: Innovations Waiver Providers of Residential Support and Supported Living services
From: Cindy Ehlers, Executive Vice President
Date: April 13, 2020
Subject: Innovations Waiver Appendix K Flexibilities for Residential and Supported Living. Patient Information and Support Line, Local Health Department COVID-19 Call Centers

During the COVID-19 state of emergency, Trillium Health Resources continues to work with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC-DHHS) in an effort to ensure members receive needed services and to implement the flexibilities identified in the approved Innovations Waiver Appendix K. Our priority is to support providers to remain viable and available and to maintain direct support staff in order that members may continue to receive needed services, as much as possible.

The main focus of the Appendix K is to allow specific flexibilities for Innovations Waiver regulations to streamline, expedite and make it easier for Waiver recipients to receive needed services by reducing the administrative burden on providers.

As more members and congregate settings begin to feel the effects of COVID-19, we want to highlight the flexibilities for members who have Innovations Waiver funding. For Residential Supports and Supported Living services the following flexibilities are intended to support members to receive services without interruptions:

- 🌱 Services can be delivered in various locations (for example a hotel, shelter, church, or other alternative setting). Guidance example: Providers may need to use this flexibility if a member must be in isolation due to symptoms of COVID-19 or after step down from a hospital stay related to COVID-19 or other conditions.
- 🌱 For adult members, services can be delivered by relatives, including Employer of Records/Representative. For relatives who are already serving as Relative as Provider (RAP), the limitation on the number of hours per week that may be delivered has been lifted. Guidance example: This maybe important to limit the number of people who are interacting with the member during the Stay at Home order issued by the Governor.

- 🌱 Community Living and Support can be provided to members in acute care hospital or short-term institutional stays. Guidance example: Providers may need staff to go to the hospital with the member to assist hospital staff in meeting the member's unique and person centered needs during the hospitalization. All members with intellectual or developmental disabilities have the right to have a person with them if hospitalized due to COVID-19.
- 🌱 Services may be increased based on the member's needs without prior authorization. Guidance example: With school out, children on the Waiver may require additional services to replace services usually offered by the school. Though services can be increased, Trillium is requesting that providers notify the member's Care Coordinator if this is necessary.
- 🌱 Direct Care staff Retainer Payments. Guidance example: If a member is hospitalized for COVID-19 and staff are unable to work with the member, retainer payments will enable that staff person to remain employed to be able to resume providing service when the member is discharged. Please follow guidance in Communication #62 to register members for retainer payments.
- 🌱 Day Support, Supported Employment, Community Living and Supports and Community Networking can be provided in the member's home, in the home of direct support staff, or in Residential Support services (group home/AFL).
- 🌱 Additional time is also now allowed for existing staff to obtain recertification for CPR/FA and Crisis Prevention/De-escalation.

For the complete details of all the approved Appendix K flexibilities see *Trillium Network Communication Bulletin #062 - REVISED* which can be found at the following link, <https://www.trilliumhealthresources.org/for-providers/provider-communications/network-communication-bulletins>.

We also want to be sure that providers are aware that each local County Health Department is set up to support you if members or staff display symptoms of COVID-19. Please immediately contact your local Health Department if you suspect staff or members may have the virus. In addition, you can call the CCNC COVID-19 Triage Plus Patient information and support line at 1-877-490-6642 from 8:00a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week.

Trillium is committed to implementing the Appendix K flexibilities immediately and in a manner that is responsive to the needs of members and providers. **Our goal is for members to receive the care they need when they need it and not have to wait for administrative processes to be completed.** We will work with providers to expedite responses to questions, and remove any barriers to members receiving services, as possible.

Any questions about this Communication bulletin may be sent to the following email: IWCOVIDResponse@TrilliumNC.org