

To: All Providers
From: Cindy Ehlers, Executive Vice President
Date: May 7, 2020
Subject: COVID-19 Guidance on Retainer Payments

Trillium has been working with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to continue to implement flexibilities available through Appendix K. As a part of Appendix K, Retainer Payments are available to direct care workers of Provider Agencies and Employer of Records (EOR). Retainer payments are intended to ensure retention of direct care workers by paying workers even in situations when the worker is not able to deliver services due to the COVID-19 related issues. These situations can include:

- 🌱 the state of emergency requirements to not leave one's home,
- 🌱 staff sickness, staff unavailability due to caring for a loved one,
- 🌱 member sickness, or
- 🌱 the need to limit staff from coming into the member's home due to health and safety concerns for the member (e.g. member is in a high risk category and at greater risk of infection/complications).

Retainer payments may **only be made for Innovations Waiver services that are currently authorized and include a personal care or habilitative component such as Day Supports, Supported Employment, Community Networking, Supported Living, Residential Supports, and Community Living and Supports.**

In order to access retainer payments, Provider Agencies have been billing for services that were approved through the completion of a Smartsheet form. Effective May 7, 2020, the process of submitting retainer payments will change. In order to access retainer payments, Provider Agencies will no longer utilize the Smartsheet link form. Instead, Provider Agencies will bill for services to be used for retainer payments using the service code with a **XU and CR modifier** when submitting their billing. **The order of the modifiers should be XU CR as outlined in the Provider Agency's contract.** If the Provider Agency bills a different order than what is in their contract, the claim will deny. The use of the modifiers will denote that the claims submitted will be utilized for retainer payments. For providers that have already submitted billing for retainer payments, no replacement claims are needed at this time.

Trillium will reimburse providers at 100% of the standard floor rate for the retainer payment services.

Please note that effective March 13, 2020, all applicable codes and modifiers have been added to the contract for those Provider Agencies who were already contracted to provide one of the services listed above.

For additional guidance related to retainer payments, please see the following guidance issued by DHHS: [SPECIAL BULLETIN COVID-19 #63: NC Innovations and NC TBI Waivers Community-Based Services \(HCBS\) Flexibilities – Retainer Payments](#)

Any questions about this Communication Bulletin may be sent to the following email:

IWCOVIDResponse@TrilliumNC.org.