pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

COMMUNITY HEALTHCHOICES (CHC)

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #2021-01

SUBJECT: Updates to Prior Authorization Requirements for Certain Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

TO: CHC- Managed Care Organizations (MCO)

FROM: Bureau of Policy Development and Communications Management

DATE: July 15, 2021

PURPOSE

Effective July 1, 2021, and as described in Medical Assistance Bulletin 99-21-03, “Reinstatement of Prior Authorization for Certain Services,” issued April 30, 2021 (found here), the Department of Human Services (Department) will, and its CHC-MCOs may, reinstate the prior authorization requirements that were in place on February 29, 2020, for all services except shift care services for children under the age of 21.

On May 7, 2020, the Department issued Provider Quick Tip #241, "Prior Authorization Changes in the Medical Assistance Program for Certain Services during COVID-19 Emergency Disaster," to announce changes to the prior authorization requirements for certain services in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This Quick Tip was also applicable to services provided through the CHC-MCOs.

The services with prior authorization requirement changes were Inpatient Hospital Admissions, including Long-Term Acute Care Hospitals, Home Health, Hospice Services, Radiology, Medical Supplies and Durable Medical Equipment (DME), Inpatient Rehabilitation Services, and Skilled Nursing Facility Services.

PROCEDURES

Effective for the dates of services on and after July 1, 2021, CHC-MCOs may reinstate any prior authorization requirements in place on February 29, 2020. Prior authorization requirements continue to be suspended for shift nursing and shift home health aide services as described in Quick Tip #241 for children under the age of 21. A

CHC-MCO must notify providers at least 30 days in advance if it is reinstating prior authorization

Prior authorization requirements may be reinstated for the following services:

- Inpatient Hospital Admissions
- Long-Term Acute Care Hospitals
- Home Health
- Hospice Services
- Radiology Services – CT scans of the chest related to the diagnosis or treatment of COVID-19.
- Medical Supplies and DME, to include the procedure codes and items listed below.
- Inpatient Rehabilitation Services
- Skilled Nursing Facility Services

CHC-MCOs may reinstate any prior authorization requirements described in this Operations Memorandum beginning on or after July 1, 2021.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this information with appropriate staff.
2. Contact the Bureau of Coordinated and Integrated Services.