

Benefit period extended for authorized PT, OT and ST for BCN HMOSM (commercial) members during COVID-19 emergency

Effective August 28, 2020, the benefit period for completing authorized physical, occupational and speech therapy (and physical medicine services by chiropractors) has been extended to 270 days for BCN HMOSM members whose plans normally have a 60-consecutive-day benefit. The benefit period starts on the date of the first treatment. The extended therapy benefit period will continue until further notice.

What this means

- For any members with therapy authorizations that began on or after March 26 but before Aug. 28 who need an extension beyond 180 days, providers can contact eviCore healthcare® for an extension to 270 days. Providers can request an extension through the eviCore provider portal or by calling 1-855-774-1317.
- If the treatment extends beyond the member's benefit year, the provider must contact eviCore through their provider portal or by calling 1-855-774-1317, to request authorization of services for the new benefit year. The benefit will reset to 270-consecutive days in the new benefit year as long as the extension is still in effect and the member continues to have BCN coverage with the 60-consecutive-day therapy benefit.

Background

We first announced the extension of the benefit period in a web-DENIS message published April 17. At that time, we communicated that members whose plans stipulate a benefit period have 180, not 60, consecutive days within which they must complete therapies that have already been authorized.

We did this to make it easier for members to start or resume their therapies once COVID-19 shelter-in-place restrictions were lifted.

This change is different from — and is in addition to — the extension of the length of time authorizations are valid. That extension is scheduled to conclude Dec. 31. The duration of authorization approvals for elective and non-urgent services was announced in a web-DENIS message on May 29, 2020.