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Temporary Rate Increase Guidance for MaineCare Providers

Maine Department of Health & Human Services sent this bulletin at 05/01/2020 11:38 AM EDT



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Temporary Rate Increase Guidance for MaineCare Providers

Attention all providers who have recently received temporary rate increases to assist with increased costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, as [announced](#) on April 18, 2020, specifically:

- Section 50, Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs)
- Section 67, Nursing Facilities (NFs)
- Section 97 Appendix B, PNMI Substance Use Treatment Facilities
- Section 97 Appendix C, PNMI Residential Care (Medical and Remedial Service Facilities)
- Section 97 Appendix D, PNMI Child Care Facilities (Room & Board rate)
- Section 97 Appendix E, PNMI Community Residences for Persons with Mental Illness
- Section 97 Appendix F, PNMI Non-Case Mixed Medical & Remedial Facilities

This letter provides further guidance on those temporary rate increases. The Department is providing financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic linked to requirements for accountability and transparency in providers' use and application of funds.

1. **Uses of funds.** The Department understands that there may be costs associated with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular increased costs related to ensuring retention of direct care / front line staff to meet members' needs. Other allowable costs for the temporary rate increase could include payments to assist with retention of other essential personnel, non-communal dining,

visitor/vendor screening, housekeeping and supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE) necessitated by COVID-19. Allowable costs must be used within the timeframe of the temporary rate increase period.

Compensation to staff to aid in retention may include hazard pay, overtime pay, and retention bonuses for essential personnel. Essential personnel are defined as anyone regularly working at the facility, although these payments should be primarily targeted toward direct care workers and/or those who are required to be in the facility on a day-to-day basis. Any compensation to staff is required to be reasonable.

Bonus payments at Nursing Facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities. The MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Sections 50 and 67 require that bonuses are provided under a written policy of the provider and are related to measurable and attainable job performance expectations. Therefore, if a provider plans to implement a retention bonus, they need to create a brief written policy that outlines the rationale, performance basis, and amount of the bonus.

2. **Cost Settlement and Timeframe for Use.** The Department is reiterating its guidance that was provided in the temporary rate increase letters earlier this month:

NFs, ICFs, and Appendix C and F PNMIs: The temporary rate increase will be reconciled at the end of the authorized period. Providers will need to submit a financial reconciliation to the DHHS – Division of Audit no later than 30 days after the authorized period has ended. The financial reconciliation must document the actual costs incurred for COVID-19-related expenditures compared to the temporary rate increase payments received. The Department will review the submissions for reasonableness and necessity of the expenditures and settle on any under/overpayment within 45 days.

Appendix E PNMIs: The temporary rate increase will be reconciled when your regular audit is conducted.

To assist in the settlement of the temporary rate increases, facilities should track their COVID-related expenditures and funding sources, including all federal sources, and maintain complete supporting documentation for these funds. The Department will pass along additional guidance about federal funding opportunities and compliance if/when we receive it.

If you have any questions regarding cost settlement, please contact Herb Downs with the Division of Audit at DHHS.Audit@maine.gov with “COVID-19 Temporary Rate Increase Question” in the subject line or call the Division of Audit main line at 207-287-2403.

3. **Online Survey for Appendix B & D PNMIs.** Appendix B & D PNMIs are not cost settled. To help ensure accountability and transparency in the use and application of these funds, the Department asks that these facilities answer the questions below by using the [Survey Monkey tool](#) by May 15, 2020.
 - Name of Facility and NPI.
 - In what ways has COVID-19 impacted your organization from a financial and/or operational perspective?
 - Please provide a brief overview of how your facility intends to use the funding associated with the rate increases for COVID-19 costs.

Please contact MaineCare Rate Setting Manager Peter Kraut at Peter.Kraut@maine.gov with any questions.

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