



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Traci McBee
Phone: 515-376-4338
E-mail: mcbeets@wellmark.com

Wellmark's response to COVID-19

DES MOINES, IA (March 19, 2020) — We are in unprecedented times, which means we need to take major steps to ensure the health and well-being of the members and communities we serve. To that end, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield is announcing temporary changes until June 16, 2020 to help relieve burdens on our members and the health care system, specifically:

1. **Using virtual visits.** To avoid the spread of COVID-19, Wellmark members have access to virtual health care visits for all appropriate medical and behavioral health visits with no member cost-share. For those who don't currently have a health care provider, please use an in-network provider or Doctor on Demand[®]. Wellmark will allow telephonic visits when audio/visual capabilities are not accessible.
2. **Covering diagnostic tests for COVID-19.** Members will have no cost-share for appropriate testing to establish the diagnosis of COVID-19.
3. **Increasing access to prescription medications.** Wellmark prescription drug benefit plans allow for early refill (up to 30 days of medication). We also will ensure formulary flexibility if there are medication shortages or other access issues. Members will not be liable for any additional charges if they receive a non-formulary medication as a result of a shortage of their current medication.
4. **Supporting our members 24/7.** Members also have access to Wellmark's BeWell 24/7SM service that connects them to real people who can help with a variety of health-related concerns.
5. **Working with individuals and small businesses suffering economic disruption.** Wellmark will allow our individual and small business policyholders at least 60 days to make premium payments in order to maintain their coverage.
6. **Reimbursing providers for virtual visits.** Wellmark's Iowa and South Dakota network providers will receive the same fee for virtual visits as an in-person visit. These changes apply to all appropriate medical and behavioral health virtual visits with any Wellmark in-network provider.

Wellmark will consider extending these measures as the pandemic situation evolves.

"We want to support those Iowa and South Dakota providers who are able to offer virtual visit services and encourage people to stay home to avoid the potential spread of the coronavirus," said Cory Harris, president and chief operating officer. "We believe these decisions to be in the best interest of our members, health care providers and the communities we serve. In this time of need we want to provide our members with the most options for care and provide our network with appropriate compensation to effectively deliver that care."

It is important that our members feel safe and secure knowing they are able to pursue the proper care and testing they need to protect their health. Wellmark will continue to work closely with local, state and federal governments during the coronavirus outbreak to ensure that members get the information, testing and care they need.

Members can find additional information at [Wellmark.com/coronavirus](https://www.wellmark.com/coronavirus).

###

About Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Wellmark, Inc. ([Wellmark.com](https://www.wellmark.com)) does business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Wellmark and its subsidiaries and affiliated companies, including Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc. and Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc., insure or pay health benefit claims for more than 2 million members in Iowa and South Dakota. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc. and Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.