

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Expected to End Soon

For the past three years, we have adjusted and shared changes to many of our processes and policies because of the public health emergency (PHE) declared in association with COVID-19. Since 2020, temporary changes have been implemented to help health care providers as they faced and responded to challenges related to the pandemic.

We frequently shared updates with you in our [provider bulletins](#), which remain posted at [FloridaBlue.com](https://www.floridablue.com). As a reminder, please note some of the flexibilities implemented during the pandemic have ended. Other changes remain in place, but we expect some will end when the official PHE expires.

Listed below are three documents which outline news and information related to COVID-19. We will continue to update these documents with new dates as the guidelines, policies, and temporary flexibilities in use during the PHE, revert to pre-pandemic standards. Please remember, **all claims billed by a provider must effectively meet the accepted standard of care for the condition being treated.**

- [COVID-19 bulletin](#) with the latest information for our Florida Blue Commercial, Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicare Advantage, Federal Employee Program® (FEP), and Truli for Health lines of business
- [COVID-19 Billing Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions](#) (updated February 2023)
- Additional [COVID-19 updates](#) are available on our website

Important HIPAA/Telehealth Reminders

- The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) exercised its enforcement discretion and was not imposing penalties for noncompliance with the regulatory requirements under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) rules related to the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 nationwide PHE. Under this [Notice](#), effective since January 2021, OCR was not imposing penalties against covered health care providers for not having a Business Associate Agreement with video communication vendors or any other noncompliance with HIPAA rules.
- This OCR leniency will end once the PHE ends, which is expected to be May 11, 2023.
 - The OCR has published [FAQs on Telehealth and HIPAA during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency](#).
 - Providers who perform virtual care should review their telehealth processes and vendors and be sure to have a [Business Associate Agreement](#) in place with a HIPAA-compliant vendor.

- Be sure to review HHS' [Guidance on How the HIPAA Rules Permit Covered Health Care Providers and Health Plans to Use Remote Communication Technologies for Audio-Only Telehealth](#)
- Throughout the pandemic, HIPAA obligations have remained in effect. It is important to maintain the protections of the HIPAA Privacy Rules. Be sure to review the additional information on [HIPAA Security Rule Safeguards](#).