

INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 2271-MC-FFS-CVD

DATE: October 1, 2021

TO: Pharmacies, Iowa Medicaid Hospital, Physician MD, Physician DO, Podiatrist, Optometrist, Rural Health Clinic (RHC), Clinic, Community Mental Health Center (CMHC), Psychologist, Certified Nurse Midwife, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), Clinical Social Worker, Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Nurse Practitioner (NP), Behavioral Health and Physician Assistant Providers, Area Education Agency (AEA), and Local Education Agency (LEA)

APPLIES TO: Managed Care (MC), Fee-for-Service (FFS), Coronavirus Disease (CVD)

FROM: Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

RE: Pharmacies Billing for COVID-19 Testing

EFFECTIVE: October 1, 2021

The purpose of this Informational Letter (IL) is to provide guidance related to pharmacies billing for specimen collection and testing for COVID-19. These changes will be in effect for the duration of the public health emergency (PHE).

IME is expanding reimbursement for COVID-19 testing and the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS)/Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes for payment for laboratory tests for the detection of SARS-COV-2, or the diagnosis of the virus that causes COVID-19, to include pharmacies. Pharmacies that wish to participate must possess or obtain a [Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments \(CLIA\) waiver certificate](#)¹.

Pharmacies will need to enroll as a provider type 10, independent clinical lab by submitting Section B of the enrollment application to IME along with a copy of their CLIA certification. Additionally, CLIA information will need to be provided on each claim per guidance in [IL 1777-MC-FFS](#)², but pharmacies will not need to enroll or credential

¹ [How to obtain a CLIA Certificate of Waiver \(cms.gov\)](#)

² <https://secureapp.dhs.state.ia.us/IMPA/Information/ViewDocument.aspx?viewdocument=c3ccce13-e0f5-4c34-b48d-341eadda7c18>

separately with the Managed Care Organizations (MCO). However, pharmacies who plan to bill for COVID-19 testing should contact their MCO provider representatives in advance of billing to ensure proper payment.

COVID-19 testing codes 87428, 87636, 87637, 0240U, and 0241U (Combination Influenza A & B and/or RSV tests) are excluded from reimbursement, as this testing is not part of the PHE authorization. Pharmacies will be eligible to bill U0005, the add-on payment for high throughput testing that follows the guidance described in [IL 2130-MC-FFS-CVD](#)³.

Pharmacies that are performing specimen collection **only** (Codes G2023 and G2024) will not receive a separate payment as this service is considered “incident to” the test being performed.

Pharmacies should bill the MCOs for tests in accordance with their medical benefits policies and procedures, using the appropriate electronic submission standards. Each pharmacy should also verify that it is in compliance with the [guidance](#)⁴ provided by the Iowa Board of Pharmacy regarding COVID-19 testing. These tests are not covered under the pharmacy benefit. Claims submitted using the BIN/PCN/Group to the pharmacy benefit using NCPDP D.0 format will be denied.

Note: This IL only covers tests administered in the pharmacy, not at-home test kits, which will be addressed separately.

The following table lists the laboratory codes for COVID-19 testing.

Code	Description	Effective
86328	Severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19])	April 10, 2020
86408	Screening test for detection of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (Covid-19) neutralizing antibody	August 10, 2020
86409	Measurement of neutralizing antibody to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (COVID-19)	August 10, 2020
86413	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) antibody, quantitative	September 8, 2020
86769	Antibody; severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19])	April 10, 2020
87426	Infectious agent antigen detection by immunoassay technique, (e.g., enzyme immunoassay [EIA],	June 25, 2020

³ <https://secureapp.dhs.state.ia.us/IMPA/Information/ViewDocument.aspx?viewdocument=517504dc-b6bf-4891-b1bc-5fbf56517cd0>

⁴ [COVID-19 Information and Updates | Iowa Board of Pharmacy](#)

Code	Description	Effective
	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay [ELISA], immunochemiluminometric assay [IMCA] qualitative or semiquantitative, multiple-step method; severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (e.g., SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19])	
87635	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA): severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), amplified probe technique	March 13, 2020
87811	Infectious agent antigen detection by immunoassay with direct optical (i.e., visual) observation; severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (coronavirus disease [covid-19])	October 6, 2020
0202U	Infectious disease (bacterial or viral respiratory tract infection), pathogen-specific nucleic acid (DNA or RNA), 22 targets including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), qualitative RT-PCR, nasopharyngeal swab, each pathogen reported as detected or not detected	May 20, 2020
0223U	Infectious disease (bacterial or viral respiratory tract infection), pathogen-specific nucleic acid (DNA or RNA), 22 targets including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), qualitative RT-PCR, nasopharyngeal swab, each pathogen reported as detected or not detected	June 25, 2020
0224U	Antibody, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), includes titer(s), when performed	June 25, 2020
0225U	Infectious disease (bacterial or viral respiratory tract infection) pathogen-specific DNA and RNA, 21 targets, including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), amplified probe technique, including multiplex reverse transcription for RNA targets, each analyte reported as detected or not detected	August 10, 2020
0226U	Surrogate viral neutralization test (sVNT), severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (coronavirus disease [COVID19]), ELISA, plasma, serum	August 10, 2020
G2023	Specimen collection for severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), any specimen source	March 1, 2020
G2024	Specimen collection for severe acute respiratory	March 1, 2020

Code	Description	Effective
	syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) from an individual in a SNF or by a laboratory on behalf of a HHA, any specimen source	
U0001	CDC 2019 novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) real-time RT-PCR diagnostic panel	March 6, 2020
U0002	2019-nCoV Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2/2019-nCoV (COVID-19), any technique, multiple types or subtypes (includes all targets), non-CDC	March 6, 2020
U0003	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), amplified probe technique, making use of high throughput technologies as described by CMS-2020-01-R.	April 14, 2020
U0004	2019-nCoV Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2/2019-nCoV (COVID-19), any technique, multiple types or subtypes (includes all targets), non-CDC, making use of high throughput technologies as described by CMS-2020-01-R.	April 14, 2020
U0005	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (coronavirus disease [covid-19]), amplified probe technique, CDC or non-CDC, making use of high throughput technologies, completed within 2 calendar days from date of specimen collection (list separately in addition to either HCPCS code U0003 or U0004) as described by CMS-2020-01-r2	January 1, 2021

If you have questions, please contact the appropriate MCO or the IME Provider Services Unit:

IME Provider Services for FFS members:

- Provider Services: 1-800-338-7909
- Provider Email: imeproviderservices@dhs.state.ia.us.

Amerigroup Iowa, Inc. Provider Services:

- Provider Services: 1-800-454-3730
- Provider Email: providersolutionsia@amerigroup.com
- Website: <https://providers.amerigroup.com/ia>

Iowa Total Care Provider Services:

- Provider Services: 1-833-404-1061
- Website: <https://www.iowatotalcare.com>