

Business during COVID-19 (Updated): Q&A for Our Providers



Thank you to all of our providers and their staff who are working diligently to keep our members and community healthy during this unprecedented time.

This document was last updated on 6/3/20. Information in this document may have changed since it was published and may not be up-to-date. Please visit cencalhealth.org/providerservicesfaq for the most up-to-date information.



Medication-Assisted Treatment and Telehealth

During the national state of emergency, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announced it will waive the Ryan-Haight act and allow the initial and ongoing buprenorphine prescription and all follow up care to be provided by telemedicine and telephone, **without an in-person medical evaluation**. The following conditions must be met:

- The prescription is issued for a legitimate medical purpose by a practitioner acting in the usual course of his/her professional practice.
- The telemedicine communication is conducted between the DEA-registered practitioner and the patient, or a health care professional who is treating the patient, using an audio-visual, real-time, two-way interactive communication system or by telephone.
- The practitioner is acting in accordance with applicable Federal and State law [including the telemedicine requirements of 21 USC §802(54)].
- If the practitioner satisfies the above requirements, the practitioner may issue a prescription either electronically or by calling a prescription into the pharmacy.

Prescriptions for new patients receiving other controlled medications (e.g., sedatives or stimulants) may be prescribed after a telehealth assessment; the DEA has not yet authorized prescribing these controlled medications for new patients by telephone.

Watch California ACEs Aware Initiative's Webinar on Strategies for Addressing Secondary Health Effects of COVID-19

In the webinar, "Primary Care & Telehealth Strategies for Addressing the Secondary Health Effects of COVID-19," panelists with physician perspectives discuss potential short and long-term health consequences, delays and disruptions in care, and using telehealth and trauma-informed approaches.

Providers can view the webinar at acesaware.org/events/2020-may-27-webinar/.

California Department of Public Health Recommends Reassuring Messaging to Patients

AAP and CDC recommend that childhood immunizations continue to be prioritized during the COVID-19 pandemic. But parents may be reluctant to bring their children in during the pandemic. To help reassure them, you may use the following messages, adapting them as needed to how your clinic is operating:

1. Emphasize steps your practice is taking to keep patients and clinic staff safe.

- *“We are taking several precautions to help keep our patients safe, including scheduling baby shot visits in the morning and only seeing sick children in the afternoon.”*
- *“We’re screening everyone who comes into the office, including taking everyone’s temperature.”*
- *“We disinfect our clinic twice daily and exam rooms after each visit.”*
- *“We have designated areas of our offices to separate sick patients from healthy patients.”*
- *“We all wear masks at all times.”*
- *“We’re scheduling appointments so only one patient is at the clinic at a given time.”*

2. Consider alternate ways to deliver care.

- *“We can schedule a telehealth appointment, where I address your questions and concerns on your phone or computer, followed by a brief immunization visit to help keep your baby safe.”*
- *“Our clinic is offering ‘drive-thru’ immunizations, so you don’t even have to come inside the clinic!”*

3. Reinforce the fact that vaccine-preventable diseases will continue to be a threat to the child.

- *“As a parent, I would not wait to immunize my baby; as your doctor, I am strongly recommending we help protect your baby from diseases that could cause harm during or after the pandemic.”*

4. Inform them that getting caught up later may not be so easy.

- *“When California ‘reopens,’ there may be many children who need to catch up on immunizations, increasing wait times for appointments. While waiting they could be exposed to dangerous vaccine-preventable diseases circulating in the community. Let’s avoid that danger by keeping your child on track.”*

To help your vital work, we encourage you to check out CDC’s NIIW tools and resources and the California Department of Public Health’s on-demand webinar on guidance for immunizations during the pandemic. Thank you again for all that you do!

Note: The article, “California Department of Public Health Recommends Reassuring Messaging to Patients,” was written and published by the Immunization Branch of the CDPH.

The California Medical Association Issues COVID-19 Financial Toolkit

The California Medical Association has just issued a COVID-19 Financial Toolkit for Physician Practices. Go to cmadocs.org/covid-19 and click on “Financial Toolkit.”

