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# For Immediate Release

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CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Announces Substantial Actions to Further Increase Access to Care During Coronavirus Pandemic

Solutions will provide members with additional resources for access to quality care

**Baltimore, Md./Washington, D.C.** – Earlier this week, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) announced it will waive additional cost sharing, increase access to telehealth programs, and take further steps to better support its members seeking testing and treatment for novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

“At this critical time, we are working tirelessly to ensure that our members, associates and communities have access to the care and resources they need,” said CareFirst President and CEO, Brian D. Pieninck. “CareFirst has a shared responsibility to help slow the rate and reduce the number of coronavirus infections in our communities. We continue to institute proactive measures to preserve the available capacity of our healthcare resources and remove barriers that could potentially interfere with people getting the care they need. By waiving cost sharing and enhancing telehealth services, we simultaneously reduce financial barriers, increase access to quality care, and lessen risk of community exposure to COVID-19 and other contagious viruses.”

To date, CareFirst has taken the following actions on behalf of our community providers and all fully insured members:

* **Waived cost sharing** (copays, coinsurance and deductibles) for in-network or out-of-network visits to a provider’s office, lab fees or treatments related to COVID-19.
* **Encouraged the use of telemedicine and virtual sites of care** such as [CareFirst Video Visit](https://member.carefirst.com/members/health-wellness/video-visit.page?utm_source=Marketing&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=COVID-19) and 24/7 nurse phone line.
	+ For CareFirst Video Visits, copays, coinsurance, and deductibles will be waived for the duration of this public health emergency—including behavioral health, lactation support, nutrition counseling and urgent care services.
	+ For other provider sponsored telemedicine, CareFirst will pay for those services, but members may be subject to copays, coinsurance or deductibles.
	+ For primary care, general practice and OBGYN providers who do not offer telemedicine, CareFirst will pay for telephone-only consultations during this public health emergency, with no member out-of-pocket cost.
* **Worked with our pharmacy partners** to provide free delivery of medications and assist with mailing prescription.
* **Rapidly expanded the scope of our contracted lab partners** to support access to testing as it becomes available.

“As this challenge unfolds our goal is to ensure the people we serve stay informed, understand the preventive steps they can take to stay healthy, and maintain access to the care they need when they need it," Pieninck said. “As a not-for-profit healthcare company, CareFirst will continue to be there for people through both good and challenging times, fulfilling our role and wherever possible helping to prevent disruption during this pandemic.”

Last week, CareFirst began implementing a large-scale remote work policy for its associates. To date, more than 90% of CareFirst associates and contractors are working remotely, with only essential personnel reporting to a CareFirst location where social distancing and enhanced cleaning measures have been implemented.

CareFirst will continue to work with its jurisdictions and public health authorities to provide support, data and expertise for the communities it serves. Visit CareFirst’s [website](https://member.carefirst.com/members/pop-up/coronavirus-information-and-illness-prevention.page) to remain up to date on the latest information.

**About CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield**

In its 83rd year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit healthcare company which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to 3.3 million individuals and employers in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. In 2019, CareFirst invested $43 million to improve overall health, and increase the accessibility, affordability, safety and quality of healthcare throughout its market areas. To learn more about CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, visit our website at [www.carefirst.com](http://www.carefirst.com/) or follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CareFirst), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/CareFirst), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/carefirst-bluecross-blueshield) or [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/carefirstbcbs/).

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