

March 20, 2025

COVID TEST KIT AND VACCINE COVERAGE IN THE PHARMACY BENEFIT

BACKGROUND

The Vendor Drug Program (VDP) requests MCO action on required changes to COVID test kits and clarifies coverage of COVID and flu vaccines in the pharmacy benefit.

KEY DETAILS

Changes to At-Home COVID Test Kits

Medicaid and CHIP members are currently allowed to receive four (4) at-home COVID tests and an additional four (4) at-home COVID tests through prior authorization for a total of 8 per month (see the May 13, 2024, notice, “Quantity Change To COVID Home Tests Per Month for Medicaid, CHIP Members” for more about this change). VDP is reducing the quantity of at-home COVID tests available per member to 4 a month without a prior authorization. This change is due to the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) expiration.

MCOs must implement this change by April 7, 2025.

HHSC continues investigating and reviewing other policy changes related to COVID at-home test kits to address concerns about fraud, waste, and abuse.

Pharmacies should only fill prescriptions when a member directly requests COVID at-home tests.

Clarification of COVID and Flu Vaccine Coverage in the Pharmacy Benefit

There is no change in policy for vaccine coverage in the pharmacy benefit. However, VDP provides the pharmacy benefit vaccine coverage chart below for clarification. This chart does not include the Medicaid medical benefit coverage requirements.

Pharmacy-Administered Vaccine Category	Pharmacy Benefit Coverage Policy
COVID vaccines for ages 3 to 18	These are not covered by the Texas Medicaid pharmacy benefit. They may be transacted and reimbursed through the Vaccines for Children program .
COVID vaccines for ages 19 and older	MCOs must allow through the Medicaid pharmacy benefit, i.e. the MCO/PBM and for FFS, Gainwell, including cost of vaccine and administration fee.
Flu vaccines for ages 3 to 18	MCOs must allow through the Medicaid pharmacy benefit, i.e. the MCO/PBM and for FFS, Gainwell, including the cost of vaccine and administration fee.
Flu vaccines for ages 19 and older	MCO must allow through the Medicaid pharmacy benefit, i.e. the MCO/PBM and for FFS, Gainwell,

	including the cost of vaccine and administration fee.
All other vaccines for ages 14 to 18	These are not covered by the Texas Medicaid pharmacy benefit. They may be transacted and reimbursed through the Vaccines for Children program . (See state pharmacy law/Texas State Board of Pharmacy for age limits on pharmacist vaccine administration.)
All other vaccines for ages 19 and older	These are not covered by the Texas Medicaid pharmacy benefit. VDP is proposing to add these. More information is to come.