

LEGAL UPDATE

Health Plans Must Provide Free Coronavirus (COVID-19) Testing

Effective March 18, 2020, [the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (FFCRA) requires group health plans and health insurance issuers **to cover COVID-19 testing without imposing any cost sharing** (such as deductibles, copayments or coinsurance) or prior authorization or other medical management requirements.

Coverage Mandate

This coverage mandate applies to the following health plans and issuers, regardless of grandfathered status under the Affordable Care Act (ACA):

- All fully insured group health plans
- All self-insured group health plans
- Health insurance issuers offering group or individual coverage

During this public health emergency, health plans and issuers must cover FDA-approved diagnostic testing products for COVID-19, including any items or services provided during a visit to a provider (in-person or telehealth), urgent care center or emergency room that relate to COVID-19 testing.

Effective March 27, 2020, the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act](#) (CARES Act) expands this coverage mandate to include COVID-19 tests provided on an emergency basis, state-developed tests and any other tests approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This coverage cannot be subject to any plan deductible, copayment or coinsurance.

Provider Reimbursement Rates

A health plan or issuer must pay a health care provider the negotiated rate for COVID-19 testing. However, if a health plan or issuer does not have a negotiated rate with a provider, it must pay the cash price published by the provider on its public website or negotiate a lower price.

Key Points

- Employer-sponsored group health plans must cover COVID-19 testing, without imposing a deductible, copayment or other cost sharing.
- This mandate applies to fully insured group health plans and self-insured group health plans.
- Plans and issuers must pay the provider-negotiated rate for testing (or the provider's cash price if there is no negotiated rate).

Effective immediately, health plans and health insurance issuers must cover COVID-19 testing at no charge.

INSGROUP

A BALDWIN RISK PARTNER