

**An Important Message from
The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)**

VDP Changes For COVID-19 Post-Public Health Emergency

Background:

The federal government allowed certain flexibilities during the COVID-19 (COVID) Public Health Emergency (PHE) coverage period. The following includes the federal authorizations and the expiration dates:

- Public Health Emergency (PHE) authorization ended May 11, 2023
- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) authorization ended Sept 30, 2024
- Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) authorization ends Dec 31, 2024

Key Details:

VDP's post-PHE COVID policies align with existing state laws.

1. Coverage of Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of Vaccines and Treatments Ending (Oct. 1, 2024)

- **Federal flexibility:** During the PHE, the ARPA allowed Texas Medicaid to cover EUAs of vaccines, treatments, and tests until Sept. 30, 2024.
- **Post PHE policy:** VDP will not cover EUAs on the formulary or the clinician-administered drug (CAD) crosswalk because now FDA-approved vaccines, treatments, and tests are available.

2. COVID Home Tests Policy Pending (Oct. 1, 2024)

- **Federal flexibility:** During the PHE, the ARPA allowed Texas Medicaid to cover at-home COVID tests under EUA until Sept. 30, 2024.
- **Post PHE policy:** Since the EUA approvals will end Sept. 30, 2024, VDP will remove all COVID home test kits from the formulary under EUA approval and do not have FDA approval.

3. Reinstate CHIP copays for COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatment (Oct. 1, 2024)

- **Federal flexibility:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services required states to provide Medicaid and CHIP coverage without cost sharing for COVID vaccinations, testing, and treatments through September 30, 2024.
- **Post PHE policy:** HHSC will reinstate CHIP copays for COVID vaccines, testing, and treatment on Oct. 1, 2024.

4. Change to Patient Vaccination Age at Pharmacy (Jan. 1, 2025)

- **Federal flexibility:** During the PHE, the PREP Act allowed pharmacists, pharmacist interns, and pharmacy techs to vaccinate patients three years and above for COVID or flu until Dec. 31, 2024.

- **Post PHE policy:** Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, pharmacies must comply with existing Texas State Board of Pharmacy (TSBP) regulations. Texas Administration Code (TAC) Section 295.15 allows pharmacists to administer immunizations or vaccinations to a patient under 14 years only upon a referral from a physician who has an established physician-patient relationship with each patient. However, a pharmacist may administer an influenza vaccination to a patient over seven years of age without an established physician-patient relationship.

Questions?

Please contact UnitedHealthcare Customer Service at 888-887-9003, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. CT, Monday–Friday.