



NOTICE to PROVIDERS – March 25, 2010

For providers serving all UCare members in Northwestern Minnesota re: Federal Emergency Declarations

SITUATION

On March 14, 2010, President Barack Obama issued an Emergency Declaration for 18 counties and the Spirit Lake Sioux Reservation in North Dakota ([view map](#)) due to flooding conditions. This status renders these areas eligible for public assistance funds. The Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)) oversees these declarations.

Six of these declared North Dakota counties – Cass, Grand Forks, Pembina, Richland, Traill, and Walsh – share a border with seven Minnesota counties in which members of UCare's *UCare for Seniors* Medicare Advantage plan, Special Needs Plans, and Medical Assistance (Medicaid) programs live. These members may be patients of providers or care systems located in North Dakota.

ACTION

To minimize any disruptions in care for these members and in response to the FEMA declaration for North Dakota, **UCare has temporarily waived prior authorization, pre-notification, and out-of-network requirements for all UCare members served by providers and care systems in the affected emergency area.**

This temporary action applies only to covered medical items/services of members of any [UCare plan](#).

This temporary change is in effect for UCare members whose care systems reside in **North Dakota's** counties of Cass, Grand Forks, Pembina, Richland, Traill, and Walsh ([view map](#)).

This action follows the invocation by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of her waiver authority for North Dakota under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act. Section 1135 allows for the waiver or modification of certain Medicare and Medicaid requirements to ensure that sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of individuals of members in the declared areas.

The waiving of prior authorizations, pre-notifications, and out-of-network requirements remains in effect until 30 days have passed since the emergency declaration, or until the emergency declaration is either withdrawn or extended by government officials.

DETAILS

ACCESS

All UCare members whose providers or care systems are located in the declared emergency area and/or affected by the emergency may go to a provider outside of their network without obtaining authorization from UCare while this Emergency Declaration is in place.

In addition, any cost-sharing for out-of-network or out-of-area access will be reduced to the in-network rate for beneficiaries affected by this disaster.

PROVIDER CODING

Providers seeing UCare members in out-of-network locations must bill using Medicare Fee-For-Service codes of "DR" and "CR."

*** The DR Condition Code:**

- The DR condition code is used for institutional billing only.
- Use of the DR condition code is required when a service is affected by an emergency or disaster and Medicare payment for such service is conditioned on the presence of a "formal waiver."
- Use of the DR condition code also may be required when either the contractor or CMS determine that such use is needed to efficiently and effectively process claims or to otherwise administer the Medicare fee-for-service program.
- The DR condition code is used at the claim level when all of the services/items billed on the claim are related to the emergency/disaster.

*** The CR Modifier:**

- The CR modifier is used for Part B items and services only but may be used in either institutional or non-institutional billing.
- Use of the CR modifier is required when an item or service is impacted by an emergency or disaster and Medicare payment for such item or service is conditioned on the presence of a "formal waiver."
- Use of the CR modifier also may be required when either the contractor or CMS determine that such use is needed to efficiently and effectively process claims or to otherwise administer the Medicare fee-for-service program.

* Additional details are available in the Medicare Claims Processing Manual ([view manual](#)), also found at www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/downloads/clm104c38.pdf.

EXPIRATION

These emergency declarations are set to expire Saturday, March 27, 2010, unless otherwise withdrawn or extended by authorized government officials.

Please direct any questions to UCare's **Provider Assistance Center: 612-676-3300 or 1-888-531-1493 (toll free), Monday- Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST.**

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