

# Physicians Health Plan COVID-19 Response

MAHP Legislative Orientation  
January 4, 2021

PATIENT  
CAREGIVER  
VISION  
MISSION  
VALUES  
PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE  
THE SPARROW WAY



## Principles Guiding Health Plan Response

- » **Flexibility:** Knowledge that the pandemic would progress in unpredictable manner; demand to stay up with best evidence and respond rapidly
- » **Collaboration:** Imperative to include needs of our provider network, members, employer groups to be effective in our responses
- » **Responsible Employer:** Imperative to be equally mindful of the health, safety, and welfare of our caregivers; need to be a part of the community solution in containing spread of the virus
- » **Stewardship:** Unrelenting need to meet the demands of government and the market as stewards of health care resources, despite / in heightened response to the pandemic

## PHP COVID-19: Internal Response

- » **Operations:** Moved 95% of Caregivers to remote work within four days of the March 14, 2020 State of Emergency EO
- » **Incident Team:** Daily huddle to address COVID concerns, and rapidly respond. Includes Medical (UM/CM/DM/Pharmacy), Compliance, Network, Operations, Finance, Sales, Communications and Exec Team, has evolved to weekly huddle
- » **Linked to Health System Sponsor Incident Command:** Director of MRM/Department Manager/CMO included in IC Operations discussions
- » **Moving Forward:** “PHP Forward” work group addressed safe and appropriate return to on-site work in accordance with Federal, State, Local mandates/requirements



## PHP COVID-19: Patient, Group Facing Responses

- » **Lowering Cost-Share Barriers:** Remove member costs for telehealth, testing and treatment (FDA approved, physician-ordered/supervised)
  - » Includes testing
  - » Vaccine covered with no patient cost
  - » Premium grace periods, rebates
- » **Expanding Telehealth:** coverage for e visits / virtual visits, including robust provider communications and assistance, including behavioral health
  - » Extended through 6/1/21
- » **Streamline Pharmacy Access:** Suspended refill “lockout” requirements, enhanced home-delivery options, extended specialty drug authorizations -
  - » Extended through 6/1/21
- » **Communications:** Regular communications to Network, Members, and Employers to promote appropriate access, awareness of available coverage, and strategies for safety.

## PHP COVID-19: Provider Facing Response

- » **Streamline Access:** Ease or remove prior authorization and referral requirements for inpatient cases and transfers, specialty consultations, allowances for social distancing (mainly MA).
  - » Extended through 6/1/21
  - » During fall surge, have again waived in-network facility transfer prior authorizations to ease bed shortage
- » **Telehealth Parity:** reimbursement for e visits / virtual visits at parity with in-person E&M codes – through 6/1/21
- » **Accelerated Incentive Payout:** Recognizing cash flow crisis particularly in primary care, paid out 2019, and 2020 incentives in this calendar year; made adjustments to metrics to avoid penalty due to member access issues.\*