

Washington state extends emergency order on telehealth to October 14

Washington's Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler has extended his emergency order again, directing all state-regulated health insurers to make additional coverage changes to aid consumers during the coronavirus pandemic. His order is in effect until October 14 and requires health insurers to:

- Continue coverage for providing telehealth via methods including telephone and video chat tools such as Facetime, Facebook Messenger video chat, Google Hangout video, Skype and Go-to-Meeting.
- Cover all medically necessary diagnostic testing for flu and certain other viral respiratory illnesses billed during a provider visit for COVID-19 with no copay, coinsurance or deductible.
- Treat drive-up testing sites for COVID-19 as provider visit with no copay, coinsurance or deductible.

To help free up hospital beds, Kreidler is directing health insurers to waive or expedite prior authorization requirements for home health care or long-term care facility services to speed up discharging patients who are ready to leave.

"This continues to be a critical time for all Washingtonians and we need to provide safe and flexible access to care," Kreidler said. "During this unprecedented time, people should not have to worry about their insurance coverage."

SOURCE: <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/news>