



Physicians Caring for Texans

December 14, 2020

TO: Jeffrey Ottmers, MD, Senior Medical Director, Aetna  
Leslie Weisberg, MD, Market Chief Medical Officer, Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Donnie Hromadka, Regional Vice President, Humana  
Mark Netoski, MD, Medical Director, Cigna  
Jason Cadenas, MD, Medical Director, UnitedHealthcare

CC: Jamie Dudensing, CEO, Texas Association of Health Plans

FROM: Diana L. Fite, MD, President, Texas Medical Association

SUBJECT: Extension of Annual Patient Deductible Renewals

On behalf of the Texas Medical Association (TMA) and our more than 53,000 physician and medical student members, I urge each of your respective health plans, as well as any health plans you administer, to strongly consider extending 2020 annual patient deductible renewals that would occur at the first of the year, where legally permissible and not disadvantageous to the beneficiary.

Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, patients and physicians have postponed elective procedures. Physician practices continue to strive to meet their patient's needs despite challenges in scheduling procedures due to the recent surge in COVID-19 cases.

Extending the timeframe in which patients can satisfy their deductible will help mitigate the anticipated surge in COVID-19 related hospitalizations by allowing patients to delay elective or non-urgent procedures.

With COVID-19 related cases surpassing 1 million in Texas and 10 million in the U.S., the postponement or cancellation of elective and non-urgent procedures has put a strain on physicians trying to keep their practice doors open to their patients. Extending the timeframe for patients to meet their 2020 deductible would encourage them to get the care they need. Furthermore, physicians will be able to safely meet the surgical and other health care needs of patients while also complying with any potential new COVID-19 restrictions relating to performance of elective procedures within hospitals or other facilities.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Robert Bennett, TMA vice president of medical economics, at [Robert.Bennett@texmed.org](mailto:Robert.Bennett@texmed.org). We appreciate your prompt response.