



update

Fast facts about administrative changes, policies, procedures or other relevant news

Special update on H1N1 influenza preparedness

BlueLink TPA is committed to the health and wellness of our members, clients and the communities in which we live.

Business continuity plans are in place

We are closely monitoring the H1N1 novel influenza virus (swine flu) situation. BlueLink TPA has implemented business continuity plans to ensure uninterrupted day-to-day claims processing, service and the technical infrastructure to support the continuing administration of providing health care coverage for our members. These plans also include making access to any necessary health care easy and expeditious. We hope the following information is helpful for you and your employees.

Status of H1N1 in Minnesota

To date, there has been one confirmed case of H1N1 in Minnesota. State health officials continue to monitor the situation very closely and have increased their disease surveillance efforts. At the time of this announcement, there are 141 nationally reported cases with one reported death. (These numbers will change as the outbreak progresses.)

Where to go for information and updates

We encourage you to review information from the Minnesota Department of Health (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/h1n1/index.html>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu). These reliable resources provide accurate updates and contain useful, common-sense tips on what people can do to prevent exposure, illness and spread of this strain of influenza.

Workplace planning

You may be preparing or deploying your own business continuity plans. BlueLink TPA is following the business preparedness recommendations made by federal and state agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services. They have developed guidelines, including checklists, to assist businesses, industries, and other employers in planning for a pandemic outbreak. We encourage you to visit www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/index.html.

You and your employees can also visit bluelinktpamn.com for updates and information on the H1N1 virus, and how BlueLink TPA is responding.

How to protect your employee community

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by infected people. There are several simple yet effective ways to protect yourself and prevent further transmission:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- If you do not have a tissue, sneeze into the inside of your bent elbow rather than your bare hands.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. It is recommended you wash for at least 15 seconds. (Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

If you or your employees do feel ill, the CDC recommends staying home from work and limiting contact with others.

Persons experiencing flu-like symptoms should call their health care provider for advice on next steps regarding assessment and treatment.

Tamiflu and Relenza available to BlueLink TPA members

As a temporary change in benefits, Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir) — the only drugs identified that address this flu strain — will be processed as formulary prescriptions for the duration of this current outbreak. *This change is applicable for groups that have prescription drug coverage with Prime Therapeutics.* * These drugs will remain covered until the outbreak has been contained or information from the CDC and Minnesota Department of Health indicate such practice is no longer necessary.

Therefore, if a physician prescribes either of these medications for your employees, they will be considered covered prescription drugs.

Groups who carve out their prescription drug coverage should consult their pharmacy benefit manager regarding any formulary changes.

We are in communication with our network of providers to let them know about this benefit change so that they are able to offer immediate and appropriate care.

If you have any questions about how your group may be affected, please contact your BlueLink TPA account manager.

If your employees have questions about coverage during this current health risk, encourage them to contact BlueLink TPA customer service by calling the phone number on the back of their member ID card.

Visit bluelinktpamn.com for additional information and updates as they become available.

*Prime Therapeutics is an independent company providing pharmacy benefit management services.

Please contact a member of your BlueLink TPA account team if you have questions about this update.