

**To:** All Providers of Children Services for Medicaid  
**From:** Cindy Ehlers, Executive Vice President  
**Date:** 3-22-2020  
**Subject:** EPSDT Service Guidance for Children Mental Health Services

---

The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit provides comprehensive and preventive health care services for children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid. EPSDT is key to ensuring that children and adolescents receive appropriate preventive, dental, mental health, and developmental, and specialty services.

Trillium is working with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) on service specific guidance in response to the COVID-19 virus. The North Carolina Division of Health Benefits (DHB) coordinated with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and requested waivers that support flexibility in service delivery that both protects the public while ensuring our most vulnerable citizens are able to continue receive support for their Behavioral I/DD needs.

This guidance is in place for the duration of the declared state of emergency or until further notice or amendment. Trillium may require at some future point replacement claims to add modifiers to service codes used for billing during this event. All service notes during this time must include the following statement: This service was delivered under EPSDT during the Covid-19 State of Emergency requiring social distancing.

Trillium Health Resources is implementing the following changes under EPSDT IMMEDIATELY for children under the age of 22 who have active authorizations or receive unmanaged visits:

- ▶ Trillium has approved all Outpatient services to be billed for services provided under the social distancing mandate via video or telephonic presence. The outpatient treatment provider MUST have contact with each child authorized or enrolled for outpatient treatment services. Trillium wants to honor social distancing requirements set forth by the State of NC and provide continuity of care for children. Therefore, we strongly recommend providers deliver this service through a telehealth platform up to the number of sessions needed or that are currently authorized for each child. We also continue to expect the outpatient treatment provider to be the first responder during any crisis for these children and to assist the child and family with strategies to avoid ED use during this time. Trillium expects providers who deliver this service under EPSDT to respond to any child that does end up in an ED with a rapid response within 24 hours to help the child and family get back home and out of that setting- including weekends. Providers of this service must also provide the family education about COVID-19 and the need for social distancing along with assisting the family to secure any needed resources to remain at home.

- ▶ Trillium has approved Day treatment to be billed for services provided under the social distancing mandate via video or telephonic presence. Each day Monday-Friday of each week the Day Treatment provider MUST have contact with each child authorized for Day Treatment services. Trillium wants to honor social distancing requirements set forth by the State of NC and provide continuity of care for children. Therefore, we strongly recommend providers deliver this service through a telehealth platform up to the number of hours that are currently authorized for each child but not less than 2 hours per day per child. These hours do not have to be consecutive nor delivered as a group. We also expect the day treatment provider to be the first responder during any crisis for these children and to assist the child and family with strategies to avoid ED use during this time. Trillium expects providers who deliver this service under EPSDT to respond to any child that does end up in an ED with a rapid response within 24 hours to help the child and family get back home and out of that setting including weekends. Providers of this service must also provide the family education about COVID-19 and the need for social distancing along with assisting the family to secure any needed resources to remain at home. This approval under EPSDT includes all levels of staff employed in the traditional day treatment setting.
- ▶ Trillium has approved Intensive In-Home to be billed for services provided under the social distancing mandate via video or telephonic presence. Each week Intensive In-Home provider MUST have contact with each child authorized for Intensive In-Home services. Trillium wants to honor social distancing requirements set forth by the State of NC and provide continuity of care for children. Therefore, we strongly recommend providers deliver this service through a telehealth platform up to the number of hours that are currently authorized for each child but not less than 2 hours per week per child. These hours do not have to be consecutive. We also continue to expect the Intensive In-Home provider to be the first responder during any crisis for these children and to assist the child and family with strategies to avoid ED use during this time. Trillium expects providers who deliver this service under EPSDT to respond to any child that does end up in an ED with a rapid response within 24 hours to help the child and family get back home and out of that setting including weekends. Providers of this service must also provide the family education about COVID-19 and the need for social distancing along with assisting the family to secure any needed resources to remain at home. This approval under EPSDT includes all staff employed in the traditional Intensive In-Home team.
- ▶ Trillium has approved Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) to be billed for services provided under the social distancing mandate via video or telephonic presence. Each week MST provider MUST have contact with each child enrolled/authorized for MST. Trillium wants to honor social distancing requirements set forth by the State of NC and provide continuity of care for children. Therefore, we strongly recommend providers deliver this service through a telehealth platform up to the number of hours that are currently authorized for each child but not less than 2 hours per week per child. These hours do not have to be consecutive. We also expect the MST provider to be the first responder during any crisis for these children and to assist the child and family with strategies to avoid ED use during this time. Trillium expects providers who deliver this service under EPSDT to respond to any child that does end up in an ED with a rapid response within 24 hours to help the child and family get back home and out of that setting including weekends. Providers of this service must also provide the family education about COVID-19 and the need for social distancing along with assisting the family to secure any needed resources to remain at home
- ▶ Trillium has approved Research Based Behavioral Health Treatment (RBBHT) to be billed for services provided under the social distancing mandate either in the home of the member or via

video or telephonic presence. Each week RBBHT provider MUST have contact with each child enrolled/authorized for RBBHT. Trillium wants to honor social distancing requirements set forth by the State of NC and provide continuity of care for children. Therefore, we strongly recommend providers deliver this service through a telehealth platform up to the number of hours that are currently authorized for each child but not less than 2 hours per week per child. These hours do not have to be consecutive. We also expect the RBBHT provider to be the first responder during any crisis for these children and to assist the child and family with strategies to avoid ED use during this time. Trillium expects providers who deliver this service under EPSDT to respond to any child that does end up in an ED with a rapid response within 24 hours, to help the child and family get back home and out of that setting including weekends. Providers of this service must also provide the family education about COVID-19 and the need for social distancing along with assisting the family to secure any needed resources to remain at home. This approval under EPSDT includes all levels of staff employed as a provider for RBBHT.

- ▶ Trillium has approved Family Centered Treatment (FCT) to be billed for services provided under the social distancing mandate either in the home of the member or via video or telephonic presence. Each week FCT provider MUST have contact with each child enrolled/authorized for MST. Trillium wants to honor social distancing requirements set forth by the State of NC and provide continuity of care for children. Therefore, we strongly recommend providers deliver this service through a telehealth platform up to the number of hours that are currently authorized for each child but not less than 2 hours per week per child. These hours do not have to be consecutive. We also expect the FCT provider to be the first responder during any crisis for these children and to assist the child and family with strategies to avoid ED use during this time. Trillium expects providers who deliver this service under EPSDT to respond to any child that does end up in an ED with a rapid response within 24 hours to help the child and family get back home and out of that setting including weekends. Providers of this service must also provide the family education about COVID-19 and the need for social distancing along with assisting the family to secure any needed resources to remain at home. This approval under EPSDT includes all staff employed in the traditional FCT team.
- ▶ Trillium has approved Child First to be billed for services provided under the social distancing mandate either in the home of the member or via video or telephonic presence. Each week Child First provider MUST have contact with each child enrolled/authorized for Child First. Trillium wants to honor social distancing requirements set forth by the State of NC and provide continuity of care for children. Therefore, we strongly recommend providers deliver this service through a telehealth platform up to the number of hours that are currently authorized for each child but not less than 2 hours per week per child. These hours do not have to be consecutive. We also expect the Child First provider to be the first responder during any crisis for these children and to assist the child and family with strategies to avoid ED use during this time. Trillium expects providers who deliver this service under EPSDT to respond to any child that does end up in an ED with a rapid response within 24 hours to help the child and family get back home and out of that setting including weekends. Providers of this service must also provide the family education about COVID-19 and the need for social distancing along with assisting the family to secure any needed resources to remain at home. This approval under EPSDT includes all staff employed as part of Child First.

Please send any questions about this bulletin to Cindy Ehlers at [cindy.ehlers@trilliumnc.org](mailto:cindy.ehlers@trilliumnc.org)