



## PROVIDER ALERT

### Clarification on the Weekly Estimated Payments Process

February 19, 2020

#### Background

When Optum launched the Incedo Provider Portal (IPP) on January 1, 2020, their system was configured to process and adjudicate claims (pay or deny) for dates of service from December 30, 2019, forward. Technical issues during the first two weeks of January presented significant challenges for many providers, including submitting and processing claims for payment. Optum Maryland processed payments for the first two weeks of January, primarily for individual providers. In addition, the authorization process needed further configuration, and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) permitted a grace period to allow providers to render care while the IPP platform was updated.

#### Estimated Payment Purpose and Process

On January 23, MDH directed Optum Maryland to implement weekly estimated payments as a tool to reimburse providers for services rendered that cannot be consistently processed in the IPP platform. While technical issues in the portal are being corrected, MDH has developed a process using claims history and current billing to reimburse providers for services they are continuing to deliver. These estimated payments are comparable to the amount you would receive if services are being paid through the system.

MDH reviewed all providers' billing history in calendar year 2019 to calculate the average weekly compensated amount paid. This became the basis for the weekly estimated payments that began for most providers the week of January 28, 2020.

In order to reimburse providers back to January 1, MDH implemented the weekly estimated payments based on the schedule below. This schedule is reflective of what occurred for most providers; your payment schedule may vary.

Week of <sup>(1)</sup>	Payment Description
January 28 <sup>(2)</sup>	Weekly Estimated Payment PLUS first half of backlog <sup>(3)</sup>
February 4	Weekly Estimated Payment PLUS second half of backlog <sup>(3)</sup>
February 11	Weekly Est. Payment MINUS advance payments and paid claims made in January <sup>(4)</sup>

February 18	Weekly Est. Payment MINUS advance payments and paid claims made in January <sup>(4)</sup>
February 25- April 20	Weekly Estimated Payment

- (1) *The date reflects when Optum “runs” the weekly estimated payments through Payspan for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) transactions and with the processing company for paper checks.*
- (2) *Providers with less than \$2,000 weekly average were not included this week and began to receive their estimated weekly payment on February 4 or 11.*
- (3) *The backlog for each provider is equivalent to three-times their weekly estimated payment. The backlog amount assumed that providers received no payments for the first three weeks in January preceding the start of the estimated payment program.*
- (4) *Some providers received a partial payment or did not receive payments on February 4, 11 and 18 in order to adjust for payments they received in January before the start of the weekly estimated payment program. Partial payments are issued for payments they received in January before the start of the weekly estimated payment program. See below for more information.*

### **Stabilizing Weekly Estimated Payments**

MDH’s approach to estimated weekly payments was intended to deliver a larger initial payment that included a backlog amount to all providers (see note 3 above). MDH expected that some “overpayments” would occur and require adjustments for actual payments made before January 28. Some providers were “overpaid” because the weekly estimated payments they received on January 28 and/or February 4, when combined with any payment they received before January 28, exceeded their estimated total for the entire month (equivalent to five weekly estimated payments for each of the five weeks in January).

MDH and Optum Maryland recognize that some providers may be billing at levels different than the amount of their weekly estimated payment due to an increase or decrease in their census or services offered. MDH and Optum Maryland have established the following process to evaluate requests for a change in the estimated payment amount:

1. Provider determines that payment is too low/high.
2. Contact [maryland.provpymt@optum.com](mailto:maryland.provpymt@optum.com) with the following information to request an increase:
  - Tax ID
  - Medicaid ID
  - NPI Number
  - Daily census of patients
  - Estimated units per procedure codes
  - Billed amount
  - Requested Amount

**Do not include PHI (Protected Health Information)**
3. If requesting a decrease, simply indicate the requested lower amount.
4. Optum will analyze the supporting information to evaluate the increase request and notify the provider of the new amount.
5. If the provider disagrees with the adjusted amount, Optum will confer with MDH to determine if a further increase is warranted.

6. The new weekly estimated payment will go into effect with the next scheduled payment.

If you're a new provider without a billing history for 2019, please see the [Weekly Estimated Payment FAQ](#) to view the process on requesting a weekly estimated payment.

### **Concluding the Estimated Weekly Payment Program**

MDH and Optum Maryland anticipate that weekly estimated payments will continue through April 20, 2020, while Optum Maryland works to address the technical and process issues in the IPP platform. Once MDH determines the system is fully operational and stable, all services will be properly adjudicated in the IPP platform and providers will be paid for the appropriate approved services.

A thorough reconciliation process will begin once the system is fully stable and payments are processing as expected. Providers must continue to submit claims into the IPP platform during the weekly estimated payment program period. Those claims are currently being processed in the system, but not released for payment while Optum Maryland is addressing the issues with denials and authorizations. Providers continuing to submit claims along with the ongoing claims processing in the system will decrease the volume of services requiring reconciliation. More information on the reconciliation process will be conveyed in a provider alert and information will be posted on [maryland.optum.com](http://maryland.optum.com) in the next two to three weeks.

### **Additional Important Information**

Throughout the weekly estimated payment program period, providers must continue to:

1. Register in the IPP platform.
2. Continue to work through the authorization process.
3. Continue to submit claims.
4. Report all issues with the system to Optum as these situations will all be used for final testing before the system resumes processing and paying claims systematically as expected.
5. Providers to register for EFT through Optum Maryland's payment vendor, Payspan.

Medicaid reimburses up to the maximum of its allowable amount. If the provider bills less than the maximum allowable amount, then Medicaid will reimburse the provider the amount billed.

Please view the [Weekly Estimated Payment FAQ](#) for more information.

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### **The Best Way to Contact Us:**

Our call center is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. and can be reached at 1-800-888-1965. The clinical night staff will be available after office hours and holidays for crisis and emergency services.

You may also email us at [maryland.provpymt@optum.com](mailto:maryland.provpymt@optum.com).

If you're unable to click the links in this email, please click the text above, "View this message in a browser."

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