

MHIL Provider Memo

Molina Healthcare of Illinois, Inc. | September 24, 2025

Policy Regarding Respiratory Viral Panels, Medicaid

Molina Healthcare of Illinois (Molina) always strives to achieve the best patient outcomes at the most appropriate level of care, including diagnostic tests. Beginning December 1, 2025, claims for respiratory viral panels screening for six or more pathogens will **not** be accepted in the outpatient or urgent care setting. Providers can continue to submit claims for respiratory viral panels screening for five or fewer pathogens in the outpatient or urgent care setting.

Molina will continue to accept claims for all respiratory viral panels screening six or more pathogens for inpatient, ER, and observation testing based on place of service (POS) 21 or 23, assuming care in those settings is medically necessary.

Clinical reasoning

Effective antiviral treatments are only available for a few respiratory viruses (i.e., influenza, respiratory syncytial virus). The role of large panels that include six or more pathogen targets is ambiguous in average-risk patients in the outpatient setting, especially when the treatment is generally supportive.

Multiplex RT-PCR tests may be used in hospitalized immunocompromised patients or hospitalized patients who are not immunocompromised only if they will potentially change the management and treatment of the patient (i.e., increasing antibiotic stewardship by decreasing unnecessary antibiotic use, reducing additional testing, etc.)¹

Finally, large panels include uncommon pathogens that have low prevalence in the non-hospitalized population and, when identified, do not change the management and treatment.

Conclusion

Viral infections occur frequently in children and adults and are a common reason for seeking medical care in the outpatient setting. A viral illness is diagnosed clinically and usually does not require confirmatory testing.

Broad respiratory pathogen panels have not been shown to affect patient management outside of the hospital setting. In the outpatient or urgent care setting, providers are encouraged to use tests that provide immediate diagnosis and can potentially expedite management decisions.

Providers should reserve the use of respiratory viral panel screening for six or more pathogens for the **inpatient**, **ER**, and **observation** setting when indicated.

Questions?

We're here to help! Contact your dedicated provider relations manager or email the Provider Relations team at MHILProviderNetworkManagement@MolinaHealthcare.com. To help identify your dedicated provider relations manager, visit [Molina's Service Area page](#).

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References

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