COVID-19 PAYER SURVEY

December 2020 COVID-19 Payer Survey
Key Findings

April 2021
Multipayer Primary Care Network
Survey purpose
Understand payer policies and strategies that influence primary care practices during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Determine how payers strengthen and sustain primary care given the challenges of COVID-19
- Disseminate insights to inform current and future efforts

Follow up on Milbank’s early 2020 Payer COVID-19 survey targeting payers participating in Comprehensive Primary Care Plus (CPC+), completed by 43 payers

Survey administration and analysis
Distributed by Milbank to its Multipayer Primary Care Network, which features payers across varying geographies, profit statuses, and lines of business.

Responses aggregated by Milbank and analyzed by Mathematica
- Collected 37 responses through SurveyMonkey and email in December 2020 and January 2021
- Descriptive analyses of structured responses using SAS
- Manual content analysis of open-ended responses
Key Findings

Most payers reimburse primary care providers on par with in-person visits for telehealth services.
- Visit length is the most common driver of payment amount
- Payers encourage use of telehealth through member engagement, updates to attribution approaches, and adjustments in quality measurement methodologies
- Telehealth policies and supports often vary across lines of business, and their permanency is unclear

Most payers are also offering primary care practices:
- Advanced or accelerated payments
- Increased opportunity to participate in alternative payment models
- Modifications to quality reporting requirements
- Other supports, such as reduced administrative or documentation requirements

Nearly two-thirds of payers encountered COVID-19 response difficulties related to:
- Securing required time and resources
- Ever-changing environments, including regulatory landscape
- Need to respond to changes quickly
- Financial and other long-term impacts

Payers’ ability to support primary care practices during the COVID-19 pandemic was influenced by:
- External factors (actions by regulators)
- Internal factors (organizational characteristics, leadership, and investments)

There are signs payers protected the providers and practices from further financial losses and expanded the use of telehealth.

The complete survey analysis can be found at www.milbank.org
Payers cover many telehealth services, especially HIPAA-compliant video and audio or telephone.

More not-for-profit payers than for-profit payers prepay primary care practices for quality-based incentives.

Most payers use multiple mechanisms to support the use of telehealth.

Advanced and accelerated payments and quality reporting modifications are likely temporary.