



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2020

Media contact:

Toni Woods, Sr. Media Relations Manager

904-905-3158 – o

904-891-3304 – c

[Toni.Woods@FloridaBlue.com](mailto:Toni.Woods@FloridaBlue.com)

## **Florida Blue increases virtual health access as latest response to COVID-19**

*Free-to-Member virtual doctor visits for seniors and others through Teladoc; providing virtual care now an option for insurer's network of doctors*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Florida Blue, the state's leading health insurer, announced today that it is adding a free-to-member virtual care partner, Teladoc, for seniors and others on its Medicare Advantage plans, and waiving the virtual care copay for many commercial and Affordable Care Act members to encourage use of Teladoc if it is offered as part of their plan.

Additionally, during this crisis, Florida Blue's network of primary care doctors and specialists will be able to treat patients virtually at their normal office visit rates. These are the latest steps from Florida's largest health insurance company to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus by providing members with a safe and convenient way to seek medical help for conditions other than COVID-19.

With virtual care, patients can protect their health and avoid a crowded doctor's office for non-emergency illnesses from anywhere. If needed, virtual care doctors can make referrals and prescribe most medications.

"Florida Blue's mission is to serve our members by caring for and protecting individuals, communities and the safety of our health care system," said Pat Geraghty, president and CEO of Florida Blue. "Virtual care can slow the spread of COVID-19 by keeping people out of provider waiting rooms, which is particularly important for seniors who are most at risk. Patients can speak to a doctor from the comfort of their home, making it not only more convenient, but also a safer way to seek medical help during this public health crisis."

Teladoc virtual care can be easily accessed by members through the Florida Blue website, [www.FloridaBlue.com](http://www.FloridaBlue.com), and through the Florida Blue app. Additionally, the Teladoc app can be downloaded or members can call Teladoc directly at 800-835-2362. Teladoc offers care in both English and Spanish.

Increasing access to virtual care is the latest in Florida Blue's industry-leading efforts to support Floridians and combat the spread of coronavirus during this unprecedented public health challenge. In the past two



weeks, the company announced several [efforts to minimize barriers to testing and treatment](#) of the COVID-19, and provided a [free emotional support helpline for all Floridians](#). Florida Blue also is partnering with leaders in Washington, D.C., Tallahassee, across the industry and in communities throughout Florida to spearhead efforts to respond to the virus and its impact.

The company will cover medical testing for COVID-19 at no out-of-pocket cost for its commercial insurance plan members, including Affordable Care Act (ACA)/Individual and Medicare Advantage health care plans. Florida Blue also waived prior authorization for diagnostic tests and covered services that are medically necessary and consistent with CDC guidelines for the treatment of infected members.

Florida Blue increased access to necessary medications by waiving early medication refill limits on 30-day prescription medications. In the event of drug shortages, alternative medications will be added to the formulary until the shortage is resolved.

At no charge, Florida Blue also has partnered with New Directions Behavioral Health to offer a bilingual helpline to assist all Floridians with the stress they may feel during the COVID-19 health crisis. The toll-free helpline connects individuals with specially trained behavioral health counselors who can assist anyone experiencing feelings of stress, anxiety, trauma and grief due to the health crisis. Any Floridian, whether or not they have Florida Blue insurance, can call the 24-hour helpline at 833-848-1762. Florida Blue members with questions about the novel coronavirus, who have symptoms or need help finding a doctor to do a COVID-19 test, or any other concern, should call the number on the back of their member ID card, 800-926-6565.

Additionally, Sanitas Medical Centers, which exclusively serves thousands of Florida Blue members at locations across Florida, continues to offer free bilingual virtual care to its current patients via its mySanitas Chat [website](#), and the Sanitas mobile app.

### **About Florida Blue**

[Florida Blue](#), Florida's Blue Cross and Blue Shield company, has been providing health insurance to residents of Florida for 75 years. Driven by its mission of helping people and communities achieve better health, the company serves more than 5 million health care members across the state. In total, Florida Blue and its affiliated companies serve 27 million people in 35 states. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., it is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

###