

## Gaudino, Patricia

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**From:** Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts <email@contact.emailbcbsma.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023 2:04 PM  
**To:** Gaudino, Patricia  
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JUNE 2023

## MENTAL HEALTH BRIEF

News For You



Our *Mental Health Brief* helps you stay up-to-date on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts news that affects your practice.



### Tell us what you think!

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions in this brief survey.

[Take our survey](#)

Your answers will help us to improve our communications to you.

### New provider partnerships expand mental health care options

We're expanding our mental health care network to help members find high-quality, affordable care that's right for them and their families. As described in our [press release](#), we've formed and expanded new partnerships with the following providers.

#### Primary mental health groups

- [Alma](#), a national primary mental health provider focused on telehealth, in-person therapy, and medication management, will be available to Blue Cross members nationwide this summer. Alma's network is made up of more than 13,000 mental health clinicians, with many identifying as Black, Hispanic/LatinX, Asian, and/or LGBTQIA+, enabling culturally competent care to diverse populations.
- [Headway](#), which currently participates in Blue Cross' network as one of its primary mental health provider



partners, will now be available to out-of-state members for virtual services this summer.

*"We know how difficult it can be to find the right type of care for a variety of mental health challenges. We're here to support our members and guide them to the care and resources that they need regardless of where they are at in their mental health journey."*

- Dr. Greg Harris, senior medical director for mental health

### Sub-specialty providers

We're also adding two specialty mental health provider organizations that offer care for specific conditions and populations:

- [Cortica](#) offers whole-child, value-based care for autistic and other neurodivergent children and their families. Services include medical care, ABA therapy, counseling, and developmental therapies such as speech, physical, and occupational therapy.
- [Eleanor Health](#) helps treat substance use disorders and other mental health conditions with personalized care plans for each patient.

See our [complete list](#) of primary and specialty mental health groups that offer therapy and medication management to our members.

### We're encouraging members with major depression to follow your plan of care

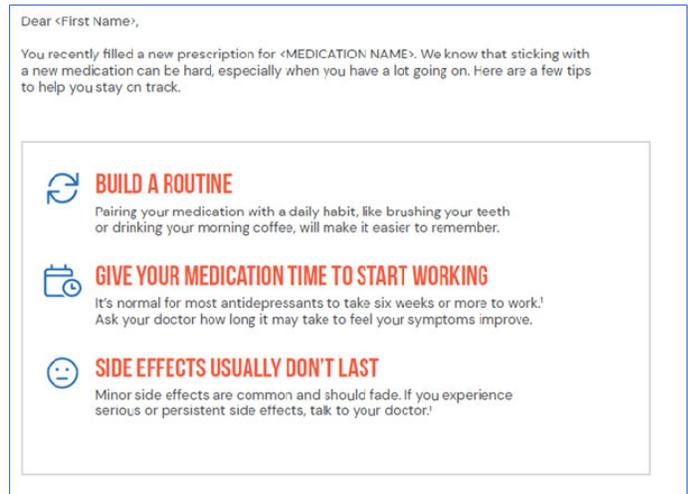
As clinicians, you know that there are many reasons that patients diagnosed with major depression may not continue on the treatment you prescribe. Whether it's due to experiencing side effects, believing that the medication isn't working, or starting to feel better, patients often don't realize how important it is to take the medication for a sustained period of time to prevent relapse.

Racial disparities can also impact members accessing care and their ability to adhere to the medication you prescribe. Social stigma, distrust in the health care system, and lack of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color mental health provider availability all play a part, according to [a recent Blue Cross Blue Shield Association survey studying racial disparities in mental health care](#).

To address some of these challenges, we've updated letters (shown above) that we send to members diagnosed with major depression to provide encouraging, success-oriented messages about the importance of sticking with their medication. We're sending English and Spanish versions to all members newly prescribed an antidepressant.

### What you can do

- Seek to understand your patient's attitudes and cultural beliefs related to mental health care.
- Help your patient have realistic expectations about side effects, duration of treatment, and the importance of long-term use of antidepressants.
- Suggest culturally appropriate interventions – such as population-specific mental health hotlines or support groups.



- Advocate for appropriate resources in your organization – such as translation services, interpreters, and hiring of diverse clinicians and support staff – so that patients can access care from providers who represent their community.



### Quantity limits increased on generics of Adderall XR, Concerta

We [recently increased](#) the quantity limit for certain generic controlled substance medications given the recent supply shortages, and to help reduce prescribers' administrative burden.

The change took effect April 12, 2023 and we plan to maintain the new limit even after the manufacturers' shortages are addressed. This applies to commercial members with health plans that include prescription coverage and who use our [Blue Cross formulary](#). As you know, because these are controlled substances, a new prescription is required with each refill whether you are adjusting the quantity or not.

### Authorization Manager tips

As of June 1, 2023, all Blue Cross providers are required to submit initial authorization requests and inquiries electronically through [Authorization Manager](#) rather than by phone or fax for our commercial (HMO, PPO) and Federal Employee Program (FEP) members. Authorization Manager is the most efficient method to submit requests, and it's available 24/7 at no additional cost via single sign-on through Provider Central! Read our May 1 [news article](#) for tips specifically for mental health providers on how to use Authorization Manager.



See the latest mental health news in [Coverage](#), a Blue Cross news service



#### Need Provider Central help?

Email us: [providercentral@bcbsma.com](mailto:providercentral@bcbsma.com)

Call us: 1-800-771-4097, Option 2  
Available Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

#### Email changes?

To update your email address or user profile, [log in](#) and click My Profile on the upper right-hand side of the home page.

Have your billing agency (if you use one) register for Provider Central to work on your behalf. [Learn how.](#)

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