

MENTAL HEALTH BRIEF

News For You



It's Mental Health Awareness Month!

Thank you for the care you provide to our members

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

New partnerships expand options for mental health care

Given the unprecedented demand for mental health services, Blue Cross is reshaping and expanding our mental health network to promote access. As described in our recent [press release](#), we have formed new provider partnerships with several specialty and primary mental health providers to improve access to care. We will also soon add specialty provider groups focused on severe eating disorders and LGBTQ and racial inequity issues.

"We're taking action to support our members at a time when the need for mental health services has never been greater," said Andrew Dreyfus, Blue Cross' president and CEO.



[Research by our Foundation](#) shows that many people who need mental health care struggle to find it, so we're working hard to expand our network and help members find affordable, convenient care when they need it.

Navigation and collaboration are key

As we transition away from the COVID state of emergency, we're experimenting with new approaches to:

- help our members navigate the system to find the appropriate mental health care
- reduce providers' administrative burden
- collaborate with providers on treatment options to reduce gaps in care for our members

We'll keep you up-to-date on new initiatives as we announce them.

Sign up for the May 26 ConnectCenter training

We've created a training opportunity specifically to help mental health providers make the switch to ConnectCenter. The session will be held on Thursday, **May 26** from 10:30 a.m. - Noon. [Click here](#) to register today! Providers who currently use Online Services to submit 1500 claims using Direct Data Entry will need to begin using ConnectCenter by **July 22**. See our [news article](#) for more details.



Linking back to mental health

Back pain is one of the top reasons patients seek medical care. It's no surprise that it can have a negative impact on overall quality of life. In addition to preventive care and alternative treatments, it's important to consider the mental health implications. As you know, chronic pain can often result in depression and insomnia among patients, which can amplify and prolong their pain. If your patient is dealing with a painful condition, ask if it has affected their mood. From there, you'll be able to discuss the mental health comorbidities of chronic pain, identify stress triggers, and empathize with their concerns. For more insight on treating patients with back pain and mental health concerns, read our Provider Central article [here](#). You can also share this helpful [fact sheet](#) with your patients.

Follow-up after ED visits for alcohol or drug use leads to better outcomes

Research suggests that follow-up care with patients just discharged from the emergency department (ED) for the treatment of alcohol or drug use is linked to fewer repeat visits, avoidable readmissions, and better compliance with follow-up instructions. NCQA's [Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse or Dependence HEDIS® measure](#) recommends follow-up for patients hospitalized with a principal diagnosis of substance use disorder and overdose within seven days of the ED discharge.

Here's how you can help

To help increase compliance with outpatient follow-up care, you can:

- Educate patients and families about the importance of a follow-up appointment within seven days of an inpatient behavioral health hospitalization or an emergency room visit related to behavioral health.
- Schedule a telehealth appointment as part of the discharge plan so they have one planned as follow-up. To read our **Telehealth – Mental Health payment policy**, log on to bluecrossma.com/provider, and go to **Office Resources > Policies & Guidelines > Payment Policies**.

New ABA medical policy replaces InterQual criteria

On March 1, 2022, we replaced InterQual® criteria for applied behavior analysis with a new simplified Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Medical Policy 091. Prior authorization is still required for patients with commercial (HMO, PPO, Indemnity) and Federal Employee Program health plans. There are no changes to the way you request prior authorization. For details on how to request authorization for ABA services, refer to our [news article](#).

Have you reviewed your directory information lately?

When looking for care, patients rely on our online directory, Find a Doctor & Estimate Costs, for accurate information about you and your practice. This is also a contractual requirement for all providers in our network. If you haven't reviewed your information lately, please take the time to review it now by signing in at proview.caqh.org.

Coverage

Latest news in Coverage,
a Blue Cross news service

- [When the heroes need help: New support for mental health care amid pandemic strains](#)
- [The power of antidepressants and therapy](#)
- [A new in-home approach to substance use treatment](#)
- [Seeking new ways to meet kids' mental health needs](#)



**COVID-19
INFORMATION**



**OPIOID RESOURCE
CENTER**



**PRIOR AUTHORIZATION
GUIDELINES**



**TREATMENT
RESOURCES**

Need Provider Central help?

Email us: 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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