

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 may interest you.

Is your patient taking medications? What you need to know for January

We'll have a new pharmacy benefit manager on January 1, 2023 for our commercial and Medicare Advantage members. This transition to CVS Caremark¹ will have little or no impact to our members and prescribers. We want to create a smooth transition, so we are ensuring that:

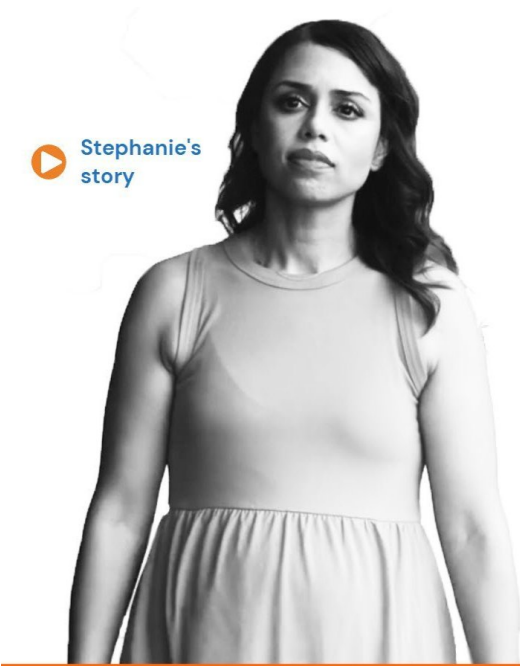
- Active **mail order prescriptions** transfer automatically.
- **Prior authorization approvals** transfer automatically.
- There will be **minimal changes to the network of pharmacies** members can use for retail prescriptions.
- The **specialty pharmacy network** stays the same.



You'll know the member has pharmacy coverage with Blue Cross by looking at their member ID card. Look for the Rx symbol on the bottom of their card.

Some employers choose to offer their employees separate prescription drug coverage. If that is the case, the member will have a separate prescription coverage ID card. If they do not have their pharmacy coverage with Blue Cross, we recommend that you ask them to show you that card. [Go to our pharmacy benefit manager page for information on what prescribers need to know.](#)

¹CaremarkPCS Health, LLC ("CVS Caremark") is an independent company that has been contracted to administer pharmacy benefits and provide certain pharmacy services for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. CVS Caremark is part of the CVS Health family of companies.



Stephanie's story

Member videos highlight mental health challenges

To help combat the stigma associated with mental health issues, Blue Cross members have shared their stories that highlight the challenges they've experienced with substance use, depression, and anxiety.

[Watch the videos](#) where the members discuss their challenges, how they addressed them, and how to [seek help](#).

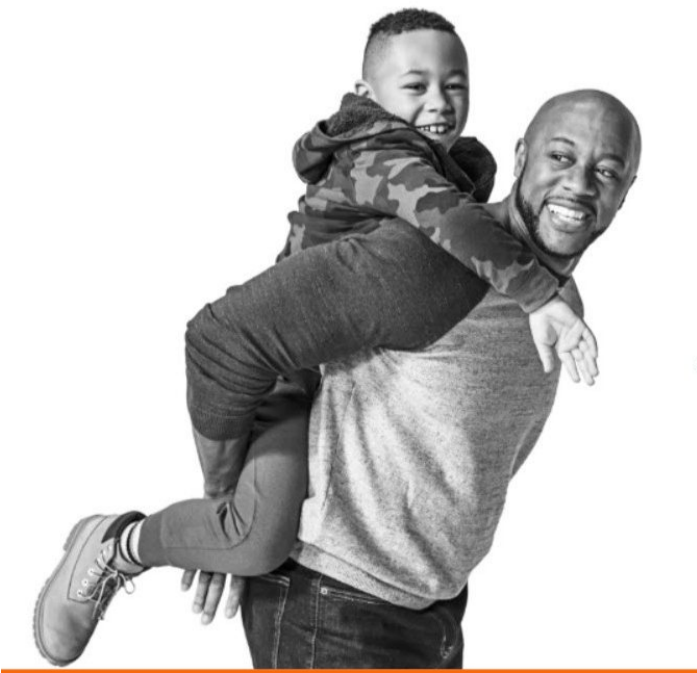
Disparities in antidepressant medication management

Recent [Blue Cross data shows](#) that Black and Hispanic members were approximately 15-20% less likely than White members to stay on their antidepressant for 3-6 months (when newly prescribed medication for depression). Stigma, lack of diversity among providers, and cultural understanding are common factors that can impact access to treatment.

How you can help

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing encourages providers and stakeholders to focus on cultural perceptions of mental health and culturally informed approaches to outreach and engagement. Recommendations include:

- Increasing use of telehealth services to improve access and address issues such as lack of transportation and lack of availability of providers.
- Recruiting and retaining diverse providers and support staff.
- Promoting cultural competency training to ensure staff have skills to work with diverse populations.



NCQA quality metrics look for adults who consistently fill their antidepressant medication for the first 3 and 6 months of treatment.

- Using family-centered treatment models.

MENTAL HEALTH

	Black	Hispanic	White
Antidepressant Medication Management – Acute Phase	56.40%*	56.50%*	74.30%
Antidepressant Medication Management – Continuation Phase	38.30%*	38.90%*	59.20%

*Indicates when the inequity between minoritized racial and ethnic group (Asian, Black, Hispanic) members and White members is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Provider partnerships expand mental health care access

In May, we [shared](#) that we formed new provider partnerships with several specialty and primary mental health providers to improve access to mental health care. We're continuing this effort by partnering with five additional mental health providers:

[And Still We Rise](#) is an organization that specializes in providing culturally affirming therapy to individuals in diverse communities, including women, BIPoC (Black, indigenous, and people of color), and LGBTQIA+ individuals. And Still We Rise providers are culturally diverse, bringing real-life experience to the practice, and aim to dismantle oppressive systems.

[Carbon Health](#) and [Firefly Health](#). In 2023*, many of our commercial members will have the option to receive virtual health care from one of these two national primary groups. They both work closely with mental health providers to give members a collaborative care experience. Eligible members can choose their designated virtual PCP through either Carbon Health or Firefly Health. Read more in our September [press release](#).

*To be effective January 1, 2023

[DynamyCare](#) is a digital therapeutic and coaching program that helps members overcome substance use disorders by rewarding recovery and wellness-based activities. Members are connected with a personal recovery coach who supports and guides them in achieving their goals. Specific plan-based fees for text-based coaching and both individual and family voice and video coaching are waived for Blue Cross members.

[Talkiatry](#) focuses on telehealth psychiatric therapy, in-person therapy, and medication management. The patient is first assessed by a psychiatrist who addresses their medication management and other needs. If the psychiatrist feels the patient would benefit from talk therapy, they will refer the patient to one of Talkiatry's therapists.



Setting your young adult patients on track to optimal health

Blue Cross data shows that young adult members, ages 18-25 who are on antipsychotics are less likely to get the necessary monitoring labs compared to both younger and older populations. During this potentially vulnerable time in their lives when they are striving to be independent, it's especially crucial to ensure important vitals, such as their A1c and LDL levels, are completed annually. These members may have previously had a parent or guardian coordinate their care and could use your help keeping their health on track. By partnering with their primary care team, you could fill potential gaps in the patient's care, including getting follow-up treatment when appropriate. Collaboration between you and the primary care team allows for a cohesive treatment plan to address mind and body. Our care management team also reaches out to members to promote the maintenance of their overall health. Care collaboration sets positive trends in motion today, for healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Payment updates

Interprofessional telephone/internet/electronic health record code update

To improve mental health access for our members, effective November 1, 2022, we consider the following codes reimbursable to mental health providers only: 99446-99449 and 99451-99452: interprofessional telephone/internet/electronic health record assessment and management services provided by a physician.

Read our [news article](#) for more information.

Reimbursement for crisis stabilization

We have also updated our reimbursement for crisis stabilization for commercial members effective November 1, 2022. The revised reimbursement and procedures support acute care hospitals while the member is awaiting expedited inpatient psychiatric admission or is stabilized for discharge. We will reimburse an additional per diem to acute care hospitals for crisis stabilization when the member's emergency department observation stay exceeds 48 hours and a mental health inpatient placement is medically necessary, but unavailable. Prior authorization and medical necessity reviews will not be required.

Please click here to start survey

Please take a few minutes to complete our annual Mental Health Survey

This survey will help us better understand barriers for members accessing treatment for mental health care and allow us to more accurately reflect your availability to see patients. This year's survey also focuses on your satisfaction with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts. Thank you in advance for taking this quick survey.

Coverage

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



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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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