



Behavioral Health Management recognizes the diverse and changing needs of organizations involved in Behavioral Health Medicine.

Welcome to the Behavioral Health Management Newsletter

In the quickly changing industry of managed care it is essential to remain one step in front of the competition. BHM will continue to strive to bring you the latest news and information from the forefront of managed care, along with helpful tips on topics that you can implement within your organization and detailed information on the latest developments within BHM.

Behavioral Economics suggest Pay for Prevention May Work

A simple but proven idea is at play among healthcare providers, insurers, and employers called "Pay for Prevention," which offers monetary incentives for healthy behavior choices made by an individual. According to the *New York Times*, "studies show that 50 percent to 70 percent of the nation's health care costs are preventable." These costs are associated with bad behavior choices (diet, lack of exercise, and smoking) which cause chronic health conditions that account for a large amount of healthcare spending. Chronic conditions which have been cited as being strongly correlated with health choices include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and cancer. Spurred by this information some employers like Safeway and GE are offering cash incentives for those who choose a healthier lifestyle. Additional incentives are offered by some insurers who offer lower premiums for healthy choices, and business based cash incentive plans that pay employees money for meeting fitness goals, or abstaining from smoking. Additional finding state that rewards for good behavior elicit more responses than punishments for bad behavior. According to Aaron Day, CEO of Tangerine Wellness, "the carrot definitely works better than the stick." Additionally Gary Charness, economist at the University of California states that "financial incentives can kick start healthy habits that can then become self sustaining." This is good news for us all.



Healthcare Providers, Insurers, and Employers explore "Pay for Prevention" strategies to increase health and lower costs

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Clarifying Medical Necessity Criteria

According to William Glazer “Medical Necessity like beauty, can often be a matter of taste or personal opinion and the idea of each his own does not work for medical necessity. The fact that a provider has prescribed recommended or approved medical care or a service does not in and of itself make such care or services medical necessary or a covered service.” But most important thing for providers to remember is that a comprehensive understanding of MNC is a key component in getting the care they seek for their patients authorized. MNC is ever evolving, and it is important for providers to stay up to date with the latest changes and revisions in criteria. The exact definition of Medical Necessity Criteria also can be ambiguous at times but most definitions incorporate principles of providing service which are “reasonable and necessary” or “appropriate” in light of clinical standards of practice. Medical Necessity Guidelines came about because allocating care which was once lenient has become stricter in the recent healthcare environment. There has been ethical concern that the managed care companies were increasing profit by enforcing greater practice efficiency and MNC can be viewed as a type of checks and balances system which ensures standard decision making guidelines which protect patient care and adhere to best practice guidelines. It also ensures that care is reasonable and adequate. “The ethical issue therefore is not whether making a profit is right or wrong, it is whether the decision making thresholds used in making medical necessity determinations are fair and consistently applied.” In this way MNC Criteria are the decided upon guidelines used by utilization management staff to make payment determinations, but are also a guide for providers and reviewers outlining the most appropriate care for a patient. Despite this it is important to remember that MNC are not intended to replace prudent clinical judgment, and they are neither exhaustive, nor will they cover all situations. Clinicians will need to continue to determine what is “beneficial” to the consumer’s health and what is “essential” and be able to make this distinction.



Keys to Understanding Possible Exceptions to MNC

- Exceptions to standard MNC should be reviewed by a physician or peer reviewer based on accepted standards of good medical practice, and all details of the case should be provided to assist in the decision making
- Exceptions may also be based on geographical variances in availability of treatment services. Cases for this can particularly be found in rural or medically underserved areas
- When a medically necessary service is not available the patient will be able to either obtain outside services, or treatment at a higher level of care based on determination of what is “essential” for the optimal care of the patient.

“MNC ARE SUBJECT TO DIFFERENT, YET EQUALLY DEFENSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS BY DIFFERENT CLINICIANS”

BHM Launches new Healthcare Insider Blog

CONTRIBUTED BY BOB LEVINE

Behavioral Health Management has launched a new blog, the Healthcare Insider. Visitors to the blog can now read the latest breaking health care news, and get real actionable advice from senior BHM consultants in real time. The blog which was launched in March will have numerous contributors from the BHM staff providing specific recommendations, essential tips, and useful advice on a number of wide ranging topics. "With all of the fast developing changes in healthcare we are really looking to expand the mediums available which we use to collaborate and discuss essential healthcare components, a blog is the perfect format for this as it encourages dialogue and provides information in real time." stated Mark Rosenberg, President and CEO of BHM. Visitors to the blog can get information on everything from latest business trends, to the essentials of financial analysis, and much more. "We really want to encourage open dialogue and discussion within the healthcare community" stated Danyell Jones, Director of Customer Relations at BHM "this blog will give our consultants the chance to share their expertise in a whole new interactive way, and we are excited about the collaborative and educational opportunities that the new blog will open up for both viewers, and members within the organization." Future plans include expert speakers, and essential links to everything healthcare from the latest news to the most noteworthy controversies. To visit the BHM Healthcare Insider Blog and become a member of this active community please visit:

<http://healthcareinsider.net/>



President of BHM to Deliver Much Anticipated Session on Schizophrenia

Mark Rosenberg, President and CEO of BHM will deliver a much anticipated educational session covering Schizophrenia at the upcoming NAMCP Spring Managed Care Forum. Schizophrenia is a chronic, severe, and disabling brain disorder that affects 1.1% of the US population age 18 and older in a given year. Treatments have varied in efficacy in the past, but Dr. Rosenberg's presentation entitled "Diagnosing Schizophrenia and Current Treatment Options" will take this disease head on revealing the latest developments in understanding causation, emerging treatment options and efficacy, as well as the importance of treatment adherence and how to improve the odds of adherence within the patient population. Those attending this educational conference will gain a general knowledge of Schizophrenia and be able to distinguish based on accurate diagnosis. They will gain an in depth knowledge of the Schizophrenia Guidelines from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, as well as gaining an understanding of the latest new behavioral and pharmacological treatments for Schizophrenia. A final emphasis will be on compliance and adherence to treatment within the patient population and will consist of actionable recommendations that providers can implement to improve the odds of successful treatment within their own patient populations.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SEMINARS PROVIDED BY BHM PLEASE EMAIL US AT: RESULTS@BHMP.COM

NAMCP Spring Managed Care Forum

Date: April 22nd and 23rd, 2010

Location: Orlando, FL at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort

Contact Information: <http://www.namcp.org>

Contact Number: 1-804-527-1905

Content:

Mental Health parity: preparing your organization for upcoming change

Schizophrenia: epidemiology, and tracking the current developments in care



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