

12/03/2021

Hello REDC Members,

Katrina and Allison look forward to seeing many of you next week in Henderson, NV for the all-member meeting! We will be providing members with a recap of the year and our strategies heading into 2022.

Telehealth

• Big Insurers Designing Telehealth First Plan Design

- United Healthcare, Centene, CVS-Aetna and Cigna have struck deals with health tech companies (i.e., Teledoc) to provide the infrastructure for expanded telehealth and other coverage contingencies.
 - Humana is the first insurer that launched a telehealth-first option before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Most companies declined to discuss payment parity in states that don't already require it.
 - Aetna voluntarily instituted a parity policy in every state before the pandemic, allowing its in-network providers to get paid the same for virtual and in-person visits.
- Behavioral health saw the biggest increase towards telehealth, which accounted for 38% of its visit in 2020, up from just 1% in 2019.
 - As much as 70% of these remote visits were reimbursed as "audio-only" visits.
 - Telehealth accounted for 8.3% of primary care visits in 2020 and 2.6% of specialty care visits.
- Disparities exist in telehealth use; however, all groups gained with telehealth visits comprising of:
 - 6.4% of Asian beneficiaries'
 - 6.2% of Hispanic beneficiaries'
 - 5.3% of white beneficiaries'
 - 4.7% of Black beneficiaries'
 - 5.6% of American Indian/Alaska Native beneficiaries'

• Lobbying Organizations Gear Up for 2022 Telehealth Fights

- Some 16 trade groups have announced the formation of a group dubbed Telehealth Access for America. The organizations ranging from the American Hospital Association to Teledoc Health say they want to protect telehealth.
 - Their [website](#) makes their aims clear: They're concerned about the expiration of the federal waivers expanding access to telehealth, which will expire at the end of the PHE unless Congress acts.

Parity

- **Oxford Health Insurance Inc. Sued**

- Earlier this week, the payor was sued in Manhattan federal court by two women who say the insurer violates federal employee benefits and mental health parity law by covering nutrition counseling services for patients with diabetes but not eating disorders.

- **Interim Final Rule Releases by Federal Government on Parity**

- The Employee Benefits and Services Administration (EBSA), along with HHS, Treasury and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released an interim final rule implementing section 204 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which passed in December of 2020.
- The section requires plans and issuers to submit to the Departments listed above certain information about prescription drug and health care spending.
- More information can be found [here](#).

COVID-19 Relief

- **Biden Administration Works to Require Coverage of At-Home COVID Tests**

- The Administration announced this week they would soon require private health insurers to cover the cost of at-home COVID-19 tests as part of an effort to tamp down infections during the winter months.
- The new policy means that more than 150 million American with private coverage will be able to get reimbursed for the rapid tests as long as they submit their expense for reimbursement.
 - The forthcoming change will not be retroactive.
 - It appears insurers will still not be required to cover costs tied to workplace screening programs.
 - The policy will also not apply to Americans with insurance through public health programs—Medicare, Medicaid or those without health insurance.

Treatment Center Site Visits

- The Center Road Solutions team will be reinstating eating disorder treatment center visits in 2022.
- As a REDC member benefit, this is a great way to engage your Congressional members and their staff and we prep each facility accordingly.
 - The visits have been on pause during the pandemic, but we look forward to engaging in this activity again with you in the new year.

NDAAs Status:

- The NDAA is currently stalled in the Senate amidst party amendment quarrels. Democratic leaders had hoped to pass the NDAA in the Senate this week, which will not be happening.

- Instead, Leader Hoyer announced today, the House will be voting next week on a version of the NDAA that is different from what they previously passed.
 - Over the past few months, House and Senate Armed Services staff have come together to pre-negotiate the package.
 - The House will be voting on that negotiated version next week and send it to the Senate so they can (hopefully) pass it too.
 - By doing this, Democratic leaders are hoping to expedite the process and get it to Biden's desk by end of year.
- The House having leadership over the NDAA bodes well for us, since both SERVE and the provider training amendments passed in the House version.
 - Still, we are in close communication with our leads in both House and Senate to strategically position our asks.
- Next Steps:
 - **Final Negotiations:** We have and will continue to advocate in this process to ensure our amendments remain in NDAA 2.0.
 - **House Submits NDAA 2.0 and Passes it on the House Floor:** The House will release their pre-negotiated NDAA text and pass it next week.
 - **Senate Floor Passage:** The Senate will then take up the House's NDAA 2.0 instead of their own version in order to cut down on time. Leadership hopes the Senate will be able to pass 2.0 next week and send it to Biden's desk.

Have a great weekend!

Best,
Center Road Solutions Team