

12/17/2021

Hello REDC Members,

Here is this week's policy update. This will be the last policy update of 2021. We wish everybody a happy holiday and we look forward to working together in the new year!

NDAA

- Senate passed the SERVE Act (through the NDAA) 89-10, and the bill is on its way to Biden's desk to be signed into law!
- Congrats to everyone and thank you all for your amazing advocacy throughout the years on this! Active-duty military families up to 64 years old can now receive residential eating disorders care starting October 1st!
- Attached is a cava image if you would like to share the update on social media.

Survey on Access to In-Network MH/SUD Care—please participate and share!

- Survey
Link: <https://survey.amerispeak.org/SE/?st=tT6ZyQXGSUOdUeS0y8aFxCpGXOkqy5R0UUFOI2sASI%3d&urlimport=1&questlist=PVD&PVD=58>
- The Bowman Family Foundation in collaboration with NAMI and NORC (a nonpartisan research institute at the University of Chicago) is conducting a survey to address topics such as:
 - Whether MH or SUD care was needed and not received and why;
 - The impact of the COVID pandemic on (a) MH and SUD conditions and (b) access to care
 - The frequency of, and reasons for, use of out-of-network providers
 - “Search times” and “wait times” to access in-network providers
 - Insurance denial rates for MH and SUD care
 - The use of views about (a) tele-behavioral care and (b) apps for MH/SUD care
- This survey was commissioned because certain information captured above can't be ascertained by claims data analyses.

Telehealth

Update on MH/SUD Letters to Payors

- Based on the letters that we sent out to the 22 payor groups last week, we have heard from **Manny Arisso, President of the Anthem Behavioral Health, which includes Beacon Health Options.**
 - He reiterated their support for tele-behavioral health services and that they're committed to keep this coverage going—independent of whatever the federal government ultimately decides.

- He stated that if any of our members run into any issues with their products to get in touch with him personally as he would like to handle.
- We sent over a follow up email to him this week and encouraged to the extent he/Anthem BH can push other payors to continue this vital coverage at all levels of care is most welcome.
- We also received a canned response from **Dr. Michael Sherman, Executive VP & Chief Medical Officer for Point32Health, which handles Tufts Health Plan and Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare.**
 - We took the opportunity to respond and alert them that if any coverage changes related to tele-mental health services are to take place, a 60-day notice period is needed to adequately address patient care coordination/transition planning.
 - This 60-day time window was voiced at the REDC meeting in Henderson, NV last week as the minimum appropriate amount of time to properly address patient care planning.

Telehealth Study on Eating Disorders Care

- The International Journal of Eating Disorders has released an early view of a study comparing efficacy and patient satisfaction with in-person, outpatient eating disorders treatment versus virtual therapy.
 - Results: Participants in both groups showed similar improvements on eating symptoms, levels of weight gain (in individuals in whom gain was indicated), and satisfaction with services.
 - The study can be viewed here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/eat.23655>

Biden Administration Releases Executive Order (EO) entitled, “Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government”

- The EO featured a couple mentions of telehealth that are pasted below. To view the full EO you can click [here](#).
- (e) The Secretary of Labor shall:
 - (i) update existing rules and policies, consistent with applicable law and to the extent practicable, to allow individuals entitled to medical treatment under their workers’ compensation plans to conduct their routine medical treatment appointments **using telehealth platforms**; and
 - (ii) update rules, policies, and procedures to eliminate, consistent with applicable law and to the extent practicable, requirements for workers’ compensation claimants to submit physical documents, but to retain the option for physical submission for claimants who cannot otherwise submit them.
- (f) The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall:

(v) develop guidance for entities regulated pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) on providing telehealth in compliance with HIPAA rules, to improve patient experience and convenience following the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

New House Telehealth Bill Introduced

- Led by Ways & Means Health Subcommittee Chairman Doggett (D-TX) and Ranking Member Nunes (R-CA), the legislation would:
 - eliminate Medicare's regulations that restrict telehealth access to rural areas
 - mandate beneficiaries have in-person visits at a maximum 6 months before ordering expensive durable medical equipment (fraud protection provision)
 - allow CMS to audit doctors ordering pricey equipment or tests
- To learn more you can read Rep. Doggett's press release [here](#).

Health Spending Within Private Insurance Market

- Health Spending Grew in 2020 Except Private Insurance
 - Private insurance spent 3.5% less on medical goods and services compared to 2019.
- The pandemic also shifted the nation's coverage picture.
 - More than 2 million fewer people got insurance from work as a result of COVID-induced job cuts.
 - In addition to great Medicare enrollment, 600k more people picked ACA plans.

Have a great holiday season.

Center Road Solutions Team