

03/11/2022

Hello REDC Members,

Here is this week's policy update.

REDC Advocacy Day Registration Opened

- Tuesday, April 26th from 9am to 4pm EST
- Required training on Monday, April 25th from 3pm to 4pm.
- **Register here:** <https://redcadvocacyday.eventbrite.com>
- Registration open till April 1st.

Telehealth (CONGRATS!)

Congress passed the [Fiscal Year 2022 omnibus](#) and it is now head to the President's desk for signature. This will close out funding for this year and we can really begin digging into Fiscal Year 2023. Below are the victories we have secured in the omnibus related to telehealth (starting on page 1,901 linked above):

- **Delay in the in-person tele-mental health requirement under Medicare for 151 days after the conclusion of the Public Health Emergency**
 - Last year, Congress passed a provision that stated at the conclusion of the PHE, a patient must have an in-person visit with their provider within 6 months to continue or begin their in-person telehealth appointments for mental health care services.
 - **The REDC led a letter to House and Senate leadership urging for a delay in the implementation of this provision that was signed by 53 organizations, payors, and telehealth groups.**
 - **Result:** A 151 day delay (roughly 5 months) of implementing this rule. Although nothing has been stated, Congress is anticipating the PHE to not be renewed again after it expires in July and that would then give them 5 months (to the end of the year) to figure out permanency for telehealth or another fix.
 - **Equity component:** Individuals under age 65 comprise roughly 16% of Medicare enrollees; however, they represent 42% of enrollees with eating disorders. This delay will help stave off a telehealth cliff for those with Medicare or are dual eligible.
 - **We also know that because commercial payors look to Medicare on coverage determinations, we are working to permanently remove this in-person requirement to avoid replication in the commercial market.**
- **Extension in telehealth waivers afforded under the pandemic for 151 days after the conclusion of the Public Health Emergency**

- This extends the removal of geographic and originating site restrictions, restrictions on the list of practitioners eligible to utilize telehealth, and continues to enable Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Centers to continue providing services (including mental health services) via telehealth.
- **Reinstates the policy that allows pre-deductible coverage of telehealth services in high-deductible health plans with Health Savings Accounts (HDHPs-HSAs) through January 1, 2023.**
 - The REDC has supported the continuation of this policy through support letters.

Aetna Expands Access to Virtual Eating Disorders Treatment

- Aetna has joined forces with Equip to offer its members a virtual eating disorder treatment program.
- Aetna commercial members in CA, NJ, NY, OR, TX and WA will gain in-network access to Equip's program and the companies will consider expanding to additional states in 2023.
- Equip's program is focused on treating children, adolescents, and young adults, aged 6 to 24 years of age.

COVID Relief

- COVID Relief Stabilized Health Coverage, improved Access and Affordability
- The left leaning Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) released a [new paper](#) on how relief provisions have helped American retain health coverage.
 - In large part, health coverage did not decline, and may even have risen thanks to relief legislation and other policies enacted during the pandemic.
 - The share of uninsured people eligible for zero-premium plans increased from 43 to 62%, and the share of eligible for plans with monthly premiums of \$50 or less increased from 57 to 73%.
 - As premium tax credits increased, enrollment in the ACA marketplace plans rose to 14.5 million people, up from 11.4 million in 2020.
 - Nearly 1/3 of enrollees who used Healthcare.gov selected a plan for \$10 month or less during 2022 enrollment, and average monthly premiums fell by 23%.
 - An estimated 69% of uninsured Latino adults are eligible for zero-premium plans and 80% are eligible for plan with \$50 or less in monthly premiums.
 - An estimated 66% of Black uninsured adults are eligible for zero-premium plans and 76% are eligible for plan with \$50 or less in monthly premiums.

Have a great weekend,

Center Road Solutions Team