

MEDICA CONNECTIONS®

For Medica network providers

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GENERAL NEWS

Focus on opioids:

Recap of 2019 resources to limit opioid prescribing

After publishing links to opioid resources for the past nine months in this monthly e-newsletter, it was interesting to see which topics got the most attention. "Our hope at Medica is that prescribers find these resources valuable," said Stacy Ballard, MD, MBA, senior medical director at Medica. "We know this information can lead to providers changing their prescribing habits and ultimately improving patient health, which is our shared goal."



Here were the top-viewed opioid resources in order of popularity.

Opioid topic	Where to find related resource
Alternative treatment options for chronic pain	CDC: " Nonopioid Treatments for Chronic Pain "
A tool to assess patients for substance abuse	DAST-10 screening tool for drug abuse
Alternative treatment options for chronic pain	Mayo Clinic: " Evaluation of Complementary Health Approaches for Pain Management "

Tapering of opioids for chronic pain

CDC: [“Tapering Opioids for Chronic Pain”](#)

Tapering of opioids for chronic pain

Mayo Clinic: [“Tapering Long-term Opioid Therapy in Chronic Noncancer Pain”](#)

Tips for improving opioid prescribing practices

[Sample patient agreement forms](#)

More tips for improving opioid prescribing practices

State of Minnesota: [“Opioid Prescribing Improvement Program”](#)

More tips for improving opioid prescribing practices

ICSI: [Guideline to assess and treat pain](#)

Medica Foundation awards \$400,000 across Nebraska in 2019

The Medica Foundation awarded \$1.8 million in 2019 to improve community health in the Medica service area. New last year was a \$400,000 investment across Nebraska to 21 nonprofit agencies. Grantmaking focused on behavioral health, early childhood health and rural health. The Medica Foundation awarded grants to several federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and provider groups in Nebraska:

- Buffalo County Community Partners (Kearney) – to support the Circle of Security Parenting program that provides scholarships for parents to attend 8-week sessions that improve the development pathway of children, and helps parents deal with stress and build a healthier relationship with their child
- Charles Drew Health Center (Omaha) – to support behavioral health programming, including both individual and group therapy for adolescents identified through routine screening, and those referred for care by the court system or schools
- Children’s Hospital and Medica Center Foundation (Omaha) – to expand the telehealth program in support of behavioral health services for those in rural areas across Nebraska
- Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska (Gering) – to provide transport for Native American patients who prefer to receive their care at the Indian Health Services, where they can see their provider and obtain medications in the same visit
- HopeSpoke (Lincoln) – to expand the Extended Day Treatment Program, a strength-based, trauma-informed program, designed for children 5-11 years of age with serious emotional and/or behavioral challenges who are at risk for out-of-home placement or hospitalization
- OneWorld Community Health Center (Omaha) – to support a Child Health Navigator to help facilitate access to medical, prenatal and preventive care for women who have difficulty navigating the complex health care system, in particular recent immigrants and those who do not speak English
- Two Rivers Public Health Department (Holdrege) – to support the LifeSmiles Dental Health program in providing dental services at preschools, Head Start, WIC clinics and long-term care facilities in the Two Rivers Public Health service area

See more details. In early February, information about grant recipients as well as 2020 funding opportunities, giving guidelines and application deadlines will be available online.

CLINICAL NEWS

Effective March 16, 2020: Medical policies and clinical guidelines to be updated

(This applies to Medica leased-network providers as well as direct-contracted providers.)

Medica will soon update one or more utilization management (UM) policies, coverage policies and clinical guidelines. These upcoming policy changes will be effective March 16, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

These policies apply to all Medica products including commercial, government, and individual and family plan (IFB) products unless other requirements apply due to state or federal mandated coverage, for example, or coverage criteria from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Monthly update notifications for Medica's policies are available on an ongoing basis. **Update notifications are posted on medica.com** prior to their effective date. The medical policy update notification for changes effective March 16, 2020, is already posted. Changes to policies are effective as of that date unless otherwise noted. ("Medical policy updates" notifications are available at medica.com under For Providers, "Policies and Guidelines," then "Updates to Medical Policies.")

The medical policies themselves will be available online or as a hard copy:

- **View medical policies and clinical guidelines at medica.com** as of their effective date; or
- Call the Medica Provider Literature Request Line for printed copies of documents, toll-free at 1-800-458-5512, option 1, then option 8, ext. 2-2355.

Note: The next policy update notification will be posted in February 2020 for policies that will be changing effective April 20, 2020. These upcoming policy changes will be effective as of that April date unless otherwise noted.

Medica to deliver vitamins, supplements to pregnant moms *New program will benefit IFB, MHCP members*

"Helping families grow in the healthiest way possible is our #1 priority," said Stacy Ballard, MD, MBA, senior medical director at Medica. "To this end, we're using meaningful data to try to lower the rate of preterm births."

Starting in February 2020, Medica will begin sending expectant mothers a 90-count supply of Walgreens-brand prenatal vitamins and 90-count supply of Omegavia DHA daily capsules. This well-pregnancy initiative aims to supply pregnant moms with products that include appropriate dosing of folic acid, iron, zinc and fish oil. Through this new program, Medica will specifically reach out to its members in individual and family business (IFB) plans and Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) — i.e., members of Medica AccessAbility Solution[®] Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC) and Medica AccessAbility Solution Enhanced (HMO D-SNP) plans.

"Because many commonly purchased over-the-counter products don't include the recommended volumes, we want to educate soon-to-be moms and let them know we've got them covered," said Dr. Ballard. Research indicates that receiving a daily dose of 600 mcg of **DHA** while pregnant is important for a baby's brain and eye development. It may also reduce the chance of a preterm birth, or may reduce the number of days a baby stays in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) if the mother does have a preterm birth.

Medica will use important information received from its new partner, Ovia Health, through the Ovia Pregnancy app, as well as incoming claims information to identify newly pregnant moms. (**See more on [Ovia Health and its apps.](#)**) Up-to-date information allows Medica to better serve members and deliver information and support to ensure their pregnancy experience is as healthy and complete as possible.

Moms-to-be who like receiving the first box of products can receive another box of the same products for no additional cost. "We want to make it simple and easy for expecting moms to make healthy choices for themselves and for their baby," said Dr. Ballard. "New moms have so many important decisions to make. By delivering healthy products to their home, we hope these members consider using these products to improve the chances their baby or babies receive a full 40 weeks in utero. The safest place for a growing baby is in the mother's uterus."

The success of the program will be determined based on the number of members who opt in to receive their second box, the feedback received from a survey and, ultimately, whether the program helps reduce the number of preterm deliveries.

See list of references about DHA in pregnancy.

PHARMACY NEWS

Effective April 1, 2020:

Medica plans to update MHCP member drug list

(This applies to Medica leased-network providers as well as direct-contracted providers.)

Medica will likely be making changes in coverage status to the 2020 Medica List of Covered Drugs for Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) effective April 1, 2020. These upcoming changes are determined by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) since Medica follows the DHS drug list. As with all Minnesota managed care organizations (MCOs) that follow the DHS drug list for MHCP patients, DHS provides Medica with advance notice of changes to the drug list, which Medica posts as soon as possible to medica.com.

The Medica MHCP drug list applies to the following products: Medica Choice CareSM (for Minnesota Senior Care Plus program, or MSC+), Medica AccessAbility Solution[®] (for Special Needs Basic Care program, or SNBC) and both Medica DUAL Solution[®] (for Minnesota Senior Health Options program, or MSHO) and Medica AccessAbility Solution Enhanced, for non-Part D drugs. Any changes will not apply to Medica Medicare Part D drug formularies.

NETWORK NEWS

Effective April 1, 2020:

Medica to make quarterly update to Medicare fee schedules

(This applies to Medica direct-contracted providers only.)

Beginning with April 1, 2020, dates of service, Medica will implement the quarterly update to its Medicare fee schedules for applicable Medica products. This fee schedule change will implement updates from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and have an impact on the following provider types: home infusion therapy, home health care and public health agency providers, as well as physicians.

This fee schedule change incorporates CMS relative value units (RVUs) and conversion factor as well as various Medicare non-RVU fee maximums (such as labs, injections, immunizations, etc.). In addition, Medica will update its Medicare fee schedules with rates for codes without a fee maximum established. Overall reimbursement for providers will depend on specialty and mix of services provided.

Details on Medicare changes to drug fees, which typically see the greatest impact from these quarterly CMS updates, **are available online from CMS**. Providers who have further questions may contact their Medica contract manager.

Effective April 1, 2020:

Medica to implement commercial fee schedule updates

(This applies to Medica direct-contracted providers only.)

Effective April 1, 2020, Medica will implement standard fee schedule updates for commercial products in both its metro

and regional service areas. While these updates will reflect an aggregate increase to physician reimbursement overall, the effect on individual reimbursement will vary by specialty and mix of services provided.

Various fees for services without an assigned Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) relative value unit (RVU) will also be updated. Examples of these services include labs, supplies/durable medical equipment (DME), injectable drugs, and immunizations. This non-RVU update will also have an impact on physician reimbursement that will vary based on specialty and mix of services provided.

Medica will apply CMS-based RVU methodology where applicable. The CMS Medicare physician RVU file (National/Carrier) **is available online from CMS**.

Providers who have questions may contact their Medica contract manager.

Effective April 1, 2020:

Medica to make quarterly update to reference lab fee schedule

(This applies to Medica direct-contracted providers only.)

Effective with April 1, 2020, dates of service, or as soon thereafter as the CMS quarterly reference lab fee schedule updates are publicly available, Medica will implement the next quarterly update to its standard reference lab fee schedule, for all Medica products. This quarterly update will reflect any applicable Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) reference lab code or fee schedule updates that are effective April 1, 2020. The reimbursement impact of this CMS quarterly update will vary based on mix of services provided.

Details on Medicare changes to lab fees **are available online from CMS**. Providers who have further questions may contact their Medica contract manager.

Third-quarter PCR checks to be mailed in January 2020

(This applies to Medica direct-contracted providers only.)

By the end of January 2020, Medica plans to mail to eligible providers the physician contingency reserve (PCR) payment for the third quarter of 2019. This represents a 100-percent return of the third-quarter 2019 PCR withhold, plus interest, for the Medica Prime Solution[®] (Medicare Cost) product. Checks will cover PCR withheld for claims with dates of service of July 1, 2019, through September 30, 2019, and dates paid of July 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS

Provider College training topic for February

(This applies to Medica leased-network providers as well as direct-contracted providers.)

The Medica Provider College offers educational sessions on various administrative and clinical topics. The following class is available by webinar for all Medica network providers, at no charge.

Training class topics

"Resources for Providers"

Having quick and easy resources available is a great way to save time. Medica routinely updates resources available to providers. This webinar will walk providers through Medica's



self-service options, including resources on medica.com. It will focus on determining member eligibility; verifying if utilization management and reimbursement policies apply to services being billed; verifying how a claim processed; and next steps for claims (e.g., appeals or adjustments).

Class schedule

Topic	Date	Time
Resources for Providers	Feb. 12	Noon-1 p.m.

For webinar trainings, login information and class materials are e-mailed close to the class date. To ensure that training materials are received prior to a class, providers should sign up as soon as possible.

The times reflected above allow for questions and group discussion. Session times may vary based on the number of participants and depth of group involvement.

Registration

The registration deadline is one week prior to each class date. [Register online for the session above.](#)

Thoughts on webinars?

Medica wants feedback!

Medica updates reimbursement policy

(This applies to Medica leased-network providers as well as direct-contracted providers.)

Medica recently updated the reimbursement policy indicated below. Such policies define when specific services are reimbursable based on the reported codes.

Telemedicine for MHCP members

Telemedicine or telehealth is the delivery of health care services or consultations while the patient is at an originating site and the licensed health care provider is at a distant site. Medica's Telemedicine for Minnesota Health Care Program (MHCP) Members reimbursement policy describes eligible services and coverage limitations, reflecting the following updates:

- Modifier GT ("Via interactive audio and video telecommunication systems") *is no longer required* for reporting interactive audio and video communication. Providers will report these services with place of service 02 ("The location where health services and health related services are provided or received through telecommunication technology").
- The following *provider types were added* to the MHCP telemedicine policy as eligible to provide telemedicine services: clinical psychologist, clinical social worker and dentist, dental hygienist, dental therapist, advanced dental therapist, public health nursing organizations and mental health professional. Their eligibility is based on requirements and service limitation **outlined by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.**
- Day treatment, partial hospitalization programs, residential treatment services and case management face-to-face contact *are not covered* under telemedicine.

The updated policy is available online or on hard copy:

- **View reimbursement policies at medica.com**; or
- Call the Medica Provider Literature Request Line for printed copies of documents.

Updates to Medica Provider Administrative Manual

To ensure that providers receive information in a timely manner, changes are often announced in *Medica Connections* that are not yet reflected in the Medica Provider Administrative Manual. Every effort is made to keep the manual as current as possible. The table below highlights updated information and when the updates were (or will be) posted

online in the Medica Provider Administrative Manual.

Information updated	Location in manual	When posted
Added new state-specific contract requirements for the states of IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, OK, SD and WI	“Additional Contracting Requirements” section, under “State-Specific Contract Requirements” subsection	December 2019

For the current version, providers may [view the Medica Provider Administrative Manual online](#).

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