



Periodic *Fast Faxes* are intended to enhance your partnership with HealthCare Partners, IPA

HealthCare Partners, IPA

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Important Contacts:

Customer Service

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Important Reminder

Regarding In-network Referrals for Your Patients Enrolled in Managed Care Plans Contracted with HealthCare Partners, IPA

I am writing in my new role as Vice President of Network Operations at HealthCare Partners (HCP). I thank you for continuing to provide a high level of care to our Members and your patients. I look forward to meeting and speaking with you personally in the coming months.

Health care can be very confusing for Members and Providers, particularly the question of whether Providers are "in-network" or "out-of-network." It is problematic when a Member's doctor makes a referral to a Non-Participating or out-of-network Provider for non-emergency services without having first received authorization to do so. Because such out-of-network services are not covered by the Member's HMO insurance plan, the Non-Participating Provider may bill the Member directly for the services rendered. Such "surprise" bills have forced some individuals to the verge of bankruptcy. This issue was recently highlighted in the New York Times.

HCP provides the guidance below to assist our contracted Providers to minimize this situation so that only Participating Providers are utilized in non-emergency situations.

- When making referrals, please ascertain that the Provider you select is considered Participating. For HCP Members, a Participating Provider is contracted either with HealthCare Partners or with the Member's insurance plan.
- If you are uncertain whether a Provider is considered Participating, you or your office staff should call us at 800-877-7587 to verify the Provider's current status with HCP and/or the Member's Health Plan.
- Your best alternative is to request an authorization from us.
- Another alternative is to submit Automatic Authorization referrals requests to HCP, with only the specialty identified, without including a Provider name. HCP will select a Participating Provider in the Member's service area and notify both the requesting physician and Member of the authorized Provider.

Please note that your Provider Agreement with HealthCare Partners underscores the importance of only utilizing Participating Providers in non-emergency situations unless you have an authorization. The relevant contract provision is:

***Non-Participating Provider:** In the event PROVIDER refers an Enrollee to a Non-Participating Provider for a non-emergent condition, without prior authorization, PROVIDER agrees to be responsible for payment of claims incurred for the unauthorized Covered Medical Service within thirty (30) days of the date on which the services were rendered, and PROVIDER agrees to hold harmless the Enrollee for such claims. If such payment is not made within such thirty (30) day period, then HCP may pay the claims and deduct the amounts from PROVIDER's compensation.*

Thank you for your continued support in improving health care for our members and your patients.

Sincerely,

George Ingram