

To:

All Providers

HMOs and Other
Managed Care
Programs

Health Coach Service Pilot Addresses Frequent Emergency Room Use

Pursuant to a legislative mandate in the 2005-07 biennial budget, the Division of Health Care Financing (DHCF) implemented a six-month Health Coach service pilot in Milwaukee County beginning in November 2006. The Health Coach service pilot addresses the frequent use of emergency room (ER) services by some Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare recipients. In addition, the DHCF is addressing ER utilization in Milwaukee County via the following activities:

- Providing the Wisconsin Emergency Room Medicaid Health Information Exchange Application for emergency rooms.
- Mailing education letters to recipients.

The DHCF may expand these and other activities such as the Medicaid Recipient Lock-in Program to further address inappropriate use of ER and ER-related services.

Health Coach Service Pilot

Pursuant to a legislative mandate in the 2005-07 biennial budget, the Division of Health Care Financing (DHCF) has taken steps to address the frequent use of emergency room (ER) services by some fee-for-service Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare recipients.

In November 2006, the DHCF began implementing a six-month Health Coach service

pilot in Milwaukee County. This pilot will enroll approximately 40 fee-for-service Medicaid and BadgerCare recipients from Milwaukee County identified by Wisconsin Medicaid who have visited the ER six or more times in the previous 12 months.

The purpose of the Health Coach service pilot is to employ health coach techniques with selected recipients. The goal of this service pilot is to reduce unnecessary or inappropriate ER visits and related medical costs. Health coach services to be provided during the pilot include the following:

- Teaching recipients to distinguish between medical circumstances warranting ER services and those where primary and preventive care are more appropriate.
- Facilitating care coordination and communication among providers currently providing care to the recipient.
- Assisting recipients to comply with existing health care treatment plans and orders.
- Providing additional Medicaid information such as medical and pharmacy claim histories to providers caring for the recipient.
- Accompanying recipients to provider office visits.
- Providing health education with emphasis on behavioral change.

- Identifying and addressing barriers to obtaining care in the most appropriate setting.

The health coach is authorized to contact providers to obtain information on Medicaid Health Coach service candidates and enrollees. Disclosure to the health coach made by providers regarding Medicaid recipient candidates or enrollees is permitted as a health care operations activity for the DHCF (45 CFR s. 164.506[a-c]) in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Regulation.

Milwaukee County providers currently caring for recipients who are candidates or who are already enrolled in the Health Coach service pilot have already received personalized, official correspondence from the DHCF. The correspondence explains the interaction the provider is requested to have with the health coach regarding the recipient's health care.

Provider participation in the Health Coach service pilot is voluntary. Providers who provide other Medicaid reimbursable services may not receive enhanced reimbursement for interactions with the health coach.

A preliminary evaluation of the Health Coach service pilot will be conducted in mid-2007 and a final evaluation will be published at the end of 2007. Outcomes to be evaluated include the following:

- Changes in utilization and expenditures.
- Impact on quality of care.
- Effectiveness of the health coach and other interventions in changing behavior.
- Reporting of barriers identified.
- Surveys of providers involved in the pilot.

If the results of the pilot are favorable, the DHCF may expand the Health Coach service.

Additional Steps to Address Frequent Use of Emergency Room Services

In addition to the Health Coach service pilot, the DHCF is addressing ER utilization in Milwaukee County via the following activities.

Wisconsin Emergency Room Medicaid Health Information Exchange Application

The Wisconsin Emergency Room Medicaid Health Information Exchange Application is a Web-based portal for accessing medical and pharmacy claims histories of fee-for-service and managed care recipients with three or more ER visits in the previous 12 months. The DHCF made the application available on a pilot basis to Milwaukee County emergency rooms in January 2006.

Mailing of Education Letters

In August 2006, education letters were mailed to 374 recipients with high ER utilization and their respective performing providers. The letter informed the recipients that the DHCF is monitoring their ER use and encouraged them to seek care in the most appropriate setting.

The DHCF may expand these and other activities such as the Medicaid Recipient Lock-in Program to further address inappropriate use of ER and ER-related services.

Information Regarding Medicaid HMOs

This *Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Update* contains Medicaid fee-for-service policy and applies to providers of services to recipients on fee-for-service Medicaid only. For Medicaid HMO or managed care policy, contact the appropriate managed care organization. Wisconsin Medicaid HMOs are required to provide at least the same benefits as those provided under fee-for-service arrangements.

The *Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Update* is the first source of program policy and billing information for providers.

Although the *Update* refers to Medicaid recipients, all information applies to BadgerCare recipients also.

Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare are administered by the Division of Health Care Financing, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, P.O. Box 309, Madison, WI 53701-0309.

For questions, call Provider Services at (800) 947-9627 or (608) 221-9883 or visit our Web site at dhfs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/.

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