

FILING NOTICE: Revisions to this policy require filing with the CA Department of Managed Healthcare. Notify the Compliance Department of any edits made to this policy.

UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT		Effective Date 01/01/2021	
	ACCESS TO UM STAFF AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES	Policy # AHP-HS081	
		Review Date 11/17/23	Applicable to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medicare Advantage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthem HMO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blue Shield Trio
	Approver's Name & Title Kellie Verdugo, Interim Director Utilization Management		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all AHP and Commercial HMO members and providers:
 - 1.1.1 Have appropriate access to Utilization Management (UM) staff to discuss UM issues or address questions related to the UM process.
 - 1.1.2 Receive communications specific to the approval, modification or denial of health care services in a timely manner, which include all applicable regulatory elements.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 UM staff will be available from 0800 to 1700 on normal business days (Monday through Friday) for inbound calls from providers regarding UM issues. UM staff will be available to monitor incoming voicemail and fax communications when an office closure extends more than 48 consecutive hours (i.e. an observed holiday falls on a Monday).

DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Refer to the Definitions Manual

3.0 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 UM staff will be available from 0800 to 1700 on normal business days for inbound calls from providers regarding UM issues.
- 3.2 AHP uses telephone, email, and facsimile for communications after-hours, after normal business hours, voicemail is available to receive and record questions regarding UM issues. The voicemail message also directs providers to call the on-call nurse if the issue is pertaining to an urgent authorization request that cannot wait until normal business hours. Members requiring urgent and emergent medical care are directed to the nearest emergency room or to call 911.
- 3.3 Communications received after normal business hours are returned on the next business day. Documentation of these calls are recorded in the member record.

- 3.4 Outbound communication regarding UM inquiries are conducted via telephone calls, fax and letters during normal business hours; when initiating or returning calls regarding UM issues, staff identifies themselves by name, title and organization.
- 3.5 AHP provides a separate toll free phone number for receiving TDD/TTY messages and also uses the State/711 Relay Services.
- 3.6 Calls from providers regarding questions related to the UM process are received by administrative staff within the UM department and are triaged accordingly. Documentation of the communication is recorded in the member record by the staff receiving the call with their name, the date and time of the call, and who they spoke with.
- 3.7 AHP provides members and practitioners with direct access to UM non-clinical staff for specific cases and in order to provide, information, including determination status.
- 3.8 Member may request a Sensitive Service Confidential Communication (SSCC) in accordance with [AHP ASO CO013 Protection Against Disclosure of Protected Health Information](#). Confidentiality must be protected regardless of method of requested communication; this may include information sent to an alternative location.
 - 3.8.1 The disclosure of medical information related to sensitive services is prohibited to anyone other than the Protected Individual/Enrollee (including the policyholder or parent of a minor patient without the Enrollees express written authorization.).
 - 3.8.2 All communications regarding sensitive services shall be sent directly to the Enrollee at the current address on file, unless the Enrollee has otherwise designated an alternative address.
 - 3.8.3 All communications regarding a Protected Individual's receipt of sensitive services shall be sent directly to the Protected Individual when the following criteria apply:
 - 3.8.3.1 There are communications (written, verbal or electronic communications) regarding the individual's receipt of sensitive services containing the name and address of a provider, description of services provided, and other information related to a visit when the individual requests the confidential communication; and,
 - 3.8.3.2 The communications contain protected health information.
 - 3.8.4 The Plan shall not inform parents or legal guardians of a minor's sensitive services care and information without minor's permission, except as allowed by law.
- 3.9 Any written communication to a physician or other health care provider of a denial, delay, or modification of a request shall also include:
 - 3.9.1 The name and telephone number of the health care professional responsible for the denial, delay, or modification.
 - 3.9.1.1 The telephone number provided shall be a direct number or an extension to allow the physician or health care provider to easily contact the professional responsible for the denial, delay, or modification.
 - 3.9.2 The UM denial includes reviewer's unique electronic signature or identifier on the denial letter or on the notation of denial in the file.
- 3.10 For all members who request language services, the organization must provide the information in the requested language through bilingual staff or an interpreter, to help members with their UM issues. Language assistance services are provided free-of-charge. AHP staff document this in member's record. This does not apply to after-hours calls.

4.0 TRAINING

4.1 Training for employees will occur within 90 days of hire, and upon updates to the policy.

5.0 REVIEW PERIOD

6.1 Annually.

6.0 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AND REFERENCES

6.1 29 CFR 2590.715

6.2 29 CFR 2590.715-2719(b)(2)(ii)(E)(I); 45 CFR 147.136 (b)(2)(ii)(E)(I)

6.3 CA Health and Safety Code section 1367.01(i)

6.4 CA Civil Code 56.107

6.5 CA Health and Safety Code 1367.01(11)(4)

6.6 CA Health and Safety Code sections 1367.01(h)(3) and (4)

7.0 POLICY VIOLATION

Any AHP associate or contractor who fails to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including termination. Please refer to AHP's Disciplinary Guidelines and Enforcement Policy for further details.