

QUARTERLY REPORT FROM THE VENDORSHIP AND MANAGED CARE COMMITTEE

The Vendorship and Managed Care Committee met by teleconference in October, December and January and communicated by email. The committee consists of representatives from the various NYSSCSW chapters. Some of the issues addressed are as follows:

Medicare Webinar. A seminar on Medicare with teleconference and access to a Power Point presentation is planned for Monday, February 28, from 9:00 am. to 11:00 am. at One Liberty Plaza in Manhattan. Details to be announced. National Government Services will provide an overview of provider enrollment, PECOS, and provider responsibilities, including documentation. They will discuss the future direction of Medicare, including electronic billing. Following the presentation there will be a question and answer period. This seminar is tailored for members of NYSSCSW.

Parity Issues: Many clients will be subject to the Federal Parity Bill for the first time this month since most policies renew in January and this is when changes will take effect. Congress has not decided whether all diagnoses will be covered by federal parity so at the moment we expect that only the biologically based diagnoses will be covered under parity by insurance companies, unless an employer decides to be more generous. We advise providers with a new patient to call the insurance company and determine whether the patient's plan falls under parity.

Although under parity laws patients may be told they have "unlimited benefits" providers will still have to show medical necessity for the patient to access these benefits. Providers are advised to familiarize themselves with criteria for medical necessity which are usually posted on the website of the insurer. Often the requirements come down to demonstrating two points: symptoms and how impaired the client is. Plans often distinguish between acute care and maintenance, with less frequent sessions authorized for the latter.

Some MCOs no longer require OTRs: The good news is that more and more plans have discontinued the use of Outpatient Treatment Reports, for example, MHN, some GHI plans and some Value Options plans. However, plans may fall back on more frequent telephone reviews to manage the benefit more closely. The Committee has been discussing appropriate responses to requests for in-depth medical information by telephone. Patients, and the public, are unaware that their information can be used in this way and need to be educated by therapists.

New Vendorship and Managed Care Webpage: With the installation of a new NYSSCSW website the Vendorship and Managed Care Committee has been able to mount an improved webpage. For recent informational bulletins, announcements, articles, lists, and alerts go to:

http://www.clinicalsw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=124

If you have questions or need information about an insurance issue please contact one of the members of the committee listed on our website.

Helen T. Hoffman, LCSW
State Chair, Vendorship and Managed Care Committee

January 11, 2011

QUARTERLY REPORT FROM THE VENDORSHIP AND MANAGED CARE COMMITTEE

The Vendorship and Managed Care Committee met by teleconference in January and February, and in March, in person. The committee consists of representatives from the various NYSSCSW chapters. They continue to disseminate information and provide support to individuals with insurance questions. Some issues being addressed currently are as follows:

Survey on Billing Strategies: The Committee has designed a short questionnaire to obtain member feedback, using surveymonkey.com. Questions will cover electronic billing of managed care companies and Medicare, billing services, practice management software, and software for typing paper claims. The outcome of the survey will be a list of resources on billing (see details below).

Medicare: A successful Medicare Webinar was presented for Society members by National Government Services at Wellpoint on February 18. About 12 people attended, with an estimated 25 on the telephone. A summary of highlights and the PowerPoint created by NGS can be seen on the Vendorship webpage (clinicalsw.org).

Experiences with Managed Care: The Committee explored recent negative experiences with insurance companies which include increasing copayments, increasing deductibles, deductibles for in-network benefits, continued efforts by Multiplan and others to discount reimbursement rates, and continued intrusive behavior by managed care companies. The Committee noted that patients (and the public) are unaware of the degree to which confidentiality can be compromised by (legal) telephone reviews. Helen Hoffman has posted on the listserv encouraging individual members to write pieces for their local papers, in blogs, or as letters to the NY Times, responding to “teachable moments” in the news.

Managed Care Toolkit: Our Managed Care Toolkit, which includes information on where to purchase claim forms, plus websites for Medicare, the NYS Department of Insurance, and the NYS Attorney General’s Office, has been updated. Go to clinicalsw.org and click on Vendorship and Managed Care.

REMINDER: SURVEY ON BILLING STRATEGIES

Share your experience filing paper or electronic claims, using billing services, or installing patient management software. Your input will help other members to find the most efficient means of submitting claims to insurance companies and Medicare. Even if you file no claims we would like to have your information. Go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QZGW9S8>.

Helen T. Hoffman LCSW, State Chair
4/30/2011

QUARTERLY REPORT FROM THE VENDORSHIP AND MANAGED CARE COMMITTEE

The Vendorship and Managed Care Committee met by teleconference in May and June and continues to communicate by email. The Committee consists of representatives from the various NYSSCSW chapters who disseminate information and provide support to individuals with insurance questions. Areas being addressed currently are as follows:

Survey on Billing Strategies: A survey to obtain member feedback on billing practices went out in May using surveymonkey.com. Questions covered electronic billing of managed care companies and Medicare, billing services, practice management software, and software for typing paper claims, as well as questions about HIPAA compliance. 157 responded and the results were published in June. Go to the Vendorship Website to read “What Members Say About Electronic Billing and HIPAA Compliance”. [Insert link](#)

Workshop on Electronic Billing Planned:

The Committee is sponsoring a Workshop on Electronic Billing to be held October 15 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 88th and Lexington, in Manhattan, from 10:00 to 1:30 pm. Presenters will include James Bavoso of National Government Services speaking on how to set up electronic billing for Medicare; David Phillips on the basics of HIPAA compliance; Linda Plastrik on her experience using a clearinghouse for electronic billing; and Helen Hoffman on the various billing strategies available, including typed claims, direct billing to insurers, billing services, and clearinghouses. The Committee is creating a handout of Billing Resources.

Please save this date. Further details to be announced.

Monitoring Changes in Managed Care:

The Committee continues to gather information on changes by insurers which impact on clinical social work practice. While there has been some streamlining of the authorization process and discontinuance of OTRs, members report suddenly increased deductibles, deductibles for in-network providers, decreases in the reimbursement rate by HIP, and the seeming prevalence of demand for telephone reviews.

A front page New York Times article in May about rising deductibles and the tendency of subscribers to use health insurance more sparingly sent a chilling note. There is an ongoing need to remind the public of the value of psychotherapy through personal communications, letters to the editor, articles or blogs. Every day there is a “teachable moment”.

Vendorship and Managed Care Webpage:

For resources, articles and announcements on insurance issues go to: [Insert link](#)

If you have questions or need information about a specific issue please contact one of the members of the Committee listed on this website.

Helen T. Hoffman, LCSW
Chair, Vendorship and Managed Care Committee

July 31, 2011

QUARTERLY REPORT FROM THE VENDORSHIP AND MANAGED CARE COMMITTEE

The Committee’s main focus during this period was the Electronic Billing Workshop held October 15 in Manhattan. Helen Hoffman gave an overview of all types of billing, from hand-written paper claims to billing services and clearing houses. James Bavoso, Manager of Provider Outreach and Education for National Government Services, outlined the various electronic billing strategies for Medicare and commercial insurance. David Phillips, NYSSCSW Ethics Chair, spoke about the basics of HIPAA compliance. Committee member Linda Plastrik described her own experience getting started with a clearinghouse for electronic billing.

Workshop materials and speeches are posted on the Vendorship website:

<http://www.nysscsw.com/vendorship-a-managed-care>

The Vendorship Committee consists of representatives from the various NYSSCSW chapters. They continue to communicate by email, gathering and disseminating information and providing

support to individuals with insurance questions. If you have questions or need information about a specific issue please contact one of the members of the Committee listed on the website.

Helen T. Hoffman, LCSW
Chair, Vendorship and Managed Care Committee

October 31, 2011