

Spring 2024

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# A message from the Market President

## Mental Health Month

May is Mental Health Month, and AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia (DC) is pleased to join the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. It is an opportunity for us to come together to fight mental health stigma, while providing emotional support and educational opportunities for our community.

According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), 43.7% of adults in D.C. reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in February 2021. However, 25.7% were unable to get needed counseling or therapy. This includes both teenagers and adults struggling with depression and thoughts of suicide.

We in the health care space play an important role in conversations on mental health, and it is of the utmost importance that we collaborate to build a stronger system that provides inclusive and all-encompassing behavioral health services.

AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees have access to a variety of behavioral health benefits, including behavioral health providers, 24/7 emotional support and mental health coaching via text message, addiction and recovery support, and fitness classes at the Enrollee Wellness and Opportunity Center. By prioritizing our enrollees' mental health, we help them live better lives.

We encourage you, our providers, to support a holistic approach to health care, integrating both behavioral and physical care to the extent permitted by law. Resources are available on our website to assist you in delivering high-quality care and improved health outcomes..

As always, thank you for your continued support and commitment to the care of our enrollees.

Sincerely,

Karen Dale

Market President, AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia

Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, AmeriHealth Caritas<sup>SM</sup> Family of Companies



## General updates

### 2024 Provider Advisory Committee meeting schedule

AmeriHealth Caritas DC designed and developed the Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) to support local providers and increase access to care for enrollees. The PAC is an opportunity for D.C. providers in our network to engage with AmeriHealth Caritas DC leadership. Through this collaboration, we hope to encourage providers to work together to find new and better ways for enrollees to be healthier, while reducing the cost of care.

The committee provides critical input on innovative and collaborative strategies focusing on effective integration of care coordination and care management programs, as well as other services to achieve desired outcomes. We find it vital to our mission to work with providers and community-based organizations to proactively improve the health status of those we serve.

We hope you will join us for this year's upcoming virtual meetings, taking place on the following dates from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

- May 16
- September 19
- November 7

We will provide more information closer to each event. You can also view reports from prior PAC meetings [here](#).



## PerformPlus Total Cost of Care program

We are committed to helping you deliver the best care to your patients. To meet our providers' needs and priorities for health care delivery, we created the [PerformPlus® Total Cost of Care program](#) for participating providers. We also developed a document to help you [understand your scorecard](#).

One crucial aspect of this program involves closing Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) gaps in care. By addressing these gaps, we aim to elevate the overall standard of care and ensure that our enrollees receive the most comprehensive and effective treatment.

Additionally, our focus extends to reducing the district's prioritized pay-for-performance measures:

- Low-Acuity Non-Emergent (LANE): Percentage of avoidable, low-acuity non-emergent emergency department visits.
- Potentially Preventable Hospitalizations: Percentage of inpatient admissions for specific ambulatory care conditions that may have been prevented through appropriate outpatient care.
- Plan All-Cause Readmissions (PCR): For patients ages 18 – 64, the number of acute inpatient stays during the measurement year that were followed by an acute readmission for any diagnosis within 30 calendar days and the predicted probability of an acute readmission.

Through these collaborative efforts, we seek to streamline patient care pathways, minimize unnecessary hospital admissions, and maximize the efficiency of health care resources.

Your active participation in these endeavors is vital to the success of our shared commitment to providing high-quality, value-based care. We encourage you to engage with the AmeriHealth Caritas Value-Based Dashboard on [NaviNet](#) as well as the [3M platform](#). These tools are provided to support your efforts in closing HEDIS gaps and minimizing hospital utilization.

Refer to the following program guides for more information:

- [PerformPlus® True Care Behavioral Health Program](#)
- [PerformPlus® True Care Perinatal Program](#)
- [PerformPlus® Dental Value-Based Compensation Program](#)

## Events calendar

AmeriHealth Caritas DC offers a variety of events and wellness classes at no cost for all enrollees. These include activities at the Enrollee Wellness and Opportunity Center that promote healthy living and care management strategies, as well as community events that offer opportunities for health checks or further health education. Please remind your patients who are AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees to view our monthly [events calendar](#).

If you are interested in partnering with us for an enrollee event, please email JoAnn Smith, Member Engagement Manager, at [jsmith5@amerihealthcaritasdc.com](mailto:jsmith5@amerihealthcaritasdc.com). If you are interested in collaborating with us on an Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) Wellness Day for children under the age of 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid, please email Amena Hamilton, EPSDT Program Manager, at [ahamilton2@amerihealthcaritasdc.com](mailto:ahamilton2@amerihealthcaritasdc.com).

## Patient Experience Survey

The Patient Experience Survey encompasses the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey and the Experience of Care and Health Outcomes (ECHO) survey. Considered the national standard for measuring and reporting on consumers' experiences with health plans, providers, and the services provided, its purpose is to enhance understanding of patient experience and advance the delivery of safe, patient-centered care.

Press Ganey, on behalf of AmeriHealth Caritas DC, has invited a random selection of AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees to complete the annual survey **via mail, internet, or phone**. The identifying marks are the AmeriHealth Caritas DC logo on the survey itself and Press Ganey on the envelope.

Survey topics include, but are not limited to:

- Annual flu vaccinations
- Ability to get necessary care and treatment
- Ability to get care quickly
- Customer service interactions
- Satisfaction ratings of overall health care experience
- Ease and ability to get prescribed medications
- Experience with behavioral health care and services

Survey responses are anonymous and help AmeriHealth Caritas DC, as well as our network providers, better serve enrollees by informing how we deliver our programs and services. Responses can help us facilitate system change, so please encourage your patients who receive the survey to complete it.



## Prior authorization lookup tool

In light of recent changes to services requiring prior authorization, we wish to remind you of the [prior authorization lookup tool](#) available on our website. To find out if a service needs prior authorization, type a Current Procedural Terminology code or a Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System code in the available space online to get started.

This tool provides general information for outpatient services performed by a participating provider.

The following services always require prior authorization:

- Elective inpatient services
- Urgent inpatient services
- Services from a nonparticipating provider

The results of this tool are not a guarantee of coverage or authorization. All results are subject to change in accordance with plan policies and procedures and the [Provider Manual](#).

Prior authorization requests may be submitted to the Utilization Management department by phone at **202-408-4823** or **1-800-408-7510**. Requests can also be made by fax at **202-408-1031** or **1-877-759-6216**.



## Collaboration with DispatchHealth

We are pleased to share that AmeriHealth Caritas DC is collaborating with DispatchHealth to provide our enrollees with urgent medical care at home. As part of our commitment to help ensure enrollees have ample access to care and resources, they can now book an appointment with DispatchHealth for an urgent health need and an experienced care team will treat their illness or injury in the safety of their home.

DispatchHealth is an option for getting urgent care when it's not an emergency and an enrollee's primary care provider is not available. DispatchHealth will communicate directly with the primary care provider if a home visit is deemed inappropriate and will also work closely with the provider to coordinate care as necessary. The acute care model aims to decrease emergency room utilization.

DispatchHealth is available seven days a week, including holidays, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. To schedule an appointment, enrollees should call **1-888-908-0553** or book online at [www.dispatchhealth.com](http://www.dispatchhealth.com). A representative will ask the caller about their symptoms and give a time frame for arrival, typically within a few hours of the call.

## Change Healthcare System Interruption

In February, Change Healthcare, our electronic data interchange clearinghouse for claims and payment cycle management, informed us of a network interruption related to a security incident. Change Healthcare took immediate action to disconnect their systems to mitigate further impact. We also took appropriate measures to protect our own systems and ensure operational security. There is no indication that our systems or data were impacted.

We established a connection with Availity to receive electronic claims. If you or your clearinghouse do not currently use Availity to submit claims, you may register [here](#). You will find registration options for Healthcare and Atypical Provider, so please choose the one that aligns with your business. For manual claims submission, we established a direct claims entry process through [PCH Global](#).

Please visit <https://www.amerhealthcaritasdc.com/provider> for additional updates related to the Change Healthcare system interruption.

We understand this incident may have presented a hardship for our provider community and appreciate your patience. If you have questions, please contact your Provider Account Executive or Provider Services at **202-408-2237**.



## Behavioral health updates

### Emotional support via text

Everyone needs help sometimes, and for AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees, emotional support is just a tap away. When enrollees sign up for the mental health service, they are connected with a mental health coach. Coaches can help enrollees with daily challenges such as stress, sleep habits, issues with work, relationships, and more. The service is not meant to replace enrollees' current providers. Instead, it is a supplemental service enrollees can rely on as needed between appointments. Enrollees ages 13 and older can use emotional support via text whether or not they have another [behavioral health provider](#) or a behavioral health condition.

AmeriHealth Caritas DC works with two companies, Headspace Care and MindRight, to provide emotional support via text. MindRight specializes in services for teens and young adults and works with enrollees ages 13 to 20. Headspace Care provides services to adults age 21 and older. AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees can visit the behavioral health page on our website to learn more, or they can get started right away:

- Enrollees ages 13 to 20 can access MindRight by texting **886-886** and using referral code "AmeriHealth" during enrollment.
- Enrollees age 21 and older can access Headspace Care by downloading the Headspace Care app from Google Play or the Apple App Store.

Please help us direct your patients who are AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees to this service, giving them the emotional support they need right at their fingertips.

## 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. Please remind patients that the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides 24/7, confidential support at no cost for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for mental health professionals in the United States. The lifeline is a direct connection to immediate support and resources for anyone in crisis. People can call, text, or chat with the lifeline if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline was formed to improve accessibility of crisis services and to meet the nation's growing suicide and mental health-related crisis care needs. It provides easier access to mental health crisis care, separate from the public safety purposes of 911 where the focus is on dispatching emergency medical, fire, and police services.

Numerous studies have shown that most lifeline callers are more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking to a lifeline crisis counselor. For more information and additional resources, visit <https://988lifeline.org/>.

## Dental updates

# Caries risk assessment form and instructions

AmeriHealth Caritas DC will reimburse dental providers for submitting a CDT code for caries risk assessment (CRA). CDT codes D0601 for low risk, D0602 for moderate risk, and D0603 for high risk will be used for reimbursement and to assess oral health disease prevalence in the district.

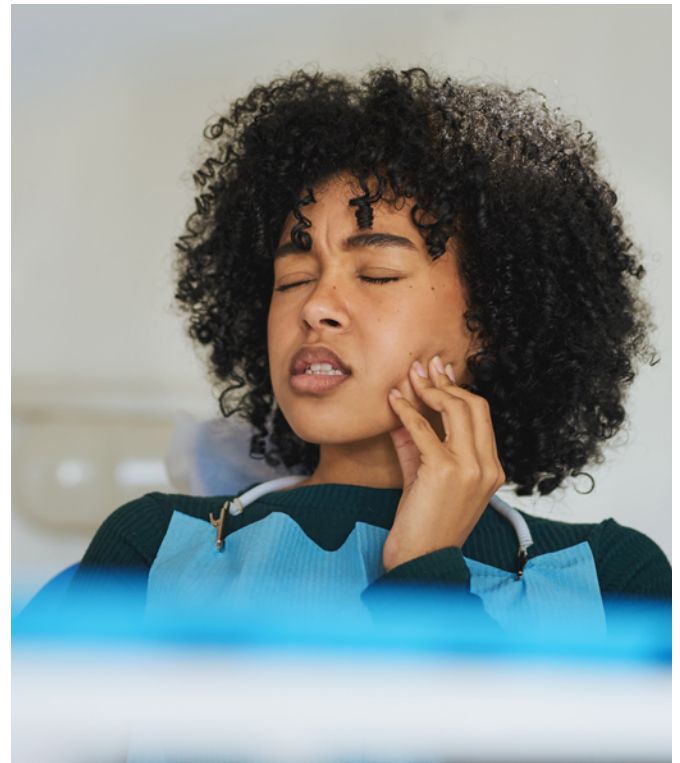
The Universal CRA Form, available [online](#), should be used for all ages and will need to be available for review in the patient treatment record. It is important to review the form for an accurate assessment and for future evaluation at each subsequent office visit to determine if there is a reduction in risk for your patients. If you so desire, the form can be completed by office staff with our assistance.

AmeriHealth Caritas DC strives to address the oral health concerns of the community we serve through our advocacy and your assistance. The CRA will allow us to establish a baseline assessment for what we hope will be an improvement in the oral health status of the community through the reduction of caries risk. As we know, this will also influence the overall health of our enrollees for the better.

## Instructions

On the form, enter the score for each line and add them to get a total in each column. The scoring parameters are listed at the bottom of the form with the associated CDT code for claims submission. This submission should only apply in association with D0150, the comprehensive oral evaluation, and D0120, the periodic oral evaluation. Do not submit with any other evaluation CDT codes.

Thank you for your cooperation. We look forward to improving the oral health of our community through your assistance with the CRA form. If you have questions, please contact Dental Provider Services at **1-855-609-5170**.



## New ADA guideline recommends NSAIDs to manage dental pain in adults

A new clinical practice guideline from the American Dental Association (ADA) recommends nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) taken with or without acetaminophen as first-line treatments for managing acute dental pain in adults and adolescents 12 years and older.

According to this new guideline, when used as directed, NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and naproxen on their own or in combination with acetaminophen can effectively manage pain after a tooth extraction or during a toothache when dental care is not immediately available.

The guideline also offers recommendations for prescribing opioid medications in the limited circumstances in which they may be appropriate. These include avoiding “just in case” prescriptions, engaging patients in shared decision-making, and exercising extreme caution when prescribing opioids to adolescents and young adults. The guideline also suggests clinicians advise patients on proper storage and disposal and consider any risk factors for opioid misuse and serious adverse events when prescribing opioids.

You can find more information on the guideline [here](#).





**Pharmacy updates**

**Duplicate therapy notification: GLP-1 receptor agonists and DPP-4 inhibitors**

Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonists and dipeptidyl peptidase-4 (DPP-4) inhibitors control blood glucose by targeting the incretin system in the body. GLP-1 agonists act as an “incretin mimetic” and DPP-4 inhibitors prevent the breakdown of endogenous incretin. Unlike endogenous incretin, GLP-1 analogues are not broken down by the DPP-4 enzyme, and therefore using these medications concomitantly yields no additional benefit and may increase your patient’s risk of side effects. This is backed by current guidelines from the American Diabetes Association and the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, which do not support combination therapy of GLP-1 agonists and DPP-4 inhibitors due to a lack of added clinical benefit.

Given the variety of approved and recommended combinations for diabetes treatment, dual therapy would not be recommended with drugs that offer little or no clinical benefit. If applicable to any of your current patients, please assess and consider a change in therapy (e.g., discontinuing one of these agents and optimizing the dose of the other, or adding an alternative agent) as appropriate.

GLP-1 Agonists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bydureon (exenatide extended release)</li> <li>• Byetta (exenatide immediate release)</li> <li>• Mounjaro (tirzepatide)</li> <li>• Ozempic (semaglutide)</li> <li>• Rybelsus (semaglutide)</li> <li>• Trulicity (dulaglutide)</li> <li>• Victoza (liraglutide)</li> <li>• Xultophy (insulin degludec/liraglutide)</li> </ul>

DPP-4 Inhibitors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Januvia (sitagliptin)</li> <li>• Nesina (alogliptin)</li> <li>• Onglyza (saxagliptin)</li> <li>• Tradjenta (linagliptin)</li> </ul>

If you have questions, call PerformRx Pharmacy Services at **1-888-602-3741**.



## Care management services

AmeriHealth Caritas DC has care management programs for enrollees with special health care needs, behavioral health conditions, and chronic conditions, such as heart disease or high blood pressure. These programs can help enrollees learn more about their condition and how to manage it, with the support of a Care Manager.

There are multiple avenues for enrollees to be considered for complex care management services, including practitioner referral. Please call **1-833-805-2233** if you would like to recommend an enrollee for these services.

## Medical record requirements

Medical records of network providers are to be maintained in a manner that is current, detailed, organized, and permits effective and confidential patient care and quality review. Provider offices are to have an organized medical record filing system that facilitates access, availability, confidentiality, and organization of records at all times.

Providers are required by contract to make medical records accessible to the D.C. Department of Health Care Finance, the D.C. Department of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and/or the Office of the Inspector General, and their respective designees in order to conduct fraud, abuse, waste, and/or quality improvement activities.

Refer to the [Provider Manual](#) for a list of our medical record standards.

## Medical record audits

AmeriHealth Caritas DC conducts medical record audits to assess the provision and documentation of high-quality primary care according to established standards. Compliance with these standards will be audited by periodic review and chart samplings of the participating primary care offices. Health care practitioners/providers must achieve an average score of 90% or higher on the medical records review. AmeriHealth Caritas DC will assist health care practitioners/providers scoring less than 90% through corrective action plans and re-evaluation.

### Important reminders

## Balance billing

AmeriHealth Caritas DC enrollees should not be balance billed from any participating provider. Please reference the below language from the AmeriHealth Caritas DC [Provider Manual](#), Section IX: Claims Submission Protocols and Standards.

### Balance Billing Enrollees

Under the requirements of the Social Security Act, all payments from AmeriHealth Caritas DC to participating plan providers must be accepted as payment in full for services rendered. Enrollees may not be balance billed for medically necessary covered services under any circumstances. All providers are encouraged to use the claims dispute processes to resolve any outstanding claims payment issues.

If you have questions, please contact your Provider Account Executive or Provider Services at **202-408-2237**.



**AmeriHealth Caritas**<sup>™</sup>  
District of Columbia

[www.amerihealthcaritasdc.com](http://www.amerihealthcaritasdc.com)

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GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
**MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR**