

Serving Seniors and People with Disabilities – A Plan-Provider Partnership

The transition of seniors and people with disabilities (SPDs) from Medi-Cal FFS into Medi-Cal Managed Care is in full swing. As a result of changes in the 1115 Waiver, the state of California is conducting a twelve month transition process that began in June 2011 and will continue through May of 2012. We have been averaging nearly 3,000 new members per month since June 2011.

At Molina, we are committed to our partnership with providers to insure a smooth transition and provide quality care to these new members.

How will this Impact you?

Expect a shift in your patient demographics. Medi-Cal managed care's program and services have historically focused on Moms and children. The average age of our new members is between 45-64 years of age. You may notice care trending from maternal child health to chronic disease management. Statistics show that 70% of seniors and people with disabilities live with two or more chronic conditions and 25% of these new members have four or more chronic conditions. SPD's receiving treatment for a behavioral health condition is approximately 30%.

Studies show significant healthcare disparities between seniors and people with disabilities and able bodied populations. The percentage of SPD's with diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and depression are significantly higher than beneficiaries that report having no disability. Many of these disparities are a direct result of barriers to accessing healthcare services.

Barriers to Accessing Healthcare

Persons with disabilities often face barriers when accessing healthcare. These barriers range from access issues, which can include architectural barriers, inaccessible equipment (i.e., exam tables, scales, radiology, etc), transportation and communication to attitudinal issues that often result from a lack of understanding of disability by healthcare providers. **“Some people with disabilities report that they often encounter health care providers speaking condescendingly to them like they are children or ‘overly friendly’ and in paternalistic tones. They feel their healthcare needs, for example, like being weighed or being examined on an exam table instead of while seated in their wheelchair are sometimes ignored”**...says June Isaacson Kailes, consultant and disability rights advocate.

Healthcare professionals are not always aware of how to accommodate a person with a disability, i.e., obtaining a sign language interpreter, scheduling adequate appointment times, how to assist with a transfer from chair to exam table, etc. These and many other barriers can result in a decline in health and self care and delayed diagnosis.

How We Can Help – Molina's Bridge2Access Program

Molina created our exclusive Bridge2Accesssm Program which focuses on improving access to healthcare programs and services for seniors and people with disabilities. Take a look at what we've been working on thus far:

I. Detailed Information on Provider Accessibility in our Online and Written Directories

Members can choose their Primary Care Physician (PCP) based on their physical access needs.

II. Communication Access

ASL and Foreign Language Interpreters for every PCP and Specialist appointment. Molina will cover the cost of qualified interpreters. Members can request an interpreter through member services or you can request one by referring to the Cultural and Linguistic Services Guide (contact your Provider Services Representative if you need a copy!)

III. Information in Alternate Formats

Health Education and other materials are available in Braille, Large Font, Audio or other electronic formats. Large Font and Audio files may be available online at www.molinahealthcare.com and click on the Bridge2Access link. For Braille or other requests (procedure instructions, etc), call your provider services toll free number at (888) 665-4621.

IV. Improved Care Coordination

Members with complex needs and/or multiple chronic conditions may benefit from our individualized care managed program. Molina takes an interdisciplinary approach to case management. Let our team of nurses, social workers, health educators and medical directors help you coordinate care. To make a referral to case management contact Case Management queue: 1-800-526-8196, Ext. 127604 or FAX: 1-800-811-4804.

V. Transportation

Getting transportation to your office may be difficult for someone with a disability or mobility limitation. Have your patients call Molina member services at (888) 665-4621 to see if they qualify and to arrange transportation with at least 72 hours advanced notice.

Molina is committed to strengthening our partnership with our providers to ensure our SPD members have access to quality medical services. Here are some final tips on coordinating accommodations that might help you in your practice.

- Flexible Appointment times. Patients relying on public transportation may have challenges getting to your office i.e., bus lift isn't operational for a wheelchair user, etc.
- Longer Appointment times. If utilizing an interpreter, needing to assist a patient with a wheelchair transfer, person has a speech disability, etc; your actual appointment may take a little longer.
- Advance Preparation. Keep a record of a patient's access requirements prior your appointment. Utilize Molina's Patient Access Accommodation sheets.
- Ensure Sign Language Interpreter has been requested.

- Provide assistance to complete forms if needed. Someone who is blind, has a visual impairment or who has difficulty writing may need your assistance. Offer to take them to a private room.
- Allow Service Dogs. Patients utilizing service dogs to maintain their independence must be allowed to accompany patient to his/her appointment.

Be sure to explore the “Provider” section of the Molina website at www.molinahealthcare.com and click on the Bridge2Access logo for additional resources and information.

References

Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy; Brenda Premo, Director and June Kailes, Associate Director, disability consultants: <http://www.hfcdhp.org/>

World Institute on Disability: Access to Medical Care: <http://wid.org/access-to-health-care>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Disability and Health:
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/programs.html>