

PPO Network Provider Newsletter

Fall 2008



Billing Bilateral Procedures

Current Requirement

The First Choice Health PPO Network currently requires practitioners to bill for bilateral procedures (modifier 50) on two lines. The first line billed without the modifier, prices at 100% of allowable, the second line billed with modifier 50, prices at 50% of the allowable.

New Requirement

Effective October 1, 2008, we will require providers to bill using the industry standard of one line with modifier 50, and price to 150% of the allowable.

If you have questions please call Provider Relations at (800) 231-6935, ext. 2103.

2008 Electronic Health Records Grant Awards

\$3 Million in Grants Help Clinics Improve Their Quality of Care Through Electronic Initiatives

More than 40 physician practices, health clinics and hospitals, primarily in small and rural communities throughout the Pacific Northwest, are getting help to improve health care for their patients through information technology.

Health care providers throughout Washington, Alaska, Idaho and Oregon have been selected to receive up to \$20,000 from an innovative public-private partnership, the Washington Health Information Collaborative. The organization is comprised of First Choice Health (FCH), the Washington

State Health Care Authority (HCA), the Puget Sound Health Alliance and Qualis Health. First Choice Health and the HCA have contributed a million dollars (\$500,000 each) to the awards fund for 2008. This year, the Health Care Authority is funding three larger grants of up to \$50,000 each to address communitywide provider engagement and connectivity efforts. Organizational and in-kind services are contributed by the Alliance and Qualis. This is the fourth year of the awards program that has now distributed about \$3 million to health care providers since 2005.

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2008 Electronic Health Records Grant Awards

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“We are intentionally targeting smaller and more rural physicians’ practices for these awards,” says First Choice Health President/CEO Ken Hamm, “because we want to be sure that all people, even if they don’t live in the region’s big cities, have access to the best health care available. The cost of technological innovation is much greater for small physician practices than for large ones because there is less economy of scale.”

The Health Information Technology awards are intended to improve health care safety, quality and cost by enabling physicians and other practitioners to instantly and securely access accurate individual patient medical records, in addition to looking at aggregated data among all their patients for improved decision-making. As health care quality comparison reports become more common, physicians and hospitals are adopting technology to help them more consistently provide care that is effective in keeping their patients as healthy as possible.

The 2008 Award winners for First Choice Health include:

Alaska

- Alaska Women’s Advanced Pelvic Surgery & Urogynecology, LLC Anchorage, AK
- Anchorage Women’s Clinic Anchorage, AK
- Arctic Skye Family Medicine Palmer, AK
- Glacier Family Medicine, LLC Seward, AK

- Jan H. Nyboer, MD Anchorage, AK

Idaho

- Davis Family Medicine Boise, ID
- Idaho Falls Infectious Diseases, PLLC Idaho Falls, ID
- Ironwood Family Practice Coeur d’Alene, ID
- Meridian Adult Medicine Meridian, ID
- Shoshone Family Medical Center Shoshone, ID

Oregon

- Baker Clinic Baker City, OR
- Cascade Physicians, PC Portland, OR
- Cleary Medical Associates, LLC Portland, OR
- Columbia Gorge Family Medicine Hood River, OR
- Community Cancer Center Roseburg, OR
- J. Robert Ullrich, MD, LLC McMinnville, OR
- Richard J. Segal, MD, PC Salem, OR
- Rose City Clinic, LLP Portland, OR
- Salem Cardiology Associates, PC Salem, OR
- Salem Women’s Clinic, Inc / Salem Medical Associates Salem, OR
- Women’s Health Center of Oregon, PC Oregon City, OR

Washington

- Fir Creek Pediatrics University Place, WA
- Lakeshore Clinic, PLLC Bothell, WA
- Pioneer Family Practice, PLLC Lacey, WA
- Vista Family Health Kennewick, WA
- Women’s Health Connection Spokane, WA

For a complete list of both HCA and FCH winners please go to www.wahealthinfocollaborative.org

First Choice Health’s TPA

First Choice Health’s TPA, a payor under the First Choice Health PPO Network will be moving from McKesson’s Code Review Claims Editing System to McKesson’s Claim Check Claims Editing System later this year. Look for more information on our website as we make the transition.



2008 Provider Survey

First Choice Health recently received the results of our 2008 Provider Survey. Thank you very much to those of you who took the time to respond to the survey. This feedback is very beneficial.

The areas where providers scored First Choice Health positively were in customer service, provider relations and our improved web-based tools. The areas where you indicated you would like to see First Choice Health improve were in identifying where to send claims, identifying First Choice Health group number and group names and more timely claims payment.

We are initiating projects in 2009 to improve upon these identified areas and we’ll keep you apprised of our progress in upcoming newsletters.

Thank you for your continued support of First Choice Health.

Holiday Thoughts from our Chief Medical Officer: The Power of Human Kindness

By Ze'ev Young, MD, Chief Medical Officer



We are inundated on a daily basis with news of war, crime, illness, poverty, and a full slew of human calamities. So much in life seems unfair and not understood. Illness and chronic medical conditions abound. Medical advances have achieved new heights, but don't offer universal cures.

The world around us appears to be continuously changing, and becoming ever more technologically advanced. One component of our world that hasn't changed is the "Power of Human Kindness". As caring physicians, we are naturally in positions to deliver human kindness to our patients, families, colleagues, friends, and those we meet on a daily basis. Human kindness is an essential and powerful ingredient in the delivery of quality health care.

I recently had the privilege of hearing Doug Crabtree, the Board Chair of the Idaho Hospital Association, speak passionately about kindness at the annual meeting of the Idaho Hospital Association. A large group of hospital Chief Executive Officers, Chief Financial Officers, administrators, physicians, and volunteers listened attentively to real stories of how acts of human kindness impacted patients and their families. For many, it was the highlight of the conference. We heard of the vital and concrete roles kindness played in palliative and comfort care. We heard how a kind caring word, a listening ear, a heartfelt smile, a sincere compliment, a whisper of encouragement, a "thank you", a hug, and the holding of another's hand made all the difference in the worlds of our fellow human beings.

Our medicines and technologies are a vital part of health care delivery, but by themselves they are only part of the care picture. Even when medicines and our technologies don't offer a remedy, the power of human kindness retains its vital life-enriching effect and provides needed dignity to our patients. I fear that our volumes of patients, our many deadlines, our

rushed schedules, and our day-to-day disruptions often distract us from opportunities to display kindness and compassion. Mr. Crabtree appealed to his audience to not let the pressure and hard-working conditions in the patient care arena lead to rushed and impersonal interactions.

Patients need kindness. When folks are sick or hurt, they often feel helpless, vulnerable, and anxious. Our heritage is one of mercy, a heritage of displaying human kindness. Even with advanced medical technologies, the human side of care needs to be there. Our calling as physicians is to help a suffering human being feel better, even if we aren't able to provide a cure.

The goal, as stated by Mr. Crabtree, is to provide our patients with BOTH, the best possible evidence-based medical treatment AND the best possible human experience. He described kindness as the "oxygen" of the patient care experience.

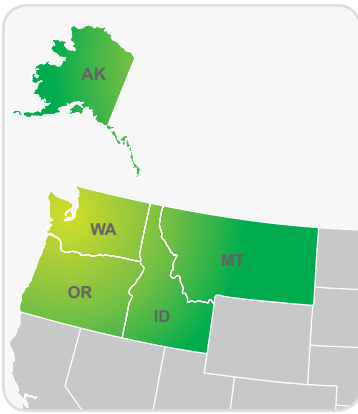
Mr. Crabtree also shared a few words about Moses Maimonides. Maimonides was a Renaissance man before the Renaissance, a philosopher, a physician to the sultan, and a renowned Torah scholar. In his masterful book, entitled "The Guide to the Perplexed", Maimonides attempted to reconcile scientific knowledge with faith and service to man. In a physician's "Oath" attributed to him, Maimonides wrote: "May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain. You have appointed me to watch over the life and health of Thy creatures. Here am I ready for my vocation. And now I turn unto my calling." These words offer an insightful framework for a commitment to compassion and kindness.

I left the conference with a "renewed" passion to search out opportunities to display kindness. Patients need us to connect with them in their time of need. We need to continue to help people feel better as we strive to get them better.

Kindness enriches the lives of both the giver and the recipient. I wish everyone a joyful, healthy and peaceful holiday season filled with an abundance of human kindness. Dr. Young can be reached at (206) 268-2430.

Reminder: Healthcare Direct Name Change

To enable our combined companies to compete locally and regionally, effective July 2008 Healthcare Direct changed its name to First Choice Health. Please contact Provider Relations at (800) 231-6935 extension 2103 if you have any questions regarding the name change.



State of the Network

In an ongoing effort to maximize savings to your clients, the First Choice Health PPO Network (FCHN) is always working to recruit new providers, target expansion areas, and fill any gaps that may exist within our network service area. We are pleased to announce that as of September 30, 2008, our network includes 47,786 practitioners, 233 hospitals, and 2,008 ancillary facilities.

Client Updates:

New Payors:

- Benefit Management Services, Inc has been accessing FCHN as a Beech Street client/payor since October 1, 2004, and now has a direct relationship with FCHN effective July 1, 2008. Their first direct group, also effective July 1, is National Council for Air & Stream Improvement (NCASI).
- Stein Distributing, Inc, administered by Mercer, was effective July 1, 2008.
- Summit Administration Services Inc, the payor for Nooksack River Casino, has contracted directly with FCHN for new group access, including Stephens Media Group effective February 1, 2008.
- VentureNet Healthcare and their group One Source Employee Services were effective July 1, 2008.

Terminating Payors:

- Coalition America terminates December 31, 2008.

Other Updates:

- Evergreen Community Healthcare will change their venue of access to FCHN from a direct relationship (with claims administration by Zenith) to access via First Choice Health Administrators effective January 1, 2009.
- Group Health Options' groups that did not have access in Kootenai County, Idaho and Spokane County, Washington will have full FCHN access effective April 1, 2008.
- Samaritan Health Plans, an Oregon-only client since January 1, 2006, has been added.

Other News:

- Government Employees Health Association (GEHA) will be updating their member ID cards with FCHN's claims address starting January 1, 2009.
- Kipp & Company will be updating their member ID cards with FCHN's claims address starting October 1, 2008.
- MultiCare Health Systems and Valley Medical Center will access FCHN via First Choice Health Administrators effective January 1, 2009.

2008 Holiday Schedule

First Choice Health will observe the Thanksgiving Holiday November 27th and 28th as well as the Christmas Holiday December 24th and 25th. We will also be closed January 1st, 2009 in observance of New Year's Day. Access to our Customer Service and Provider Relations voicemail systems will be available while we are closed. We will respond to all messages within 24 hours of re-opening.

If you have any questions regarding the holiday schedule, please contact Provider Relations at (800) 231-6935 extension 2103.

Provider Bulletin Index

Since January 2008, all providers should have received the following Provider Bulletins:



Control Number	Subject
PRB 02-08-01	Group Health Options access to FCHN CAM Providers
PRB 03-08-01	Retail Drug Employees Welfare Trust termination and transition to Sound Health & Wellness Trust
PRB 03-08-02	Mutual of Omaha name change to Coventry Health Care
PRB 04-08-01	LAST REMINDER Quarterly Provider Newsletter Web access
PRB 04-08-01	Healthcare Management Administrators, Inc.
PRB 05-08-02	NPI Readiness Statement
PRB 05-08-01	June 1st Client Changes
PRB 06-08-01	July 1st Client Changes
PRB 08-08-01	System Enhancement to Bilateral Procedure Billing
PRB 08-08-02	Mega Life and Healthcare Insurance Company and MidWest

Please contact Provider Relations at (800) 231-6935 extension 2103 if you did not receive a copy and would like one. These are also available for download on the web site at: <http://www.fchn.com/ppo/providers/ProviderBulletins.aspx>.