

Keeping Health Care Affordable
For Workers And Their Families

ISSUE 3 — 2017

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Washington Health
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A banner image featuring the BridgeHealth logo on the left and a surgical scene with bright lights on the right. An orange text box is overlaid on the surgical scene.

BridgeHealth

Big Savings: According to BridgeHealth, the average price paid for knee replacement surgery is \$47,667. However, BridgeHealth's negotiated case rate is \$22,158—a savings of \$25,509, or over 50%!

BRIDGEHEALTH FOR LOWER COSTS, HIGHER QUALITY SURGICAL CARE

With costs for surgery skyrocketing, one of the most popular programs available to our member health plans is the BridgeHealth Surgery Benefit Program. This innovative program provides access to the highest quality surgical care, at no cost to the participant. **That's right: all surgical costs and travel expenses for the patient are paid,** including any deductible, copay or coinsurance!

A Companion Comes for Free

In addition, travel costs, including airfare, food and lodging, are paid for a companion whom the patient can choose to accompany them, as a caregiver.

BridgeHealth: Good for Your Plan...

Currently, ten health plans — covering nearly 60,000 lives

annually — have been able to benefit from BridgeHealth through HCCMCA. Nationally, BridgeHealth covers over 1 million lives.

BridgeHealth saves participating plans money—typically 20% to 40% below the discounted PPO rate—by bundling costs and pre-negotiating fixed case rates for high-dollar, non-urgent surgical treatments such as total hip or knee replacement, women's health, coronary artery bypass graft or spinal fusion.

...And Good for Your Health Plan Participants

For plan participants seeking non-urgent surgery, BridgeHealth provides the option of having surgery at one of 106 Centers of Excellence in their nationwide network, each of which has a proven

record for top-quality care, minimal complications, reduced recovery times and healthy outcomes.

With Personalized Care from Start to Finish

A dedicated BridgeHealth Care Coordinator provides personalized service for the patient every step of the way, including help understanding BridgeHealth benefits, gathering medical records, choosing a facility and surgeon, obtaining Plan approval, arranging travel and pre- and post-operative scheduling.

For more information, please visit BridgeHealth.com or contact them directly.
Phone: 855-456-9064 (toll-free)
Email: sales@bridgehealth.com. □

PRESCRIPTION FORMULARY MANAGEMENT: THE CORNERSTONE OF COST CONTAINMENT

For many plans, implementing formulary management for prescription drug plans is a proven way to help manage costs. Formulary management saves plans money by not covering some expensive drugs — however, a clinically appropriate alternative drug is always available.


Participating member plans enjoy lower trend and lower per-member-per-year drug costs through the HCCMCA's partnership with National CooperativeRx, compared to pharmacy benefit plans covered by other vendors.

“One of the ways we achieve great savings for our members is by promoting good pharmaceutical plan practices,” explains Wayne Salverda, Senior Director of Clinical Services at National CooperativeRx. “Member plans who adopt the formulary can realize significant cost savings.”

For example, in the first quarter of 2017, CVS/caremark member plans' per-member-per-month (PMPM) cost when using formulary management was \$85.90 (compared to \$121.12 for plans that did not use formulary management).

Formulary management helps leverage savings in many ways. One way is guiding participants and prescribers to lower cost options, specifically by narrowing down the drugs that are available to participants. Of course, there will always be a clinically appropriate drug available. Also, while CVS/caremark has price protection built into many of their manufacturer contracts, preferred

brands on the formulary are more likely to be subject to these terms. This helps keep costs in check.

If you are interested in learning more about how adopting formulary management through HCCMCA and National CooperativeRx can help your health plan save money, contact Wayne Salverda, Senior Director of Clinical Services at National CooperativeRx: wsalverda@nationalcooperativerx.com. 

DID YOU KNOW?

Marketing and Medicine
Pharmaceutical companies spend millions of dollars to advertise certain branded drugs (for example, the well-known branded antidepressant drug, Prozac, is known generically as Fluoxetine.) Although both branded and generics contain the same active ingredient(s), branded drugs such as Prozac cost more to purchase because of their perceived higher value by consumers—based on consumer-targeted advertisements paid for by the pharmaceutical companies! In fact, in 2016, \$5.6 billion was spent by Pharma on direct-to-consumer advertising (an increase of 9% from 2015). The United States is one of only two countries that allow this type of marketing. Research indicates 21% of patients ask for a specific drug when doctors write prescriptions, and 92% of the time, the doctors comply.



HCCMCA Looks to Washington Health Alliance for Focus



Whether it's politicians squabbling over "Repeal and Replace," or patient-specific cancer treatments based on DNA, a challenging—and exciting—era is here for health care in the U.S. From new research discoveries to shifting insurance regulations, the changes are constant. HCCMCA understands how crucial it is to stay current with these developments. We actively pursue partnerships with key organizations so that we can help our member plans prepare for—and benefit from—what's coming.

To this end, HCCMCA is an active participant in the Washington Health Alliance and its Purchaser Affinity Group. (The Washington Health Alliance is a nonprofit organization that shares data on health care quality to help purchasers and plans make better decisions about health care.)

"The Washington Health Alliance conducts a deep, detailed analysis of a specific health care topic, and creates reports that are vetted by all parties in the industry—participants, insurers, etc.," said Randy Scott, Northwest Membership Representative for HCCMCA.

These topics are often then picked up and investigated further, by other groups.

The Alliance is especially valuable as an information exchange; "They're all about attempting to help the industry focus in one direction by getting all the players together to talk about, for example,

the opioids issue. What are we really doing about it?" explained Scott.

The Purchaser Affinity Group adds value by helping members gain information that can enable more beneficial contracts with providers. "They are a great resource for us to learn about all of the important things happening in health care, or when looking at market trends," added Scott.

In May and June, for example, the Purchaser Affinity Group met with representatives from commercial health plans to hear updates on topics including: value-based health care, cost management and consumer engagement.

HCCMCA also gains visibility in the Pacific Northwest by participating in the Washington Health Alliance

In September, Executive Director Fred Brown was a panelist at the quarterly All-Alliance meeting where they discussed strategies for moving the Washington health care market to one of high value. The Alliances defines value in health care as "high-quality care and a good patient experience at a fair price." Additionally, Brown and Scott presented to the Purchaser Affinity Group on the advantages for health benefit plans who participate in a coalition, such as HCCMCA, to achieve value in health care. ☐

CALENDAR

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (IFEBP) 63ND ANNUAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS CONFERENCE

October 22 – 25, 2017
Las Vegas, NV

HCCMCA / National CooperativeRX Reception

Join us for complimentary drinks, heavy hors d'oeuvres and great company!

Monday, October 23, 2017
Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino
4:30p.m. – 6:30p.m.

Attendance is limited, so be sure to RSVP here: www.nationalcooperativerx.com/event/ifebp-reception-vegas/ ☐

CHOOSING WISELY® SUMMIT

Friday, October 27
8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m.
DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton – SeaTac

www.wahealthalliance.org/events/event/choosing-wisely-summit-improving-value-in-health-care

HCCMCA QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

November 15, 2017 ☐

Save the Date!

NATIONAL COOPERATIVERX AND HCCMCA ANNUAL MEETING

March 20-21, 2018
Hotel Captain Cook
Anchorage, Alaska

Reception: Evening of
March 20, 2018

Annual Business Meeting:
March 21, 2018 ☐

3000 A Street, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99503

**READ ABOUT
PRESCRIPTION FORMULARY
MANAGEMENT SAVES \$\$\$\$\$, P. 2.**

Since 1994, Health Care Cost Management Corporation of Alaska, Inc. (HCCMCA) has been helping member health plans control health care costs by negotiating better pricing on health benefits and services than these same plans could achieve on their own. Current member health plans include 27 headquartered in Alaska and 19 headquartered in the Pacific Northwest.

HCCMCA ENCOURAGES CHOOSING WISELY®

“Is that medical test or procedure really necessary?”

Americans today enjoy 24/7 access to on-line health care information, with advice on everything from abdominal pain to the Zika Virus. However, there's a hidden downside to this bounty of information: health care consumers are increasingly requesting tests, procedures, and medications that are unnecessary—which can ultimately raise overall health plan expenses.

To help counteract this trend, HCCMCA has been working with the Washington Health Alliance to promote “Choosing Wisely®,” an initiative of the American Board of Internal Medicine and national

HCCMCA member plans have full access to all of the Choosing Wisely® campaign materials, to help your participants become better engaged in their health care.

communications campaign backed by Consumer Reports. The campaign provides resources that encourage conversations between physicians and patients about smart and effective health care choices.

Information Everyone can Access and Understand

The 12-month communications campaign includes a large selection of free, ready-to-use materials from trusted sources. It's easy-to-understand messaging is delivered in bite-sized chunks.

The materials cover widespread topics, like “Antibiotics: When you need them and when you don't” and “Five ways to be smart about back pain.” Formats include brochures, posters, videos, rack cards and even supporting Tweets! Medical categories range from prescription drugs to imaging to prevention, and more—all to help promote better health care consumerism.

For more information go to:
<http://oyh.wacommunitycheckup.org/partners/choosingwisely/>

To join the campaign, contact Laurie Kavanagh at lkavanagh@wahealthalliance.org 