

July 2020

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Caring for Our Communities

The past weeks and months have been distressing for our country. A national pandemic, stay at home orders, and store closings, which have resulted in economic, health, and personal uncertainty. Then the nation watched images of George Floyd's death in police custody. This was traumatizing; leading to powerful and emotional demonstrations and protests across the country as well as here in Arkansas.

Empower believes in equality and diversity. We are dedicated, connected, and invested in our communities. Our staff live and work in the communities we serve. We are committed to our mission of empowering individuals to lead fuller, healthier lives at home and in their communities. Empower is committed to recognizing and caring for the culturally diverse needs of the members we serve. Empower acknowledges the unrest and the uncertainty, anxiety and fear occurring and we are here to help.

Care Coordinators are assisting members during this time by:

- Assisting to locate food resources and ensuring members have an adequate food supply
- Ensuring members have an adequate supply of their medications
- Ensuring services continue for our members for all needs including personal care supplies, home health, DD waiver services, mental health, etc.
- Increased contact and follow up with our members who are identified as either High, Moderate, or Low Risk (all categories receiving additional calls vs. the one time per month pre COVID)



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- Members who are identified as High Risk receive 3 contacts per week from the CC
- Members who are identified as Moderate Risk receive 1 contact per week from the CC
- Members who are identified as Low Risk receive 2 contacts per month from the CC

Providers and members can reach out to the Care Coordinators or Care Coordinator Supervisors by emailing CareCoordination@empowerhcs.com to assist with any healthcare needs. For Empower resources including available food, housing and shelter information by region click [here](#).

For National resources we recommend:

- The Culture and Trauma resource kits from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center/National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/culture-and-trauma>
- American Public Health Association position paper: “Addressing Law Enforcement Violence as a Public Health Issue”: <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/29/law-enforcement-violence>
- Articles on Racial Violence as Repetitive Trauma:
 - <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/05/28/george-floyd-ahmaud-arbery-covid-emotional-toll-hits-black-families/5270216002/>
 - <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/viral-videos-killings-black-men-takes-toll-black/story?id=70909409>
 - <https://undark.org/2020/05/12/health-lesson-ahmaud-arbery-murder/>
- Stress and Trauma Toolkit for Treating Historically Marginalized Populations in a Changing Political and Social Environment: <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/stress-and-trauma>
- Fact sheet library on Mental Health Disparities and Diverse Populations: <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/mental-health-facts>
- Stress and Trauma Toolkit specifically relating to the impact of racism and police brutality on African American people: <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/stress-and-trauma/african-americans>
- Beacon Health Options: [Caring for Our Communities](#)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault.

American Psychiatric Association (APA) has developed a toolkit to help providers understand the unique circumstances facing historically marginalized populations, and the impact that the current sociopolitical climate in the United States has on their mental health. These populations share some commonalities: historical trauma, impact from the current sociopolitical climate, and biopsychosocial risk for anxiety, depression, and trauma. Some of the things this toolkit aims to give providers are:

- Deeper understanding of cultural concepts of distress, and of how the social determinants of mental health affect these vulnerable populations.
- Suggested recommendations for screening and treatment for anxiety, depression, trauma, PTSD, including partnering with primary care providers to deliver integrated care where appropriate.
- General treatment recommendations and resources applicable for all population groups experiencing stress and trauma.

For a full list of this toolkit click [here](#).

Staying Safe During COVID-19

Abuse is about power and control. When survivors are forced to stay in the home or in close proximity to their abuser more frequently, an abuser can use any tool to exert control over their victim, including a national health concern such as COVID-19. In a time where companies may be encouraging their employees work remotely, and the CDC is encouraging “social distancing” an abuser may take advantage of an already stressful situation to gain more control.

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline <https://www.thehotline.org/> COVID-19 could uniquely impact intimate partner violence survivors:

- Abusive partners may share misinformation about the pandemic to control or frighten survivors, or to prevent them from seeking appropriate medical attention if they have symptoms
- Programs that service survivors may be significantly impacted – shelters may be full or may even stop intakes altogether. Survivors may also fear entering shelter because of being in close quarters with groups of people

If this seems to be happening to any of your members, below are two links to help with safety plans.

- [What is a safety Plan](#)
- [Interactive Safety Plan](#)

Excerpts: American Psychiatric Association –Stress & Trauma Toolkit; National Domestic Violence Hotline





July is National Minority Mental Health Month

During National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, the HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) will launch a free and accredited e-learning program: [Improving Cultural Competency for Behavioral Health Professionals](#). This new program is part of OMH's [Think Cultural Health E-Learning Curricula](#), which are developed to help build knowledge and skills related to the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (National CLAS Standards).

In addition to the launch of the [behavioral health e-learning program](#), OMH will join partners at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels to help raise awareness about mental illness and its effects on racial and ethnic minority populations.

According to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#):

- In 2017, 41.5% of youth ages 12-17 received care for a major depressive episode, but only 35.1% of black youth and 32.7% of Hispanic youth received treatment for their condition.
- Asian American adults were less likely to use mental health services than any other racial/ethnic group.
- In 2017, 13.3% of youth ages 12-17 had at least one depressive episode, but that number was higher among American Indian and Alaska Native youth at 16.3% and among Hispanic youth at 13.8%.
- In 2017, 18.9% of adults (46.6 million people) had a mental illness. That rate was higher among people of two or more races at 28.6%, non-Hispanic whites at 20.4% and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders at 19.4%.

Despite advances in health equity, disparities in mental health care persist. The [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#) reports that racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. are less likely to have access to mental health services, less likely to use community mental health services, more likely to use emergency departments, and more likely to receive lower quality care. Poor mental health care access and quality contribute to poor mental health outcomes, including suicide, among racial and ethnic minority populations.

The HHS Office of Minority Health encourages all our partners to educate their community about the importance of improving access to mental health care and treatment and to help break down other barriers such as negative perceptions about mental illness.

Visit this web page during National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month for downloadable materials, events and health resources. [National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

Excerpts: Minority Mental Health Awareness Month—July—U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health

Welcome Kristy Strain, New Vice President of Network Strategy and Management

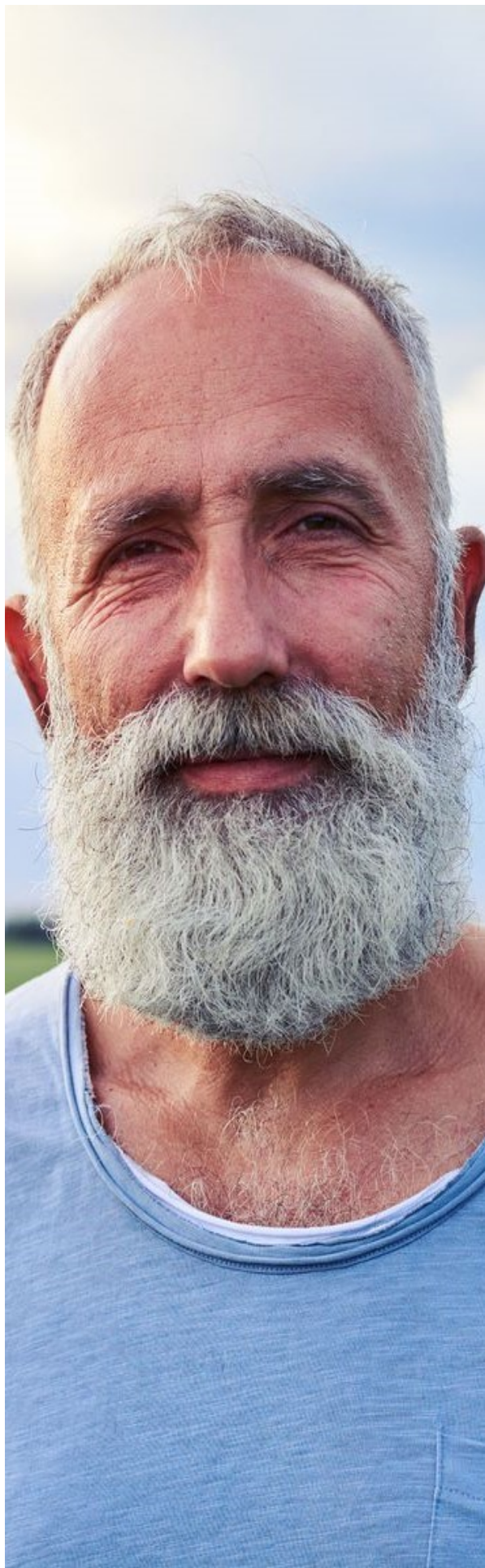


Empower Healthcare Solutions would like to introduce you to our new Vice President of Network Strategy and Management, Kristy Strain.

Most recently Kristy O'Connor Strain served as VP of Medicare Operations for Shared Health (wholly owned by BCBST). In her role as VP of Medicare her primary responsibilities were the CMS application & bid preparation, strategic partnerships, network development, implementation and launch of product, development of multi-year business and sales strategies, P & L responsibility and drive market share through innovation and product positioning.

Prior to joining Shared Health, Kristy O'Connor Strain served as, SVP and Co-founder of LTSS Innovation Group. Kristy is widely regarded as an innovative leader and thinker in government programs (Medicaid and Medicare) and has designed and implemented new, patient-focused approaches to healthcare delivery. Kristy's role includes building key strategic business relationships and thought leadership relating to LTSS and Complex Care Populations (IDD/SNP/Duals/ABD/TANF). Evaluating emerging markets, technology and trends to assemble a portfolio of services, offering solutions to drive growth through key strategic partners and to increase revenue and market share through innovative initiatives.

Kristy also successfully implemented the CMS Medicare Medicaid Plan (MMP) demonstration in 4 states for Centene. As the Corporate Director of Complex Care she was responsible for the all product and program design, implementation and management (end to end accountability) of all complex care products within Centene and its portfolio of subsidiaries, products; Medicare Medicaid Plans, DSNP, LTSS, IDD, ABD, TANF. Responsible for understanding the Complex Care market; develop and executive "go to market" strategies to gain market share and increase revenue. Created innovative programs to meet the unique needs of all vulnerable populations and developed specialty networks to support vulnerable populations. Led and supported all Centene health plans in the complex care space by providing subject matter expertise in the area of Complex Care, Medicare, Medicaid, public sector interaction and regulatory requirements. Led high performing cross-functional team that supported product design and implementation. Developed all operating policies and procedures; workflows and processes, monitor and analyze product performance and make ongoing recommendations on modifications/enhancements to meet CMS and State readiness requirements and to improve competitive position and increase market share. Utilized ability to interpret analytics to promote change and drive outcomes; claims & IT systems capabilities. Introduced new products, programs and benefits that reflected key market trends and States' needs and evolving regulations and budgetary constraints. Developed multi-stakeholder collaborative workgroups to discuss concerns in forums with decision makers present.



CES Waiver Codes

The 2020 Community and Employment Supports (CES) Waiver codes, modifiers, and rates went into effect on April 1, 2020. The previous waiver codes and rates sunset on June 30, 2020 and are longer available for use effective July 1, 2020. Prior authorization requests needed to be submitted and authorized by June 30, 2020 for all Empower members.

If you have questions about the transition process or the new codes and rates, please email LaTosha Brown at LaTosha.Brown@empowerhcs.com.

Avoid Claim Denials and Rejections

Empower is committed to paying claims appropriately and timely. In the future there will be hard validation against the state file, so please ensure to have the following information updated with Arkansas Medicaid and Empower.

- Provider name (as noted on current W-9 form)
- National Provider Identifier (NPI) –does not apply to atypical providers
- Medicaid Identification Number – does apply to atypical providers
- Tax Identification Number (TIN)
- Taxonomy code
- Physical location address
- Billing name and address (as noted on current W-9 form)

Please reach out to [Arkansas Medicaid Provider Enrollment](#) to ensure your information is up to date.

Provider Closings due to COVID-19

Empower needs your assistance to ensure members have necessary access to needed care. Please report the following to empower.network@empowerhcs.com due to COVID-19:

- Any closings
- Any reopenings
- Changes in open or closing times
- Implementing special or extended services

Coronavirus Provider Alerts

Empower is taking steps to prepare for the unique challenges related to the developing COVID-19 outbreak and resulting declared state of emergency in Arkansas. The uncertainty posed by a public health emergency can cause stress and anxiety among many individuals. Therefore, core to our plan is ensuring that members have access to routine and emergency services.

The following is a list of alerts related to COVID-19:

- ◆ [Use of Well Checks for EIDT and ADDT providers during COVID-19 Outbreak 6.1.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Services to be Provided by FQHC and RHC 5.8.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Provider Alert Summary 4.27.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Additional Services Ready to Bill 4.23.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus-FQHC & RHC Flexibilities in Service Provision 4.21.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus-Additional Services Ready to Bill 4.17.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Services Ready to Bill 4.14.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Mental Health Diagnosis 4.14.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Master Treatment Plan Services 4.10.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Marital and Family Behavioral Health Counseling 4.10.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Crisis Intervention 4.10.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Mobile Clinics and COVID-19 Screenings 4.7.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - EIDT/ADDT Nursing 4.7.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Autism EPSDT 4.7.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - PT, OT, ST Assistant Telehealth 4.3.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Nurse Practitioners Telehealth 4.3.20](#)
- ◆ [COVID-19 Lab Fees 3-26-20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Behavioral Assistance 3.24.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - New Modifier for Supplemental Support Services 3.24.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - PT, OT, ST Telehealth 3.24.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - BH Telehealth 3.20.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Physician Telehealth 3.20.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Developmental Disability CES Waiver Billing 3.16.20](#)
- ◆ [COVID-19 CMS Codes 3.13.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Provider Voluntary Self-Report 3.13.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus 3.12.20](#)

As we execute our plan, we will keep you updated via alerts, our [website](#), and our [Facebook](#) page. Please click [here](#) for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19.

For Up to Date and Additional Key Information regarding COVID-19:

CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

Arkansas Department of Health

<https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/>





Empower's Special Investigations Unit

Empower's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) reviews and monitors claims and billing practices of providers by conducting audits to ensure compliance with Federal and State documentation and billing requirements, as well as to monitor the providers for fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA).

The SIU is required by law to recover any identified overpayment. Providers are expected to follow the Empower Provider Handbook and all requirements set forth by the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Medical Services (DMS).

SIU activities, are initiated by referrals, or identified by, the SIU team that indicated potential FWA. The SIU receives referrals from internal and external sources such as:

- Government agencies – federal, state and other regulatory agencies
- Empower staff
- Providers
- Members
- Empower's compliance and ethics hotline

SIU Audit Process

All referrals are reviewed and evaluated by Empower SIU staff to determine the appropriate next steps. Potential actions may include:

- Accepting the referral for investigation and conducting claims data analysis and/or an audit of the provider's records
- Sending the referral to a more appropriate Empower department for review and handling
- Closing the referral without investigation because the referral does not represent a potential FWA issue or the associated risk is low

When conducting an SIU audit, the Auditor assigned to the case will review the provider's claims data for suspicious billing activity and select a random or targeted sample of member claims for audit. The provider will be notified of the audit and the request for member records.

The auditor will review the records submitted by the provider and determine if the services were documented and billed properly per Arkansas Medicaid rules and other applicable requirements.

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Upon completion of the audit, the provider will receive an audit report detailing the audit findings. If the provider disagrees with the findings and requests an appeal, the appeal will be reviewed by the Empower SIU Appeals Committee and the provider will be informed of the Committee's final decision.

When billing and/or documentation errors are identified, the following corrective actions may be required:

- Submitting a Corrective Action Plan identifying the steps the provider will take to correct the deficiencies
- Repaying the claims that were not adequately supported or billed correctly
- Referring the provider to Empower's Credentialing Committee for potential contract termination or suspension of referrals

If fraud is suspected or confirmed during the audit, the SIU will follow regulatory and contractual requirements, which may include notifying Arkansas Medicaid and/or law enforcement.

Reporting FWA

To report Fraud, Waste or Abuse to Empower's SIU:

Phone: 844-487-0329

Website: <https://empower.ethix360.com/>

Email: SIU@beaconhealthoptions.com

Mail: Empower Healthcare Solutions, LLC
PO BOX 211446
Eagan, MN 55121

Resources:

Stay in the know with these useful links!

Empower Resource Links:

[Provider Alerts](#)

[Provider Billing FAQ](#)

[Quick Reference Guide](#)

[Clinical Practice Guidelines](#)

[Provider FAQ](#)

[Empower Ethix360](#)

[Provider Handbook](#)

Arkansas DHS Resource Links:

[DMS: PASSE](#)

[Office of PASSE Ombudsman](#)

[PASSE Information for Providers](#)

[Provider Enrollment](#)



Provider Satisfaction Survey

Empower Healthcare Solutions will launch its first Provider Satisfaction Survey in September 2020. SPH Analytics (SPH), a research firm, has been contracted by Empower to administer the survey. This Provider Satisfaction Survey will be conducted with PCPs and medical and behavioral health physicians in the Empower network to measure their satisfaction with the health plan. SPH includes both physicians and office managers in the survey because research indicates that both have unique experiences working with the health plan that they can share and each perspective is important to capture.

Provider Satisfaction Survey Timeline

The Provider Satisfaction Survey process is expected to begin September 1, 2020. Providers will receive the survey, a cover letter, and an invitation to take the survey electronically. The communication will include a URL link to complete the survey via the internet. For those who do not respond initially, a replacement survey letter will be sent. For those who do not complete the survey electronically, surveyors will then make telephone calls (up to three attempts) in order to complete the survey by telephone.

Survey Activities	Timeline	Approximate Dates ± 2 weeks
Initial Survey Survey, cover letter, and invitation to take the survey via internet is mailed.		9/01/2020
Replacement Survey Survey, cover letter, and invitation to take the survey via internet is mailed to non-responders.	20 days following Initial Survey	9/20/2020
Telephone Interviews Telephone calls to conduct survey via telephone interview for those who did not respond to internet-based survey	20 days following Replacement Survey Continue for 30 days	10/10/2020 through 11/10/2020
Survey Data Collection Ends		11/10/2020
Survey Results Published On the Empower website and in the Empower Provider Newsletter		Winter 2020-2021

Provider Satisfaction Survey Tool

The SPH Provider Satisfaction Survey was developed to measure and compare the performance of health plans in key service areas among providers and office staff of the provider community. The current survey was tested and released in 2013. The survey includes 33 scaled questions, 7 demographic questions, and one open-ended question.

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The Survey includes the following themes:

- Empower's Call Center Service
- Empower's Finance and Claims Processing Services
- Coordination of Care between Empower Medical and Behavioral Health Network Providers
- Utilization Management Services
- Pharmacy Services
- Provider Relations Services
- Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty

Provider Satisfaction Survey Results

At the conclusion of the Empower Provider Satisfaction Survey, the results will be used to identify improvement opportunities and will be shared with providers, members, and Arkansas DHS. The results will be published and available via the Empower Healthcare Solutions website and provider newsletter.

Empower Care Coordinators to Receive Trauma Informed Care Training

Care Coordinators and Care Coordination Supervisors will receive at least 20 hours of trauma specific training by 12/31/20 to increase the knowledge of trauma, reduce re-traumatization of members, and to link and advocate for members to receive evidence-based treatment.

What does "Trauma Informed" mean?

A trauma-informed system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive.

What will Care Coordinators do to become "Trauma Informed"?

Care Coordinators will participate in specialized training for trauma via quarterly Relias trainings and participation with the online UAMS ARBEST Program monthly webinars.

Educational Opportunities

The following is a list of available trainings offered by Empower Healthcare Solutions:

- Acute and Psychiatric Residential Treatment
- Community and Employment Supports (CES) Waiver: An expansive overview of services, descriptions, and codes
- Assisting Providers with Independent Assessments at Empower
- Care Coordination Overview
- Person Centered Service Plan
- Incident Reporting for Empower Providers
- Empower Provider Orientation
- InterQual and Medical Necessity Evaluations
- Arkansas InterQual Inpatient Provider Training
- Provider Portal: Prior Authorization and Claims
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment and Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF)
- Inpatient Authorizations: Navigating Identifi and Medical Necessity
- Outpatient Services and Home and Community Based Services
- Personal Care Services
- Overview of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Day Treatment Services
- Developmental Disability Services

To access a training slide deck click [here](#) and go to Educational Opportunities.

For more information or to schedule a training for your organization, please contact empowerhealthcaresolutionsPR@empowerhcs.com



Upcoming Webinars

Provider Orientation—This webinar will cover Empower related information including provider responsibilities, provider resources, member rights and responsibilities, eligibility, covered services, utilization management, care coordination, claims submission, quality improvement, the Empower portal, and more.

Provider Orientation		
Tuesday, July 21, 2020	10:00 am—11:30 am	Register Here!
Tuesday, August 18, 2020	10:00 am—11:30 am	Register Here!
Tuesday, September 15, 2020	10:00 am—11:30 am	Register Here!

Open Forum Calls— Password 584493—This forum is intended to answer questions about Empower claims, utilization management, care coordination, and the CES Waiver Transition. Please remember that PHI should not be shared on these calls.

Open Forum Calls		
Monday, July 6, 2020	12:00 pm—12:30 pm	Join Here!

Inpatient Prior Authorization Requirements for Antipsychotics

In order to prevent disruption in medication regimen, all Empower members under 18 years of age who start a new antipsychotic or change to a different chemical entity will need the following documentation at the time of discharge. Please make sure you're completing and submitting the following to Empower *before* the member is discharged from the Inpatient facility.

- **Informed Consent** (members who are under 18 years old). Link to form: <https://link.zixcentral.com/u/9bb3c371/fAY1IZex6hGXw8ZCKXgf9A?u=https%3A%2F%2Fs18637.pcdn.co%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F17%2FMedication-Informed-Consent-Document-Under-18.pdf>
- **Prior Authorization form** Link to form: https://link.zixcentral.com/u/eb531543/OHI1IZex6hGXw8ZCKXgf9A?u=https%3A%2F%2Fs18637.pcdn.co%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F17%2FARRx_PA_Request_Form.pdf
- **Baseline Metabolic lab results**
- Prescribers can fax the consent form, labs, and PA request to 1-866-546-0484

All pharmacy information, updates, provider alerts, and forms can also be found on the [pharmacy page](#) of our website.

Important Contact Information

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855-429-1028

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Utilization Management

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To visit our website please go to:
www.getempowerhealth.com

On our website you will find:

- Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Contracting with Empower
- Cultural Competency Plan
- Forms and Resources
- Incident Reporting
- Provider Alerts
- Provider FAQ
- Provider Billing FAQ
- Provider Handbook
- Provider Portal
- Pharmacy Provider Guideline

Please feel free to share this newsletter.

If you would like to receive the newsletter, provider alerts, or training information please register for the provider distribution list at the following link.

[Provider Signup](#)

Division of Medical Services
(DMS)

toll-free numbers:

Beneficiary Eligibility
800-482-8988

Beneficiary Coverage
800-482-5431

Office of PASSE Ombudsman
844-843-7351