



Enhancing healthcare interoperability: Empower's partnership with Arkansas SHARE

Empower Healthcare Solutions announces a significant milestone in its ongoing commitment to enhancing healthcare interoperability and ensuring its provider network has access to critical healthcare information.

Empower has teamed up with the Health Information Exchange (HIE) Arkansas State Health Alliance for Records Exchange (SHARE) to bring providers even more streamlined and efficient access to essential patient care information.

Empower's collaboration with Arkansas SHARE is driven by its dedication to improving patient care and making work as providers smoother and more efficient. With this partnership, Empower is proud to offer providers two crucial initiatives:

■ **Access to Patient-Centered Service Plan (PCSP) Information:** Empower understands the importance of having timely access to members' PCSP information. Empower and SHARE are working together to ensure that providers can access this critical information seamlessly through a provider's SHARE account. This enhancement will empower providers to provide the highest level of care to patients by having their PCSP details at fingertips.

■ **Simplified Prior Authorization Information:** Dealing with prior authorizations can often be a cumbersome process. Empower is committed to making this process easier for providers. Through collaboration with SHARE, Empower staff has simplified access to prior authorization information. Providers can now obtain this crucial data swiftly and efficiently, allowing providers to focus more on patient care and less on administrative tasks.

For providers who are not currently part of the SHARE HIE, taking advantage of these benefits is just a few steps away. To join the SHARE network and start exchanging health data, please

complete the form at the following link: sharearkansas.com/contact/join-share/. Once the organization is part of SHARE, providers be on their way to accessing the enhanced healthcare information that Empower and SHARE are proud to offer.

Empower is dedicated to supporting provider in delivering the highest quality care to patients. Empower's collaboration with Arkansas SHARE is a testament to the company's commitment to providing providers with the tools and resources needed to excel in the role of healthcare providers.

If providers have any questions or need assistance with the on-boarding process for SHARE, please do not hesitate to reach out to Empower's dedicated support team. Staff members are here to ensure a smooth transition and provide the support providers need to leverage these new capabilities fully.

Empower thanks providers for continued partnership and dedication to improving healthcare outcomes. Together, Empower and providers can achieve great strides in enhancing patient care through improved interoperability and access to critical healthcare information.

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Empower Chief Medical Officer encourages providers to educate members on vaccines

The New Year is in full swing and with everything that a new year brings it also includes a trio of respiratory viruses, creating a so-called, “triple-demic”.

Dr. Bradley Diner, Empower Chief Medical Officer, encourages “providers to help advance our efforts to keep our members well during this difficult season of illness by educating them and encouraging them to vaccinate against all the illnesses that they may be susceptible to.”

Every year, the top three: influenza (flu), COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cause hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths during the fall and winter virus season. Arkansans now have more tools than ever before to help people protect themselves, their families, and communities, including:

- Safe, updated immunizations – For the first time ever, immunizations are available for all three major fall and winter respiratory diseases – flu, COVID-19, and RSV (for groups eligible for RSV immunization).

- Widely available, effective treatments – Treatments are available for flu and COVID-19 and can reduce severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

- Everyday actions – Other tools like masking, physical distancing, washing hands, and improving airflow in the places where people live and work can provide an additional layer of protection.

- Immunization against flu, COVID-19, and RSV remains the best way to safeguard against hospitalizations, long-term health impacts, and death.

In August and September 2023, the

Centers for Disease Control made the following recommendations:

- Everyone 6 months and older should receive the seasonal 2023-2024 influenza vaccine and the updated 2023-24 COVID-19 vaccine.

- All infants should be protected against severe RSV either through vaccination of pregnant women 32 through 36 weeks of gestation (Pfizer RSVpreF only) from September through January, or through immunization of infants less than 8 months born during or who are entering their first RSV season with nirsevimab, a monoclonal antibody. In addition, some children aged 8 through 19 months at increased risk for severe RSV should receive nirsevimab when entering their second RSV season.

- Adults 60 and older may receive RSV vaccine if the provider and patient think it’s right for them.

Healthcare providers are the most educated and trusted source of health information for their patients. They are in the best position to ensure their patients receive accurate and actionable information, including recommended immunizations.

Educating patients about the fall and winter virus season will provide patients with a game plan to keep themselves and their families safe from respiratory diseases this season.

Providers are encouraged to be an advocate to the population they serve by:

1. Reviewing immunization history and recommendations based on age, medical conditions, and other risk factors.

2. Assess whether the members have risk factors that place them at higher risk for severe flu and COVID-19 and should therefore receive prescription antiviral medications if they become ill.

While seeing the member:

1. Counsel the member or caregiver that immunizations are safe and the most effective way they can protect themselves or their children against severe disease, hospitalization, and death from flu, COVID-19, and RSV this season. Offer recommended immunizations to members or caregivers or refer them to where they can get vaccines. Let patients and caregivers know they may need immunizations during their next visit.

2. If a member is eligible for COVID-19 or flu antiviral medications, explain the importance of testing and treatment early if they experience illness symptoms.

3. Explain how to use the other tools (testing, well-fitted mask, physical distancing, washing hands, and improving airflow or ventilation) to further protect against respiratory diseases.



Dr. Bradley Diner is the Chief Medical Officer of Empower. Born and raised in Little Rock, he attended medical school at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and completed a residency in psychiatry at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville, Tenn.

2023 Medical Record Documentation Review

The 2023 Empower Medical Record Documentation Review (MRDR) has been successfully completed. Letters with results were mailed to all the participating providers on Jan. 12, 2023. Empower is pleased to report that over 90 percent of requested records for the project were received. The average score of reviewed documentation items was 75 percent, which falls into the range of Acceptable in the scoring categories. Three providers achieved a score of 85 percent or above, which falls in the Excellent range.

The scoring categories were as follows:

- Excellent: 85-100%
- Acceptable: 70-84%
- Needs Improvement: Below 70%

Process:

In this project, documentation records from 80 members who received care in the last quarter of 2023, were randomly chosen from a list of paid claims. Sixteen providers from five different specialties, including primary care, pediatrics, obstetrics-gynecology, psychiatry and psychology, were included in the review. Five member records per provider were requested. Up to 60 desirable documentation items were reviewed for each member.

Medical records requests tailored to each distinct specialty, were sent by mail, fax and/or email, beginning October 2023. Ongoing follow-up for medical records continued through Jan. 5, 2024. The follow up included both providers' clinics and third-party medical record entities.



Most commonly missing documentation items were:

- HIPAA/Privacy Policy signed by patient and/or guardian
- Documentation of advance directive offered to members 18 and older
- Member's demographic data and emergency contact information
- Medication allergies and adverse reactions prominently documented in chart
- For pregnant women, a prenatal risk assessment
- Assessment of suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation and/or risk of self harm
- Evidence of communication with member's other providers to obtain medical records and share treatment information

Any provider who has questions or concerns, should reach out to Melissa Griffin, BSN RN, Empower Healthcare Solutions Quality Nurse Senior Analyst, via email at melissa.griffin@empowerarkansas.com.

Group Therapy (90853) Rate Adjustments

The reimbursement rate for Group Therapy (90853) is being reduced to align with the Arkansas state fee schedule.

Empower Healthcare Solutions is delaying configuration of this rate reduction to become effective on 03/01/2024, not retroactive to 01/01/2024. This will be allowed for all providers.

For questions, contact:
empowerhealthcaresolutionspr@empowerarkansas.com.



Reminder: Free COVID-19 test kits available in 2024

The government has once again made free test kits and resources available to the general public. Providers are encouraged to communicate this information to members.

The limit of test kits are four free Covid-19 home test kits per household with free delivery to homes. Just go to COVIDTests.gov, to place the order.

Vaccines.gov is also a great resource to find vaccination locations near local health department or pharmacies. There are also local resources for testing sites listed on the site, where those interested can learn about the various Covid-19 vaccinations and booster shots. Learn about the different types of COVID-19

vaccines and get answers about the latest booster shots.

Vaccination assistance for people with disabilities

- Call 1-888-677-1199, the Disability Information and Access Line, if you have a disability and need help getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

- Assistance is also available at DIAL@n4a.org.

Trained staff will:

- Help find nearby vaccination centers
- Schedule a vaccination appointment
- Share contacts of local accessible transportation services
- Answer questions about the COVID-19 vaccine



Improved provider roster solution tool available immediately

Empower Healthcare Solutions has recently launched an automated contracting and provider roster solution to make becoming an in-network provider and updating rosters more convenient for the provider community.



Senior Director of Provider Engagement Chad Roggow encourages providers to utilize these tools.

The fully launched automated contracting and provider roster solution is located on the new Empower website under the "For Providers" tab. Providers may access this tab to update contact and roster information to prevent any delays in claim payments or inaccurate data being published on the provider directory.

Providers can email any questions about these tools to providerroster@empowerarkansas.com.



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PROVIDER NOTES

Visit our website at

www.getempowerhealth.com

TO FIND RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS:

- ◆ Clinical practice guidelines
- ◆ Contracting/credentialing
- ◆ Cultural competency plan
- ◆ EW
- ◆ Provider forms/resources
- ◆ Incident reporting
- ◆ Provider alerts
- ◆ Provider FAQ
- ◆ Provider handbook
- ◆ Provider portal
- ◆ Pharmacy provider guidelines
- ◆ Provider quality improvement activities

