

# Provider Standards and Procedures



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# *Provider Rights, Responsibilities, and Roles*

## **Provider Rights**

### **Providers have a right to:**

- Be treated by their patients and other health care workers with dignity and respect.
- Receive accurate and complete information and medical histories for members' care.
- Have their patients act in a way that supports the care given to other patients and that helps keep the doctor's office, hospital, or other offices running smoothly.
- Expect other network providers to act as partners in members' treatment plans.
- Expect members to follow their directions, such as taking the right amount of medication at the right times.
- Help members make decisions about their treatment, including the right to recommend new or experimental treatments.
- Make a complaint or file an appeal against UPMC Health Plan and/or a member.
  - See *Administrative Appeal, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*
- Receive payments for copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles as appropriate.
- File a grievance with UPMC Health Plan on behalf of a member, with the member's consent.
  - See *Provider Disputes, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*
- Have access to information about UPMC Health Plan's Quality Improvement programs, including program goals, processes, and outcomes that relate to member care and services. This includes information on safety issues.
- Contact UPMC Health Plan Provider Services with any questions, comments, or problems, including suggestions for changes in the Quality Improvement Program's goals, processes, and outcomes related to member care and services.

## **Provider Responsibilities**

### **Providers have a responsibility to:**

- Treat members with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- Not discriminate against members on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, religion, mental or physical disability, or limited English proficiency, as described in Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964, [www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevi.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevi.php)
- Maintain the confidentiality of members' personal health information, including medical records and histories, and adhere to state and federal laws and regulations regarding confidentiality.
  - See *Provider Role in HIPAA Privacy Regulations, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*

- Give members a notice that clearly explains their privacy rights and responsibilities as it relates to the provider’s practice/office/facility.
  - *See Provider Role in HIPAA Privacy Regulations, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*
- Provide members with an accounting of the use and disclosure of their personal health information in accordance with HIPAA.
  - *See Provider Role in HIPAA Privacy Regulations, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*
- Allow members to request restriction on the use and disclosure of their personal health information.
  - *See Provider Role in HIPAA Privacy Regulations, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*
- Provide members, upon request, access to inspect and receive a copy of their personal health information, including medical records.
  - **Note:** Requests for copies of bills or other personal health information documentation by a Medical Assistance member, his or her personal representative, or an attorney or insurance carrier for the purpose of legal action should be referred to the Department of Public Welfare’s Division of Third Party Liability, as directed in MA bulletin 99-09-03, “Clarification of Procedures for Requesting Copies of Medical Assistance Recipients’ Bills.”
- Provide clear and complete information to members, in a language they can understand, about their health condition and treatment, regardless of cost or benefit coverage, and allow the member to participate in the decision-making process.
- Tell a member if the proposed medical care or treatment is part of a research experiment and give the member the right to refuse experimental treatment.
- Allow a member who refuses or requests to stop treatment the right to do so, as long as the member understands that, by refusing or stopping treatment, the condition may worsen or be fatal.
  - *See Advance Directives, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*
- Respect members’ advance directives and include these documents in the members’ medical record.
  - *See Advance Directives, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*
- Allow members to appoint a parent, guardian, family member, or other representative if they cannot fully participate in their treatment decisions.
- Allow members to obtain a second opinion, and answer members’ questions about how to access health care services appropriately.
- Collaborate with other health care professionals who are involved in the care of members.
- Obtain and report to UPMC Health Plan any information regarding other insurance coverage.
- Follow all state and federal laws and regulations related to patient care and patient rights.
- Participate in UPMC Health Plan data collection initiatives, such as HEDIS and other contractual or regulatory programs.

- Allow UPMC Health Plan to use physician and provider performance data for quality improvement activities.
- Review clinical practice guidelines distributed by UPMC Health Plan
- Provide services that are medical necessary.
  - *See Glossary of Health Care Terms, Chapter K Glossary and Abbreviations*
- Comply with UPMC Health Plan’s Medical Management program as outlined in this manual.
  - *See Medical Management Chapter, Chapter G.*
- Notify UPMC Health Plan in writing. 90 days in advance, if the provider is leaving or closing a practice.
- Contact UPMC Health Plan to verify member eligibility or coverage for services, if appropriate.
- Disclose overpayments or improper payments to UPMC Health Plan.
- Invite member participation, to the extent possible, in understanding any medical or behavioral health problems that the member may have and to develop mutually agreed upon treatment goals, to the extent possible.
- Provide members, upon request, with information regarding the provider’s professional qualifications, such as specialty, education, residency, and board certification status.
- Provide members, upon request, with information regarding office location, hours of operation, accessibility, and languages, including the ability to communicate with sign language.



### **Closer Look at Interpreters and Cost**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Public Law 101-336, 42 U.S.C. §12101, et seq., state that:

- Health care professionals or facilities cannot impose a surcharge on an individual with a disability directly or indirectly to offset the cost of the interpreter.
- The cost of the interpreter should be treated as part of overhead expenses for accounting and tax purposes.
- Tax relief is available for expenditures made toward interpreters.
- The Internal Revenue Service may allow a credit. This tax credit may be applied to reasonable and necessary business expenditures made in compliance with ADA standards in order to provide qualified interpreters or other accessible tools for individuals with hearing impairments.

**For UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices (UPMC CHC) members' providers (PCP and Specialists) also have the responsibility to:**

- Provide care to members in accordance with the required appointment standards and waiting time frames established by the Department of Human Services. A UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices member's average office waiting time for an appointment for routine care is no more than thirty (30) minutes or at any time no more than up to one (1) hour when the physician encounters an unanticipated urgent medical condition visit or is treating a patient with a difficult medical need.
- Not discriminate against members on the basis of creed, sex, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, MA status, language, program participation, income status, disease or pre-existing condition or anticipated need for health care.
- Provide care to medical assistance recipients during the period from their initial MA eligibility determination to the effective date with UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices. This is referred to as the Fee-for-Service (FFS) Eligibility window. MA-enrolled providers are prohibited from denying medically necessary services to the newly eligible MA recipient during his/her FFS window. Providers must use the member's ACCESS Card to access the Department's EVS and to verify the Member's eligibility until the member receives a member ID card from UPMC *for You* or UPMC CHC. The ACCESS Card will allow the Provider the capacity to access the most current eligibility information without contacting UPMC *for You* or UPMC CHC directly. The provider will bill FFS during this time period.
  - **NOTE:** This information can be found in MA Bulletin 99-13-05, effective February 2013.
  - **NOTE:** UPMC Community HealthChoices participants may not have an ACCESS card for medical services. Providers must still use the Department's EVS to verify participant's eligibility using the identification number on the UPMC Community HealthChoices card.
- Not charge members for missed appointments (no shows).
  - **Note:** This information can be found in MA bulletin 99-10-14, effective 12-1-2010 (Missed Appointments)
  - Assure members that if they exercise their Medical Assistance member rights regarding their care, it will not affect the way they are treated by the provider, UPMC *for You* or UPMC Community HealthChoices.

Contact new members identified in lists provided by UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices who have not had an encounter during the first six months of enrollment, or who have not complied with established scheduling requirements. Provider shall document the reasons for noncompliance, where possible, as well as efforts to bring the member's care into compliance.

- Notify UPMC *for You* or UPMC Community HealthChoices if the provider has reason to believe a member is misusing or abusing services or is defrauding a government health care program and/or UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices.
- Communicate effectively with members, including those with communication barriers and not require family members be used to interpret. Provider must arrange for an interpreter for members who do not speak English or who communicate through American Sign Language or other forms of visual/gestural communication. The **Special Needs Department** at **1-866-463-1462** can help participating providers find a translator who can communicate with members during their appointments.
- Observe Department of Human Services guidelines regarding standards of care, including the EPSDT and the Healthy Beginnings Plus programs.
  - See, *The EPSDT Program, UPMC for You* chapter, Chapter E.
- Communicate with UPMC *for You*, UPMC Community HealthChoices and other providers regarding identified special needs of members.
- Not use any form of restraint or seclusion as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation.
- Participate annually in at least one UPMC Health Plan-sponsored education session.
- Provide primary and preventive care and act as the member’s advocate, providing, recommending and arranging for care.
- Identification, appropriate referral and coordination of mental health, drug and alcohol and substance abuse services through BH-MCOs
- Document all care rendered, including any specialty or referral services, in a complete and accurate medical record and service record that meets or exceeds the Department of Human Services specification.
- Maintain continuity of each member’s health care.
- Refer members for needed specialty care and other medically necessary services, both in and out-of-network. Obtain prior authorization for out-of-network care.
  - See *When to contact Medical Management*, for information on out-of-network referral prior authorization requests, Medical Management, Chapter G.

**For UPMC *for Life* (Medicare) and UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plan members’, providers also have the responsibility to:**

- Provide care to the member within a reasonable period after request for care.

**For UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plan members’, providers also have the responsibility to:**

- Recognize the “Grace Period” and not attempt to collect (balance bill) members for copayments or coinsurance.



## Closer Look at the Grace Period and Balance Billing

### Balance Billing Guidelines

The annual Part B deductible and/or coinsurance may apply to plan services. Providers may submit any unpaid balance remaining, after UPMC Health Plan payments, to the appropriate State source for consideration. However, providers **may not** attempt to collect copayments or coinsurance from members enrolled in UPMC *for You* Advantage, including during the period of time in which a member has lost full Medical Assistance coverage but is deemed “continued eligible” for the “Grace Period” of up to 120 days. Attempting to collect copayments or coinsurance from members will hereafter be referred to as *balance billing*.

Balance Billing Guidelines for UPMC Community HealthChoices. The annual Part B deductible and/or coinsurance may apply to plan services. For participants with UPMC as CHC-MCO and UPMC for Medicare coverage, Providers may submit one claim to UPMC Health Plan to receive both Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement. For participants with UPMC as CHC-MCO but a different Medicare provider, any unpaid balance remaining, after participant’s Medicare provider reimburses, can be submitted to UPMC Health Plan for consideration. Balance billing is not allowed.

Balance billing is permitted for UPMC *for Life* Options members and UPMC *Community Care* members. However, a provider should make every effort to determine if the member is dual eligible and thus ineligible for balance billing, in which case the provider may submit any unpaid balance to Medical Assistance. A non-dual eligible UPMC *for Life* Options or UPMC *Community Care* member is responsible for copayments and coinsurance and thus may be subject to provider balance billing.

### What is a grace period?

A grace period is a length of time following the loss of special needs status by a member during which the plan continues to pay for covered services. For UPMC *for You* Advantage, the grace period begins when a member loses his or her special needs status (e.g., through loss of Medical Assistance eligibility) and continues for a period of up to 120 days. For UPMC CHC, the grace period begins when a participant loses his or her special needs status (e.g., through loss of Medical Assistance eligibility) and continues for a period of up to 180 days.

For UPMC *for Life* Options, the grace period begins when a member is assessed as no longer Nursing Facility Clinically Eligible and continues for a period of up to 120 days. For UPMC *Community Care*, the grace period begins when a member is no longer diagnosed with a serious mental illness. During this time, all balance billing guidelines continue to apply. If a member does not regain his or her special needs status by the end of the grace period, he or she will be disenrolled from their UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plan.

## Provider Role in Compliance

UPMC Health Plan must comply with various laws, regulations, and accreditation standards in order to operate as a licensed health insurer. In order to meet these requirements, as well as combat cost trends in the health care industry such as fraud, abuse, and wasteful spending, UPMC Health Plan established its distinct Compliance Program.

UPMC Health Plan's Compliance Program serves to assist contracted providers, staff members, management, and our Board of Directors with promoting proper business practices. Proper business practices include identifying and preventing improper or unethical conduct.

## Reporting Compliance Concerns and/or Issues

UPMC Health Plan has established a Help Line for contracted providers, staff members, and other entities to report compliance concerns and/or issues without fear of retribution or retaliation. The **Help Line** number is **1-877-983-8442**, and it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Callers may remain anonymous. Compliance concerns include, but may not be limited to, issues related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## Responsibilities of provider with regard to compliance:

- All UPMC Health Plan contracted providers are expected to conduct themselves according to UPMC Health Plan's Code of Conduct & Ethics.
- All UPMC Health Plan contracted providers have a duty to *immediately* report any compliance concerns and/or issues.
- All UPMC Health Plan contracted providers should be alert to possible violations of the law, regulations, and/or accreditation standards, as well as to any other type of unethical behavior.
- UPMC Health Plan prohibits retaliation against contracted providers who raise, in good faith, a compliance concern and/or issue, or any other question about inappropriate or illegal behavior.
- UPMC Health Plan prohibits retaliation against contracted providers who participate in an investigation or provide information relating to an alleged violation.

The success of UPMC Health Plan's Compliance Program relies in part upon the actions taken by our contracted providers. It is critical for our contracted providers to be aware of the goals and objectives of the UPMC Health Plan Compliance Program, as well as of their responsibilities as providers.

For any questions regarding UPMC Health Plan's Compliance Program and/or a contracted provider's responsibilities, please contact the **Chief Compliance Officer**, at **412-454-5675**, or the **Director of Corporate Compliance**, at **412-454-5204**.

## Provider Role in HIPAA Privacy & Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act Regulations

All UPMC Health Plan policies and procedures include information to make sure that UPMC Health Plan complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act.

Hospitals and providers subject to HIPAA are trained to understand their responsibilities under these privacy regulations – as is the staff at UPMC Health Plan.

UPMC Health Plan has incorporated measures in all its departments to make sure potential, current, and former members' personal health information, individually identifiable health information, and personally identifiable financial information are maintained in a confidential manner, whether that information is in oral, written, or electronic format. UPMC Health Plan employees may use and disclose this information only for those purposes permitted by federal legislation (for treatment, payment, and health care operations); by the member's written request; or if required to disclose such information by law, regulation, or court order.

A form authorizing the release of personal health information is available from UPMC Health Plan's Member Services Department or from the UPMC Health Plan website. This form complies with the core elements and statements required by HIPAA privacy rules. This form must be completed, signed, and returned to UPMC Health Plan before UPMC Health Plan will release information.

All members – including UPMC Health Plan (commercial), UPMC *for You* (Medical Assistance), UPMC Community HealthChoices (Medical Assistance) and UPMC *for Life* (Medicare) –are annually provided notice of the existence of UPMC Health Plan's privacy practices and instructions on how to access it. These documents clearly explain the members' rights concerning the privacy of their individual information, including the processes that have been established to provide them with access to their protected health information and procedures to amend, restrict use, and receive an accounting of disclosures. The documents further inform members of UPMC Health Plan's precautions to conceal individual health information from employers.

UPMC Health Plan's Notice of Privacy Practices is separate and distinct from the Notice of Privacy Practices providers are required to give to their patients under HIPAA. UPMC Health Plan's Privacy Statement and Notice of Privacy Practices can be viewed at [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com).

### **Provider Role in ADA Compliance**

Providers' offices are considered places of public accommodation and, therefore, must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Providers' offices are required to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable laws. Providers may contact **Provider Services** at **1-866-918-1595** to obtain copies of these documents and other related resources.

UPMC Health Plan requires that network providers' offices or facilities comply with this act. The office or facility must be wheelchair-accessible or have provisions to accommodate individuals in wheelchairs. Patient restrooms should be equipped with grab bars. Handicapped parking must be available near the provider's office and be clearly marked. A UPMC Health Plan representative will determine compliance during the on-site office/facility review.

## **Provider Role in Surveys and Assessments**

UPMC Health Plan conducts a series of surveys and assessments of members and providers in a continuous effort to improve performance. All providers are urged to participate when asked. UPMC Health Plan retains responsibility for monitoring Provider actions for compliance with federal and state requirements

## **Reporting Fraud and Abuse**

### **Reporting Fraud and Abuse to UPMC Health Plan**

UPMC Health Plan has established a hotline to report suspected fraud and abuse committed by any entity providing services to members. The hotline number is **1-866-FRAUD-01 (866-372-8301)**, and it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Voice mail is available at all times. Callers may remain anonymous and may leave a voice mail message if they prefer. TTY users should call toll-free **1-800-361-2629**. To report suspected fraud and abuse related to UPMC Community HealthChoices call UPMC Community HealthChoices at **1-844-881-4143**.

Some common examples of fraud and abuse are:

- Billing for services and/or medical equipment that were never provided to the member
- Billing more than once for the same service
- Billing or charging the member for services paid for by UPMC Health Plan
- Dispensing generic drugs and billing for brand-name drugs
- Offering prescription or prescription medications without seeing or treating the member
- Offering gift(s), a prescription(s) or prescription medication(s), or money to members in exchange for receiving treatment(s) or service(s)
- Falsifying records
- Performing and/or billing for inappropriate or unnecessary services
- Trading prescription drugs for sexual favors

Suspected fraud and abuse may also be reported via the website at [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com) or the information may be e-mailed to [specialinvestigationsunit@upmc.edu](mailto:specialinvestigationsunit@upmc.edu).

If reporting fraud and abuse by mail, please mark the outside of the envelope “confidential” or “personal” and send to:

**UPMC Health Plan  
Special Investigations Unit  
Personal & Confidential (Do not open in mailroom)  
PO Box 2968  
Pittsburgh, PA 15230**

Information reported via the website, by e-mail, or by regular mail may be done anonymously. The website contains additional information on reporting fraud and abuse.

## **Reporting Fraud and Abuse to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has established a hotline to report suspected fraud and abuse committed by any person or entity providing services to Medicare beneficiaries.

The hotline number is **1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477)**, and it is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Callers may remain anonymous and may call after hours and leave a voice mail if they prefer.

## **Reporting Fraud and Abuse to the Department of Human Services**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has established an MA Provider Compliance Hotline to report suspected fraud and abuse committed by any person or entity providing services to Medical Assistance recipients.

The hotline number is **1-866-DPW-TIPS (866-379-8477)** and operates Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Callers may remain anonymous and may call after hours and leave a voice mail if they prefer.

Providers may also call the **Office of Inspector General Welfare Fraud Tip Line at 1-800-932-0582** to report suspected fraud and abuse committed by a Medical Assistance recipient, such as members who knowingly make false statements or representations to become eligible for Medical Assistance or members who fail to provide all required information such as other insurance coverage. Members who commit fraud may be prosecuted under state criminal laws and federal fraud and abuse laws.

Some common examples of recipient fraud and abuse are:

- Forging or altering prescriptions or orders
- Using multiple ID cards
- Loaning his/her ID card
- Reselling items received through the program
- Intentionally receiving excessive drugs, services, or supplies

Suspected fraud and abuse may also be reported via the Office of Medical Assistance's website at [www.dpw.state.pa.us](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us) or by emailing [omaptips@state.pa.us](mailto:omaptips@state.pa.us).

Information reported via the website or e-mail also may be done anonymously. The website contains a MA Provider Compliance Hotline response form and additional information on reporting fraud and abuse.

Suspected fraud and abuse of services may also be reported by writing to the Department of Medical Assistance's Bureau of Program Integrity at the following address:

**Department of Public Welfare  
Office of Administration  
Bureau of Program Integrity  
PO Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675**

DHS encourages providers to implement necessary policies, processes, and procedures to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and policies relating to the Medical Assistance (MA) Program. As part of these policies and procedures, DHS recommends that providers conduct periodic audits to identify instances where services were reimbursed inappropriately.

DHS established a Self-Audit Protocol that provides guidance to providers on the preferred methodology to return inappropriate payments. It encourages voluntary disclosure and communicates DHS's commitment to openness and cooperation. DHS's Self-Audit Protocol is intended to facilitate the resolution of matters that, in the provider's reasonable assessment, potentially violate state administrative law, regulation, or policy governing the MA Program, or matters exclusively involving overpayments or errors that do not suggest violations of law. The Self-Audit Protocol can be found on DHS's web site at:

➤ [www.dhs.pa.gov/learnaboutdhs/fraudandabuse/medicalassistanceproviderselfauditprotocol/index.htm](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/learnaboutdhs/fraudandabuse/medicalassistanceproviderselfauditprotocol/index.htm)

Providers have several options for conducting self-audits and expediting the return of inappropriate payments to the Department:

- Perform 100% claim review
- Provider-developed Audit Work plan for BPI approval
- DHS pre-approved Audit Work Plan with Statistically Valid Random Sample (SVRS)

If the provider identifies services that were inappropriately paid, they should promptly contact the Bureau of Program Integrity (BPI) to expedite the return of the inappropriate payment. When the provider properly identifies and reports to DHS inappropriate payments, that are not fraudulent, DHS will not seek double damages, but will accept repayment without penalty. Penalties would normally range from not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$10,000 per false claim, plus three times the amount of any other damages the U.S. government sustains because of the fraudulent claims.

The False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. sub sec 3729) makes it illegal to present or cause to be presented to the federal or state government a false or fraudulent claims for payment. This applies to U.S. government programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, Medicare Part D, and the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP). Any person in violation of this act could be subjected to fines and penalties.

Providers that have questions regarding this protocol may contact the **Department's Bureau of Program Integrity** at **(717) 772-4606** to discuss this protocol with the Provider Self-Audit Protocol Coordinator.

# *Provider Standards and Requirements*

## **Office Hours**

Network PCPs must have a minimum of 20 office hours per week.

## **Verifying Provider Practice Information**

The network management staff will verify important demographic information about a practice each time a staff member makes a service call. This verification is needed to ensure accuracy in various areas that concern providers, including claims payments and provider directories.



### **Alert—Product Termination**

UPMC Health Plan requires notification of product termination in writing 60 days before the change to avoid improper claims payment and incorrect provider directory information.

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Providers should notify UPMC Health Plan of any provider additions, practice changes, or corrections within 30 days. The following changes may be made through an online request form at [www.upmchealthplan.com/providers/change.html](http://www.upmchealthplan.com/providers/change.html):

- Addition/Deletion of a provider to/from a practice
- Addition or removal of an office location
- Changes to such information as phone/fax numbers, office hours, hospital privileges
- Change in billing address or tax identification number
- Changes to product participation
- Provider terminations from the network

If the online form cannot be completed the following forms may be printed and mailed or faxed to UPMC Health Plan.

- Add or Remove Provider
- Add or Remove Office Location
- Office or provider information Change

- Change Pay to Address or Tax ID
- Change in hospital Privileges
- Close/Reopen Panel
- Add/Drop Products
- Physician Termination

Provider may also notify UPMC Health Plan by faxing or mailing the information in a letter. The notification must be typewritten and submitted on business letterhead and must include the following information:

- Physician name
- Office address
- Billing address (if different than office address)
- Phone number and fax number
- Office hours
- Effective date
- W-9 tax form

Fax all provider changes to the **Provider Data Maintenance** at **412-454-8225**, or mail to:

**UPMC Health Plan  
Provider Data Maintenance  
U.S. Steel Building  
600 Grant Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

### **Voluntarily Leaving the Network**

Providers must give UPMC Health Plan at least 90 days' written notice before voluntarily leaving the network. In order for a termination to be considered valid, providers are required to send termination notices by certified mail (return receipt requested) or overnight courier. In addition, providers must supply copies of medical records to the member's new provider and facilitate the member's transfer of care at no charge to the member or UPMC Health Plan.

UPMC Health Plan will notify affected members in writing of a provider's termination, as applicable. If the terminating provider is a primary care physician (PCP), UPMC Health Plan will request that the member elect a new PCP. If a member does not elect a PCP prior to the provider's termination date, UPMC Health Plan will automatically assign one.

Providers must continue to render covered services to members who are existing patients at the time of termination until the later of 60 days, or until UPMC Health Plan can arrange for appropriate health care for the member with a participating provider.

Upon request from a member undergoing active treatment related to a chronic or acute medical condition, UPMC Health Plan will reimburse the provider for the provision of covered services for up to 90 days from the termination date. The transition of care period may be extended, after consultation with the member and provider, if determined to be clinically appropriate. In addition, UPMC Health Plan will reimburse providers for the provision of covered services to members who are in the second or third trimester of pregnancy extending through the completion of postpartum care relating to the delivery. Providers will be reimbursed for covered services for UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices (Medical Assistance) members during a pregnancy, regardless of the trimester that they are in through the postpartum period.

Exceptions may include:

- Members requiring only routine monitoring
- Providers unwilling to continue to treat the member
- Providers unwilling to accept UPMC Health Plan payment and meet the same terms and conditions of participating providers



**Alert—For UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices Members**

UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices will send a letter to affected members within 15 days of receipt of the provider’s written notice of termination.

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**Coverage for Providers on Vacation or Leave**

While on vacation or leave of less than 30 days, a network provider must arrange for coverage by another UPMC Health Plan participating provider. If a provider goes on an extended leave for 30 calendar days or longer, the provider must notify **Provider Services**. Call **1-866-918-1595** for UPMC Health Plan (Commercial) and UPMC *for You* (Medical Assistance) members, **1-844-860-9303** for UPMC Community HealthChoices, **1-877-539-3080** for UPMC *for Life* (Medicare) and UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plans members, and **1-800-650-8762** for UPMC *for Kids* (CHIP).

**Locum Tenens Billing Arrangements**

Substitute providers are often necessary to cover professional practices when the regular providers are absent for reasons such as illness, pregnancy, vacation, or continuing education. The regular provider should bill and receive payment for the substitute provider’s services as though these services were performed by the regular provider.

The regular provider may submit the claim and receive payment in the following circumstances:

- The substitute provider does not render services to patients over a continuous period of longer than 60 days.
- The regular provider identifies the services as substitute provider services by entering a Q6 modifier (services furnished by a locum tenens provider) after the procedure code.



### **Alert—An Example of Locum Tenens Billing**

The regular provider goes on vacation on June 30 and returns to work on September 4<sup>th</sup>. A substitute provider renders services to patients of the regular provider on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and at various times thereafter, including August 30<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>. The continuous period of covered services begins on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and runs through September 2<sup>nd</sup> a period of 63 days.

Since the September 2<sup>nd</sup> services were furnished after a period of 60 days of continuous service, the regular provider is not entitled to bill and receive direct payment for these services. The substitute provider must bill for these services in his or her own name. The regular provider may, however, bill and receive payment for the services that the substitute provider rendered on his or her behalf during the period from July 2<sup>nd</sup> through August 30<sup>th</sup>.

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### **24-Hour On-Call Coverage**

PCPs and ob-gyns are required to provide 24-hour on-call coverage and be available 7 days a week. If a provider delegates this responsibility, the covering provider must participate in UPMC Health Plan's network and be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **Provider Scope of Services**

Providers may bill UPMC Health Plan for all services performed for assigned members. The services should be within the scope of standard practices appropriate to the provider's license, education, and board certification.

### **Provider Effective Date**

The effective date for provider participation is the date that UPMC Health Plan Credentialing Committee approves the application.

### **For Specialists: In-Office Procedures**

Specialists should perform procedures only within the scope of their license, education, board certification, experience, and training. UPMC Health Plan will periodically evaluate the appropriateness and medical necessity of in-office procedures.

### **In-Office X-Ray**

A licensed radiology technician may perform in-office radiology services. The American College of Radiology must certify radiology facilities. A radiologist must review all x-rays.

## **In-Office Laboratory**

Offices that perform laboratory services must meet all regulatory guidelines, including, but not limited to, participation in a Proficiency Testing Program and certification by the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA).

## **Guidelines Regarding Advance Directives**

An advance directive is generally a written statement that an individual composes in advance of serious illness regarding medical decisions affecting him or her. The two most common forms of advance directives are a living will and a durable health care power of attorney.

All adults have the right to create advance directives. In the event that an individual is unable to communicate the kind of treatment he or she wants or does not want, this directive informs the provider, in advance, about that individuals' treatment desires.

### **A Living Will**

A living will takes effect while the individual is still living. It is a signed, witnessed written document concerning the kind of medical care a person wants or does not want if he or she is unable to make his or her own decisions about care.

### **A Durable Health Care Power of Attorney**

A durable health care power of attorney is a signed, witnessed written statement by an individual naming another person as an agent to make medical decisions if he or she is unable to do so. A durable health care power of attorney can include instructions about any treatment the individual desires to undergo or avoid.

Neither document becomes effective until the individual is unable to make decisions for him or herself. The individual can change or revoke either document at any time. Otherwise, the documents remain effective throughout the person's life.



### **Closer Look at Advance Directives**

If a provider is unable to honor an advance directive, the individual may transfer to the care of a provider willing to carry out his or her wishes, as appropriate to the member's benefit plan.

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## What Is the Legislative Basis for Advance Directives?

The requirements for advance directives are outlined in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, which went into effect on December 1, 1991.

If a member decides to execute a living will or a durable health care power of attorney, the member is encouraged to notify his or her PCP of its existence, provide a copy of the document to be included in personal medical records, and discuss this decision with the PCP.



### Closer Look at the Legislation

Hospitals and other health care providers that participate in the Medicare Advantage and Medical Assistance programs must provide members with written information about their right to make their own health care decisions, including the right to accept or refuse medical treatment and the right to execute advance directives.

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For more information about advance directives, contact:

**The Pennsylvania Medical Society  
Division of Communication and Public Affairs  
77 East Park Drive  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8820  
717-558-7750**

## Guidelines for Medical Record Documentation

UPMC Health Plan requires participating network physicians to maintain member medical records in a manner that is accurate and timely, well-organized, readily accessible by authorized personnel, and confidential. Per UPMC Health Plan policy, all medical records must be retained for ten (10) years.

Consistent and complete documentation in the medical record is an essential component of quality patient care. Medical records should be maintained and organized in a manner that assists with communication among providers to facilitate coordination and continuity of patient care. UPMC Health Plan has adopted certain standards for medical record documentation, which are designed to promote efficient and effective treatment. UPMC Health Plan periodically reviews medical records to ensure that they comply with the guidelines below. Performance is evaluated as follows:

**Table B1: Medical Record Documentation Guidelines**

| <b>Category</b>   | <b>Score</b>   | <b>Action</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| Level 1:  | Pass = 10 or more points including Required Element* | Compliant – No follow-up required  |
| Level 2:  | Fail = 0 to 9 points                                 | Requires a corrective action plan and follow-up review in six months     |
| Level 3:  | Fail = Automatic fail if missing Required Element*   | Requires a corrective action plan and a follow-up review in three months |
| <i>*Required Element = Organization and secure storage of medical records</i> |  |  |

**Medical Record Confidentiality and Security**

- Store medical records in a secure location that can be locked and protected when not being used, but still permits easy retrieval of information by authorized personnel only.
- Periodically train medical office staff and consistently communicate the importance of medical record confidentiality.

**Basic Information**

- Place the member's name or ID number on each page of the medical record.
- Include marital status and address, the name of employer, and home and work telephone numbers.
- Include the author's identification in all entries in the medical record. The author identification may be a handwritten signature, a unique electronic identifier, or his or her initials, (e.g., progress notes need to include the signature and credentials of the provider of service).
- Date all entries.
- Ensure that the record is legible to someone other than the writer.

## Medical History

- Indicate significant illnesses and medical conditions on the problem list. If the patient has no known medical illnesses or conditions, the medical record should include a flow sheet for health maintenance.
- List all medications and prominently note medication allergies and adverse reactions in the record. If the patient has no known allergies or history of adverse reactions, providers should appropriately note this in the record.
- Document in an easily identifiable manner family, social, and past medical history, which may include serious accidents, operations, and illnesses. For children and adolescents (18 years old and younger), past medical history should relate to prenatal care, birth, operations, and childhood illnesses.
- For members 14 years old and older, note the use of cigarettes, alcohol, substances, and query substance abuse history.
- Physicians should indicate that they reviewed the history forms completed by staff. Review by and signature of another professional, such as a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, does not meet this requirement.
- Maintain an updated immunization record for patients aged 18 and under.
- Include a record of preventive screenings and services in accordance with the UPMC Health Plan Preventive Health Guidelines.
- Include, when applicable, summaries of emergency care, hospital admissions, surgical procedures, and reports on any excised tissue.

## Treatment

- Document clinical evaluation and findings for each visit. Identify appropriate subjective and objective information in the history and physical exam that is pertinent to the member's complaints.
- Document progress notes, treatment plans, and any changes in a treatment plan, including drugs prescribed.
- Document prescriptions telephoned to a pharmacist.
- Document ancillary services and diagnostic tests that are ordered and diagnostic and therapeutic services for which a member was referred.

- Address unresolved problems from previous office visits in subsequent visits.
- Document the use of Developmental Delay and Autism Spectrum Disorder screening tools.
- Document referrals to **CONNECT** for Medical Assistance children under 5 years old, if developmental delays are suspected and the child is not receiving **CONNECT** services at the time of screening.

### **Follow-up**

- Include on encounter forms or within the notes a notation regarding follow-up care, calls, or visits. Providers should note the specific time of recommended return visit in weeks, months, or as needed.
- Keep documentation of follow-up for any missed appointments or no-shows.
- Physicians should initial consultation, lab, imaging, and other reports to signify review. Review by and signature of another professional, such as a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, does not meet this requirement.
- Consultation, abnormal lab, and imaging study results must have an explicit notation of follow-up plans in the record.



### **Closer Look at UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices (Medical Assistance) outreach requirements**

PCPs, dentists, and specialists should conduct affirmative outreach whenever a Member misses an appointment and document the outreach in the medical record. Such an effort shall be deemed to be reasonable if it includes three (3) attempts to contact the Member. Such attempts may include, but are not limited to: written attempts, telephone calls and home visits. At least one (1) such attempt must be a follow-up telephone call.

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For Community HealthChoices participants with LTSS: PCPs, dentists, and specialists may request that a Participant's service coordinator conduct outreach. Service Coordinators will evaluate any barriers to Participant attendance at appointments and develop any necessary plan to facilitate and improve Participant compliance with appointments scheduled.

# Accessibility Standards

UPMC Health Plan follows accessibility requirements set forth by applicable regulatory and accrediting agencies. UPMC Health Plan monitors compliance with these standards annually.

**Table B2: Accessibility Requirements**

| Type of Appointment               | Scheduling Time Frame   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Primary Care Providers</b>     |   |
| Preventive Care                   | Within <b>3 weeks</b> of the request  |
| Regular and Routine               | Within <b>10 business days</b> of the request   |
| Urgent                            | Within <b>24 hours</b> of the request   |
| Emergency                         | <b>Immediately</b> , or refer to the emergency room   |
| <b>Obstetrician-Gynecologists</b> |   |
| Annual Well-Woman Exam            | Within <b>3 weeks</b> of the request  |
| <b>Prenatal Care</b>              |   |
| First Trimester                   | Within <b>10 business days</b> of the request   |
| Second Trimester                  | Within <b>5 business days</b> of the request  |
| Third Trimester                   | Within <b>4 business days</b> of the request  |
| High Risk                         | Within <b>24 hours</b> of identification of high risk to a maternity care provider, or immediately, if an emergency exists  |
| Emergency                         | <b>Immediately</b> , or refer to the emergency room   |
| <b>Specialists</b>                |   |
| Urgent Care                       | Within <b>24 hours</b> of the request   |
| Emergency                         | <b>Immediately</b> , or refer to the emergency room   |
| Routine Care                      | <p>Within <b>10 business days</b> of the requests;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ except for the following specialty providers who must be scheduled within <b>15 business days</b> of the request:</li> </ul> <p>Dentist<br/>Dermatology<br/>Otolaryngology<br/>Orthopedic Surgery</p> |

**Table B2: Accessibility Requirements ... Continued**

| Type of Appointment              | Scheduling Time Frame   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Specialists ... Continued</b> |   |
| Routine Care                     | <p>Within <b>10 business days</b> of the requests;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ except for the following specialty providers who must be scheduled within <b>15 business days</b> of the request:</li> </ul> <p>Pediatric Allergy &amp; Immunology<br/>                     Pediatric Endocrinology<br/>                     Pediatric Gastroenterology<br/>                     Pediatric General Surgery<br/>                     Pediatric Hematology<br/>                     Pediatric Infectious Disease<br/>                     Pediatric Nephrology<br/>                     Pediatric Neurology<br/>                     Pediatric Oncology<br/>                     Pediatric Pulmonology<br/>                     Pediatric Rehab Medicine<br/>                     Pediatric Rheumatology<br/>                     Pediatric Urology</p> |



**Alert—Scheduling UPMC for You and UPMC Community HealthChoices Members Who Have AIDS or Are HIV-Positive**

Primary care providers and specialists also have the responsibility to maintain adequate scheduling procedures to ensure an appointment is scheduled within seven days from the effective date of enrollment for any UPMC for You or UPMC Community HealthChoices member known to be HIV positive or diagnosed with AIDS, unless the member is already in active care with a PCP or specialist.

## Emergency Services

In case of a medical emergency, the member should attempt to call his or her PCP, if possible, explain the symptoms, and provide any other information necessary to help determine appropriate action.

The member should go to the nearest emergency facility for the following situations:

- If directed by the PCP
- If the member cannot reach the PCP or the covering provider
- If the member believes he or she has an emergency medical condition

Members with an emergency medical condition should understand they have the right to summon emergency help by calling 911 or any other emergency telephone number, as well as a licensed ambulance service, without getting prior approval.

UPMC Health Plan will cover care for an emergency medical condition with symptoms of such severity that a prudent layperson, who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine, could reasonably expect the absence of medical attention to result in:

- Placing the health of the individual (or, with respect to a pregnant woman, the health of the woman or her unborn child) in serious jeopardy,
- Serious impairment to bodily functions, or
- Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.



### Closer Look at Emergency Care

Emergency services do not require prior authorization. The hospital or facility must contact **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** on the next business day or within 48 hours after the emergency admission.

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## Urgent Care

Urgent care is defined as any illness, injury, or severe condition that, under reasonable standards of medical practice, would be diagnosed and treated within a 24-hour period and, if left untreated, could rapidly become an emergency medical condition.

When in UPMC Health Plan's primary service area, members should contact their PCPs if they have an urgent medical need. UPMC Health Plan encourages providers to make same-day appointments available for their patients who call with unscheduled urgent health care needs. This improves the quality and continuity of patient care.

If members are unable to contact their PCPs, and they believe they need care immediately, they should seek immediate medical attention. After such treatment, members should contact their PCPs within a reasonable amount of time. A reasonable amount of time is typically considered 24 hours, unless there are extenuating circumstances.



### **Alert—Urgent Out-of-Area Care**

If outside UPMC Health Plan’s primary service areas, members should seek medical attention immediately if they believe they need urgent care. Members should then call their PCPs, who, in turn, should contact **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** by the next business day to ensure the claim is paid at the appropriate level. If approved, UPMC Health Plan will give the provider a confirmation number. The PCP should note this number in the member’s records.

- See *Out-of-Area Care, Provider Standards and Procedure, Chapter B.*

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### **Out-of-Area Care**

Out-of-area care should not be confused with out-of-network care. Out-of-area care is care rendered to members traveling outside UPMC Health Plan’s primary service area. Out-of-network care is care sought by members at a facility or provider not within the network appropriate to the member’s benefit plan.

- See *Alert—Out-of-Network Referrals, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.*

All UPMC Health Plan members are covered for emergency care when they travel outside the UPMC Health Plan network.

- For UPMC *for You* members, see *Out-of-Area Care, UPMC for You (Medical Assistance), Chapter E.*
- For UPMC Community HealthChoices participants, see *Out-of-Area Care, UPMC Community HealthChoices (Medical Assistance), Chapter N.*

### **Routine Care**

Members must seek routine and preventive care from providers within their network.

**Medical Management** will review extenuating circumstances. Call **1-800-425-7800** or send appropriate information by fax to **412-454-2057**.



### **Alert**

Providers can inform UPMC Health Plan Network that they are not able to accommodate new patients for a temporary period by completing a request form found online at [www.upmchealthplan.com/providers/change.html](http://www.upmchealthplan.com/providers/change.html) and checking the “Close/Reopen Panel” box. If the online form cannot be completed, the “Close/Reopen Panel” form may be printed and mailed or faxed to UPMC Health Plan. This information will then be posted in UPMC Health Plan’s web-based provider directory. The information will be updated when the provider notifies UPMC Health Plan that they are able to meet access standards.

### **Injury or Illness**

A member who needs care while traveling outside the service area should contact his or her PCP, if applicable, within 24 hours, or as soon as reasonably possible, to inform the PCP of the nature of the illness or injury. The PCP must call **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** to obtain authorization for services rendered by a non-participating provider. If Medical Management authorizes the care, the level of benefits will be determined at that time.

UPMC Health Plan (Commercial) members who receive a bill or have paid for services provided outside the area should submit those bills to UPMC Health Plan, using an Out-of-Network Care claim form.

An Out-of-Network Care claim form is included in the UPMC Health Plan (Commercial) member's information packet, or the member can download a form at [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com). The member also may call **Member Services** at **1-888-876-2756** Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### **Travel Assistance Program**

Through a travel assistance program, Assist America, UPMC Health Plan (Commercial), UPMC *for Life* (Medicare) and UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plans members have access to pre-qualified medical providers. Assist America will direct the member to the closest, most appropriate medical facility, and will notify UPMC Health Plan accordingly.

If possible, members should call **Assist America** at **1-800-872-1414** or **1-301-656-4152** (when within the United States) or **1-609-986-1234** (when outside the United States) to get a list of reliable doctors and/or safe medical facilities when they have a medical emergency and are more than 100 miles from home.

At no charge to the member, Assist America will coordinate various services, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Medical referrals
- Medically supervised transportation to the member's home
- Transportation of a family member to join the member
- Emergency medical evacuation
- Care for minor children
- Critical care monitoring
- Dispatch of prescription medicine
- Emergency message transmission
- Hospital admission guarantee
- Return of mortal remains



### **Alert—Member's Obligation**

The member still needs to call his or her PCP, if applicable, but the PCP does not need to call Medical Management as long as the member uses Assist America.

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## *Provider Role in Coordinating Care*

UPMC Health Plan relies on each provider to ensure the appropriate use of resources by delivering quality care in the proper setting at the right time. UPMC Health Plan’s approach to accountability is based on the belief that providers know what is best for UPMC Health Plan members. We rely on our providers to:

- Provide the appropriate level of care
- Maintain high quality
- Use health care resources efficiently



### **Closer Look at Referrals**

Providers are required to coordinate a member’s care with other specialists, behavioral health providers, therapists, hospitals, laboratories, and facilities in the network appropriate to the member’s benefit plan. In addition, providers are required to refer members to other Participating Providers (including but not limited to specialists, behavioral health providers, hospitals, laboratories and facilities). Use of network providers helps members maximize medical benefits and reduce out of pocket expenses. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to provider termination.

Network providers are responsible for determining the type of care the member needs and the appropriate provider or facility to administer that care.

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### **The Role of the Referring Provider**

Coordination of care requires that providers communicate with specialists, behavioral health providers, therapists, and other providers regarding member’s care. In turn, those providers should reciprocate by informing the referring provider of their findings and proposed treatment. This sharing of information can be accomplished by telephone, fax, letter, or prescription. Providers also need to supply UPMC Health Plan with critical information needed to authorize certain types of care and process claims.

For UPMC Community HealthChoices participants with LTSS, providers should also communicate with participant’s Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers and service coordinators. HCBS services are authorized through the participant’s person-centered service plan and it is important that providers work closely with participant’s service coordinators and HCBS providers to understand the participant’s needs.



### **Closer Look at Referrals**

UPMC Health Plan **does not require a referral form**, but providers must follow a referral and coordination process to ensure high-quality care and accurate reimbursement for services.

**Providers should follow these steps when referring a member to a specialist:**

**1. Direct specialty care to providers, therapists, laboratories, and/or hospitals appropriate to the member’s benefit plan.**

The only time a provider should send a member to specialists, therapists, laboratories, and hospitals outside the member’s benefit plan is when extenuating circumstances require the use of an out-of-network specialist or facility or because the only available specialist or facility is not part of the member’s benefit plan. The provider must have prior authorization from **Medical Management** to refer a member to an out-of-network specialist or facility.

➤ See *Alert—Out-of-Network Referrals*, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.

**2. Correspond with the specialist/behavioral health provider.**

The provider may call or send a letter, fax, or prescription to the specialist. The referring provider should communicate clinical information directly to the specialist without involving the member.

**3. Give the facility, specialist, or behavioral health provider the following referral information:**

- Member’s name
- Reason for the referral
- All relevant medical information (e.g., medical records, test results)
- Referring provider’s name and Unique Provider Identification Number (UPIN) or National Provider Identifier (NPI) (This information is required in boxes 17 and 17A on the CMS-1500 claim form.)

➤ See *Required Fields on a CMS-1500 Claim form*, Claims Procedures, Chapter H.

Please refer to the UPMC Health Plan provider directory, which is available online at [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com). For additional copies, call **Provider Services** at:

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>UPMC Health Plan (Commercial)</b>            | <b>1-866-918-1595</b> |
| <b>UPMC <i>for Kids</i> (CHIP)</b>              | <b>1-800-650-8762</b> |
| <b>UPMC <i>for You</i> (Medical Assistance)</b> | <b>1-866-918-1595</b> |
| <b>UPMC Community HealthChoices</b>             | <b>1-844-860-9303</b> |
| <b>UPMC <i>for Life</i> (Medicare)</b>          | <b>1-877-539-3080</b> |
| <b>UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plans (SNP)</b>  | <b>1-800-606-8648</b> |
| <b>UPMC Behavioral Health Services (BHS)</b>    | <b>1-888-251-0083</b> |



### **Alert—Out-of-Network Referrals**

In order to send members to out-of-network specialists or facilities, providers must get prior authorization from **Medical Management** by logging onto [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com) and entering the authorization request, or by calling **1-800-425-7800**. Failure to get authorization will result in denial of the claim. The referring provider must give the reason for the out-of-network referral. If written information is required, it may be sent to:

**UPMC Health Plan  
Medical Management Department  
U.S. Steel Building  
600 Grant St, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

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### **Alert—Referrals required for the Healthcare Exchange**

UPMC Health Plan offers several plans on the Healthcare Exchange. These plans require a referral when seeking services with a specialist. The words “Referral Required” will be printed on the front of the member’s ID card. The primary care physician is required to enter the referral utilizing the UPMC Health Plan Provider Online secure portal. The portal allows the physician to enter the referral for a specific physician, practice, or specialty for up to 90 days as a “Consult” or “Consult and Treat”. The referral is valid as of the date entered and 90 days forward. There are no retroactive referrals. The specialty office has the ability to log into Provider Online to verify that a referral has been entered.

The provider must log into the secure portion of Provider Online to access the referral inquiry. Begin the process to obtain a log-in and password by accessing the following link: <https://upmchealthplan.upmc.com/WebPortals/Requests/SecurityRequest.aspx>

**NOTE:** A referral is not required for pediatric members under the age of 21. In addition, a referral is not required for those members seeking care for chemotherapy, OB/GYN preventive services or from a pediatric specialist, or a behavioral health professional.

**NOTE:** This referral process does not apply to UPMC *for You* (Medical Assistance), UPMC Community HealthChoices (Medical Assistance), UPMC *for Life* (Medicare), UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plans, UPMC *for Kids* (CHIP), and UPMC Health Plan (Commercial). This process only applies to individuals who purchased a UPMC Health Plan product from the **Healthcare Exchange**.

To obtain assistance with the log-in and password process contact **Provider Services** at **1-800-937-0438** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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## **The Role of the Specialist for UPMC Health Plan (Commercial), UPMC for Life (Medicare), or Medicare Select Members**

### **1. Verify whether the care was coordinated.**

When a member sees a specialist, the specialist's office needs to determine whether a provider coordinated the care or the member directly accessed the specialist for care. (If care was coordinated, the PCP's name and UPIN are required in boxes 17 and 17A on the CMS-1500 claim form.)

➤ See *Required Fields on a CMS-1500 Claim Form*, Claims Procedures, Chapter H.

#### ***If a provider coordinated the care ...***

... collect any paperwork or check office records for communication from the referring doctor.

#### ***If the member self-directed care to a specialist ...***

... contact the PCP, if applicable, to obtain medical records and check to see if any diagnostic testing already has been completed to avoid duplicate testing.

#### ***If the member does not have a PCP ...***

... obtain a medical history and try to determine whether any prior diagnostic testing has been performed.

### **2. Determine the copayment.**

#### ***If the visit is self-directed by a member whose benefit plan does not require the selection of a PCP ...***

... care is covered at a higher benefit level if the member uses a network provider and at a lower benefit level if the member uses an out-of-network provider.

### **3. Communicate findings.**

The specialist must communicate findings and treatment plans to the referring provider within 30 days from the date of the visit. The referring provider and specialist should jointly determine how care is to proceed.



### **Closer Look at Referrals by Specialists**

A specialist may coordinate the patient's care with another specialist as long as network providers are used. The specialist providing the care is responsible for communicating pertinent findings to the member's PCP, when applicable, and for submitting the referring specialist's name and UPIN or NPI on the claim.

➤ See *Required Fields on a CMS-1500 Claim Form*, Claims Procedures, Chapter H.

## **The Role of the Specialist for UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices (Medical Assistance) Members**

### **1. Verify that the PCP coordinated the care.**

When a member sees a specialist, the specialist's office needs to determine that the member's PCP or ob-gyn coordinated the care. If there is no communication from the PCP or ob-gyn and the medical condition requires immediate treatment, the specialist should call the PCP or ob-gyn. (If care was coordinated, the PCP's name and UPIN are required in boxes 17 and 17A on the CMS-1500 claim form.)

### **2. Provide services indicated by the referral.**

The specialist can provide only those services that are indicated by the referral. If the member needs other services, the specialist must contact the PCP or ob-gyn. If the member's condition is life-threatening or a degenerative or a disabling disease or condition, the PCP may approve an ongoing "standing" referral to a specialist. Members may also request via UPMC Member Services to request a specialist to be their PCP.

### **3. Communicate findings.**

The specialist should communicate findings and a treatment plan to the member's PCP. The PCP and specialist should then jointly determine how care should proceed, including when the member should return to the PCP's care.



### **Alert—Referrals by Specialists to Other Specialists**

Specialists cannot refer members directly to other specialists. If the member needs to see another specialist, the specialist must contact the member's PCP or ob-gyn to discuss the need for a referral.

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**Alert—Out-of-Network Referrals by Specialists**

Specialists cannot make out-of-network referrals. If a specialist believes an out-of-network referral is necessary, the specialist must contact the member’s PCP or ob-gyn. If a UPMC *for You* or UPMC Community HealthChoices member requires a referral to out-of-network specialists and facilities, prior authorization must be obtained from **Medical Management** by logging onto [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com) and entering the authorization request or by calling **1-800-425-7800**. The requesting provider must give the reason for the out-of-network referral. If written information is required, it may be sent to:

**UPMC Health Plan  
Medical Management Department  
U.S. Steel Building  
600 Grant St, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Fax: 412-454-2057**

## **Referrals for Ancillary Services for UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices Members**

UPMC *for You* and UPMC Community HealthChoices providers are required to coordinate referrals for ancillary services.

- See *Ancillary Services, UPMC for You (Medical Assistance)*, Chapter E.
- See *Ancillary Services, UPMC Community HealthChoices*, Chapter N

When referring a UPMC *for You* or UPMC Community HealthChoices member for ancillary services, the member’s PCP must follow these steps:

### **1. Obtain prior authorization from Medical Management, if applicable.**

Providers should obtain prior authorization for out-of-network ancillary referrals or for ancillary services indicated on the “**Quick Reference Guide**” by contacting **Medical Management**. Prior authorization must be obtained from Medical Management by logging onto [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com) and entering the authorization request or by calling 1-800-425-7800.

- See *Ancillary Services, and Quick Reference Guide, UPMC for You (Medical Assistance)*, Chapter E.
- See *Ancillary Services, and Quick Reference Guide, UPMC Community HealthChoices*, Chapter N

### **2. Communicate with the ancillary provider.**

After verifying eligibility, providers should send a letter or fax, or write a prescription for equipment and/or services.

# Hospital Guidelines

## At a Glance

UPMC Health Plan urges all providers to use the services of a network hospital. This will reduce costs, both to UPMC Health Plan and to members, and ensure members receive the highest quality care.

Providers who want to use out-of-network hospitals for non-emergencies must receive prior authorization from **Medical Management** by logging onto [www.upmchealthplan.com](http://www.upmchealthplan.com) and entering the authorization request or by calling **1-800-425-7800**. The requesting provider must give the reason for the out-of-network referral. If written information is required, it may be sent to:

**UPMC Health Plan  
Medical Management Department  
U.S. Steel Building  
600 Grant St, 11<sup>th</sup> floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Fax: 412-454-2057**

## Observation Status

Observation status applies to members for whom inpatient hospital admission is being considered but is not certain. Observation status should be used when:

- The member's condition is expected to be evaluated and/or treated within 24 hours, with follow-up care provided on an outpatient basis.
- The member's condition or diagnosis is not sufficiently clear to allow the member to leave the hospital.



### Closer Look at Observation Status

If a member in observation status is admitted, authorization is required. Contact **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** at the time of service regarding the need to admit. If after hours, leave a message and a representative will follow up the next business day.

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## Network Hospitals

- **Inpatient Admissions**

Network providers may admit a member to any network hospital appropriate to the member's benefit plan. If the admitting provider is a specialist, the specialist must communicate the admission to the member's PCP, if applicable, to ensure continuity and quality of care.

- **Emergency Admission**

Upon admitting a member from the emergency department, the hospital should collect the following information:

- The practice name of the member's PCP, if applicable
- The name of the member's referring provider if referred for emergency care
- The name of the admitting provider if different from the referring provider or PCP

The hospital or facility must notify **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** within 48 hours or on the next business day following the emergency admission.

- **Elective Admission**

To admit a UPMC *for You* or UPMC Community HealthChoices member for an elective admission, the admitting provider must obtain prior authorization at least 7 business days prior to the admission by calling **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800**. The admitting provider must work with the hospital to schedule the admission and any pre-admission testing.

## Out-of-Network Hospitals

- **Emergencies**

When a member is admitted to an out-of-network hospital for an emergency medical condition, the member's provider should contact **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** and ask to speak to a medical review nurse. The nurse may coordinate a transfer to a hospital appropriate to the member's benefit plan when the member is medically stable.

- **Non-Emergencies**

Members should not be admitted to out-of-network hospitals unless prior authorization is obtained for medically necessary services not available in the network. Call **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** for prior authorization.

- **Inpatient Consultation and Referral Process**

If the admitting provider determines that a member requires consultation with a specialist, the admitting provider must refer the member to a network specialist appropriate to the member's benefit plan. The referral should follow the hospital's locally approved procedures (e.g., consultation form, physician order form, etc.).

The admitting provider and specialist jointly should determine how care should proceed. Coordination of care occurs through active communication among the PCP, the admitting provider, and the specialist.

### **Pre-Admission Diagnostic Testing**

All pre-admission diagnostic testing conducted before a member's medically necessary surgery or admission to the hospital is covered when performed at a hospital appropriate to the member's benefit plan. Some procedures may require prior authorization.

If testing is completed within 72 hours of the member's admission, it is included with the admission. Otherwise, the testing can be billed separately.

Pre-admission diagnostic testing includes:

- Laboratory diagnostic tests
- Radiological diagnostic tests
- Other diagnostic tests, including electrocardiogram, pulmonary function, and neurological

### **Transfers**

#### **Transfers Between Network Facilities**

If a member is admitted to a network hospital and needs to be transferred to another hospital, UPMC Health Plan requires that the member be sent to a hospital appropriate to the member's benefit plan. The transferring provider must coordinate the transfer with a representative at the receiving facility.

Providers must contact **UPMC Medical Transportation** at **1-877-521-RIDE (7433)** to arrange any type of transportation.

#### **Transfers to Out-of-Network Facilities**

UPMC Health Plan requires prior authorization for transfer to an out-of-network facility. The transferring provider must contact **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** and speak to a medical review nurse.

➤ **NOTE: Without prior approval, coverage will be denied.**



### **Closer Look at Coordinating Transfers**

Urgent and routine medical transportation must be provided by a network ambulance service. To coordinate transportation, providers must contact **UPMC Medical Transportation** at **1-877-521-RIDE (7433)**.

**NOTE:** UPMC *for You* (Medical Assistance) providers located in the Lehigh Capital zone **do not need** to call UPMC Medical Transportation.

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### **Discharges**

Medical Management works with the hospital's Utilization Management Department to coordinate discharge planning.

A discharge planner is available to assist in coordinating follow-up care, ancillary services, and other appropriate services. Contact **Medical Management** at **1-800-425-7800** to speak to a discharge planner.

### **Hospital Delivery Notification**

The hospital in which a UPMC *for You* (Medical Assistance) newborn is delivered must fill out a Hospital Maternity Profile form and fax it to the **Medical Assistance Program** at **412-454-5731**.

For copies of the Hospital Maternity Profile form, providers should call **Provider Services**, at **1-866-918-1595**.

Additionally, as contracted Medical Assistance providers, hospitals and birthing centers maintain the responsibility of notifying (via fax or phone) the County Assistance Offices immediately after the birth, then following up by mailing the MA-112 (Newborn Eligibility Form) to the applicable CAO **within 3 working days of the birth**. Additional copies of the form may be obtained by contacting the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

➤ See *Maternity Program*, Medical Management, Chapter G.

## *Provider Disputes*

If a provider disagrees with a decision by UPMC Health Plan to deny coverage of care or services, the provider has the right to appeal that decision. Appeals fall into three categories: administrative (non-medical necessity), medical necessity, and expedited.

### **Resubmitting a corrected claim due to minor error or omission is not an appeal.**

Corrections or resubmissions of claims due to minor errors or omissions should be sent to the customary claims address.

➤ See *Claims Addresses, Claims Procedures, Chapter H.*

A request for an administrative or a medical necessity appeal must be submitted in writing within 30 business days of the denial notification. The request must include the reason for the appeal and a copy of the medical record or other supporting documentation. The request for appeal should clearly state why and on what basis the provider wishes to appeal.

To answer any additional questions about the right to appeal or how to file an appeal, providers may call **Provider Services** at **1-866-918-1595**.

### **Administrative Appeal - (non-medical necessity)**

Administrative appeals involve claims that have been denied for reasons other than those related to medical necessity. Therefore, administrative denials are not reconsidered based on medical necessity.

Some examples are:

- The care was not coordinated with the PCP.
- Prior authorization was required but not obtained.
- The individual is no longer a member.

### **The following procedure outlines the administrative appeal process:**

#### **1. Provider sends a written appeal to UPMC Health Plan.**

The provider sends a written appeal to UPMC Health Plan at the following address stating the reason the claim was denied (from the Explanation of Payment) and any supporting documentation as to why the provider believes the decision should be reversed.

**UPMC Health Plan  
Provider Appeals  
PO Box 2906  
Pittsburgh, PA 15230-2906**

**2. Committee reviews the denial.**

A committee of one or more UPMC Health Plan employees decides administrative appeals. The committee reviews such appeals only once.

**3. Committee makes decision.**

The committee makes a decision within 60 business days. **All decisions are final.** If the administrative denial is upheld, the provider is notified in writing of the result within 10 business days of the decision. If the administrative denial is reversed, the claim is adjusted within 30 business days of the date of the decision.

### **Medical Necessity Appeal**

Three levels of appeal are available to providers regarding denials based on medical necessity. Each is described in this section.

- See *Glossary of Health Care Terms* for the definition of medical necessity, Glossary and Abbreviations, Chapter K

### **First-Level Appeal**

**1. Provider sends a written appeal to UPMC Health Plan.**

Within 30 business days of the denial notification, the provider sends a written appeal to UPMC Health Plan by mail to the following address:

**UPMC Health Plan  
Provider Appeals  
PO Box 2906  
Pittsburgh, PA 15230-2906**

**2. Physician reviews the appeal.**

A UPMC Health Plan physician reviewer, who was not involved with the initial determination, reviews the appeal.

**3. Physician reviewer makes a decision.**

Within 30 business days, UPMC Health Plan physician reviewer determines whether any additional information has been presented that supports a reversal of the denial.

**4. Provider receives notification of the decision.**

If the medical necessity denial is upheld, the provider is notified in writing of the result within 10 business days of the decision. If the medical necessity denial is reversed, the claim is adjusted within 30 business days of the date of the decision.

## Second-Level Appeal

**1. Provider submits a request for a Second-Level Appeal.**

A provider who does not agree with the outcome of a medical necessity appeal can submit a request for a Second-Level Appeal following the procedure listed in First-Level Appeal.

**2. Physician reviews the appeal.**

A peer physician or physician of the same specialty of care that is being appealed reviews the dispute and makes a decision. Also, a UPMC Health Plan physician reviewer who was not involved with the previous determinations reviews the appeal.

**3. Committee makes decision.**

A Committee comprised of UPMC Health Plan staff, a UPMC Health Plan physician, and an independent peer physician of the same specialty reviews the dispute and makes a decision within 60 business days.

**4. Provider receives notification of the decision.**

If the medical necessity denial is upheld, the provider is notified in writing of the result within 10 business days of the decision. If the medical necessity denial is reversed, the claim is adjusted within 30 business days of the date of the decision.

## Expedited Appeal

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### Alert – Expedited Appeal

The provider can request an expedited review if the provider believes a member's life, health, or ability to regain maximum function is in jeopardy because of the time required for the usual review process.

A decision is rendered as quickly as is warranted by the member's condition but no later than 48 hours after the review is received.

An expedited review can be requested by calling **Provider Services** at **1-866-918-1595**.

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### **Closer Look at initiating an appeal on behalf of the member**

If the provider initiates an appeal with consent from the member or the member's legal representative:

- The provider may ask the member for his or her written consent to pursue an appeal at the time of treatment or service – but not as a condition of providing that treatment or service.
- The provider may not bill the member for services that are the subject of the appeal until the review has been completed or the member's consent has been rescinded.
- The member cannot file a separate appeal for the same denied treatment or service. If a member wishes to do so, the member must first rescind consent to the provider.
- The provider must notify the member if he/she decides not to file the appeal on behalf of the member.
- If the provider obtained consent to file an appeal and decides not to file on the member's behalf the provider must notify the member immediately. The member only has a certain number of days from receipt of the standard written utilization review denial and any decision letter from a first level, second level, or external review to file their appeal to continue receiving ongoing services.

➤ See *Complaints and Grievances* section in the following chapters for additional details:

- Chapter C, UPMC Health Plan (Commercial)
- Chapter D, UPMC for Kids (CHIP)
- Chapter E, UPMC for You (Medical Assistance)
- Chapter F, UPMC for Life (Medicare)
- Chapter M, UPMC Medicare Special Needs Plans
- Chapter N, UPMC Community HealthChoices

# *Provider Credentialing*

The provider credentialing process involves several steps: request for network participation, application submission, primary source verification, on-site evaluation (if appropriate), a Credentials Committee review, and provider notification.

## **Application – Initial Credentialing**

Physicians interested in becoming a UPMC Health Plan provider should submit a network participation request online at [www.upmchealthplan.com/providers/request.html](http://www.upmchealthplan.com/providers/request.html) or by calling **412-454-5264**.

If the request is approved an application will be sent to the provider. The provider should fill in all of the requested information, sign, and date the application, and return it with any requested documents for initial processing to UPMC Health Plan either by:

**Email:** [ProviderNetworkInquiries@upmc.edu](mailto:ProviderNetworkInquiries@upmc.edu)

or

**Fax:** 412-454-8225

or

**Mail:** UPMC Health Plan Network  
U.S. Steel Building  
600 Grant Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

## **Application - Recredentialing**

According to UPMC Health Plan guidelines, network providers must be recredentialed, **at a maximum** of every three (3) years from the date of their initial credentialing.

The provider should fill in all of the requested information, sign and date the application, and return it with any requested documents for processing to the address on the recredentialing application.

**NOTE:** If the provider is a member of a UPMC Health Plan network physician hospital organization (PHO), Physician Organization (PO) or other entity that UPMC Health Plan works with to credential/recredential providers, the provider should return the completed application to that organization for processing. Providers with questions about where to submit an application can contact **Provider Services** at **1-866-918-1595**.



### **Closer Look at the Application Process**

The Credentialing and Network departments check the application for completeness. If documents or other information is missing, the credentialing or network staff will return the application with a request that the missing information be submitted. Providers must provide a signature reflecting the new date of completion.

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### **Primary Source Verification**

The Credentialing Department contacts each primary source to verify the following credentials:

- Board certification
- Malpractice insurance coverage and history of liability claims
- Medicare and Medicaid sanctions
- Residency or medical school only if not board-certified (highest level of education or training must be verified)
- Sanctions, restrictions, or suspensions of a state license
- Status of staff privileges at a network UPMC Health Plan hospital(s)
- Valid DEA or CDS certification for each state in which the provider practices
- Valid, unrestricted license to practice in state(s) in which the practice resides
- Work history—this does not require primary source verification, although gaps of six months must be reviewed with the practitioner and gaps of one year need to be clarified in writing by the practitioner for inclusion in the credentialing file.

### **On-Site Evaluation**

UPMC Health Plan may contact providers to arrange an on-site evaluation of practice site(s) and/or medical record documentation. **At a minimum**, the following UPMC Health Plan standards will be assessed:

- Adequacy of waiting room and exam room space
- Availability of appointments
- Emergency care and CPR certification
- Hazardous waste elimination
- Medical equipment management
- Medical record documentation
- Medication administration
- Physical accessibility, availability, and appearance of practice site(s)
- Radiology, cardiology, and laboratory services (if applicable)

## **Provider Rights**

Once all information is complete, including primary source verification and office site review (if applicable), the Credentialing Department reviews and compares all information on the application to the primary source data. If any discrepancies are noted, the practitioner is notified in writing and has 14 calendar days to forward the correct information in writing to the UPMC Health Plan Credentialing Department supervisor. The information must be sent in writing by mail or by fax from the facility or department from where the information originated from, e.g., state license board, education facility, hospital, etc. The Credentialing Department will document the receipt of the additional, corrected information in the provider's credential's file. The corrected information will be reviewed by the Credentials Committee.

In addition, a practitioner has the right to review the information submitted in support of his or her application. If the practitioner discovers erroneous information on the application, the practitioner has the opportunity to correct this information before the Credentials Committee reviews it. The practitioner must initial and date the corrected information and re-sign and date the attestation form.

Upon request, a practitioner also has the right to be informed of the status of his/her credentialing/recredentialing application. The Credentialing staff will inform the provider of his or her credentialing status verbally or in writing depending upon the format (written/verbal) of the request submitted by the provider.

Providers' rights are documented on the UPMC Health Plan Provider Application. Changes to provider rights will be communicated to providers in writing.

## **Credentials Committee Review**

Completed credentialing files are then presented to the Credentials Committee for review and deliberation. A welcome letter and packet are sent to practitioners once they are approved as providers in the UPMC Health Plan provider network.

Practitioners will be notified in writing if they are denied credentialing status for some reason. In the event that a practitioner wishes to appeal a credentialing denial decision, the request must be submitted via a letter addressed to the chairperson of the Credentials Committee.

- See *Credentialing Denials and Appeals*, Provider Standards and Procedures, Chapter B.

## Recredentialing Process

All practitioners must be recredentialled, at a maximum of every three (3) years from the date of their initial credentialing. The recredentialing process is the same basic process as that for credentialing, except that practitioners are also evaluated on their professional performance, judgment, and clinical competence. Criteria used for this evaluation may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Compliance with UPMC Health Plan’s policies and procedures
- UPMC Health Plan sanctioning related to utilization management, administrative issues, or quality of care
- Member complaints
- Member satisfaction survey
- Participation in quality improvement activities
- Quality-of-care concerns

Applications for recredentialing are forwarded to the practitioner about six months before the practitioner’s recredentialing date to enable the credentialing process to be completed within the required period.



### **Alert—Recredentialing**

Failure to return the completed recredentialing application and supporting documentation within the requested time limit may result in termination from the network.

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## Dual Credentialing and Recredentialing as a PCP and Specialist

UPMC Health Plan will consider, as an exception, requests from providers to participate as both a PCP and specialist when the provider:

- Meets UPMC Health Plan credentialing standards for each specialty requested
- Provides documentation demonstrating adequate professional training, expertise, capacity, and capabilities to undertake such responsibilities for providing both primary care and specialty services
- Agrees to be listed as a PCP in all member literature and accept membership
- Agrees not to bill consultation charges for members enrolled in the PCP practice regardless of the nature of the visit

## Credentialing and Recredentialing Issues

### Board Certification

UPMC Health Plan requires that PCPs and specialists be board-certified in their respective specialties by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Depending on the availability of qualified, board-certified physicians, the following exceptions may apply:

- Practitioners who meet all other qualifications but began practicing a specific scope of medical practice before the availability of board certification in their particular specialty. Such practitioners must have active admitting privileges at a UPMC Health Plan-affiliated hospital.
- Practitioners who are within five years of completion of an approved residency or fellowship in the specialty in which they practice.
- Practitioners who are members of a group practice in which 50 percent of the group physicians are board-certified in the requesting practitioner's specialty.
- Practitioners who are practicing in federally designated underserved areas and meet all other credentialing standards, including:
  - Practicing in a requested specialty for more than five years
  - Active admitting privileges at a UPMC Health Plan network facility in the appropriate department

### Malpractice Insurance

UPMC Health Plan requires that providers carry professional liability at no less than the current Pennsylvania Insurance Department minimum requirements or in accordance with the state requirements in which their practice resides.

Providers must submit a copy of their current malpractice insurance face sheet with the amount of coverage and policy effective dates at the time of credentialing or recredentialing.

### Credentialing Denials and Appeals

UPMC Health Plan will send a letter to a practitioner who has been denied credentialing. The letter will include appeal rights if applicable. If applicable, the practitioner may appeal a credentialing decision in the following manner:

#### 1. Provider sends written request to Credentials Committee chairperson.

Providers should send requests for appeals to the following address:

**UPMC Health Plan Credentialing Department  
U.S. Steel Building  
600 Grant Street, 42<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**2. The Credentials Committee chairperson sends the provider written notice of the hearing.**

The hearing date, time, and place, as well as the composition of the appeals committee, will be sent to the practitioner at least 30 calendar days before the scheduled hearing date. The notice will include a request for the practitioner's consent to disclose the specifics of his or her application and all credentialing documentation to be discussed at the hearing.

The practitioner has the right to be present and is allowed to offer evidence or information to explain or refute the cause for denial. Legal counsel also can represent the practitioner, as long as UPMC Health Plan is informed of such representation at least seven days before the hearing.

**3. The Appeals Committee conducts the hearing and sends recommendation to the Quality Improvement Committee (QIC).**

The Appeals Committee, consisting of three voting practitioners selected by the Credentials Committee chairperson, will deliberate without the practitioner present. Its decision will be by majority vote and will be forwarded to UPMC Health Plan's Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) as a recommendation.

**4. The QIC makes a decision and notifies provider.**

The QIC's decision is final. Written notice of the QIC's decision will be sent to the practitioner in an expeditious and appropriate manner and will include a written statement giving the basis of the decision.

# *Provider Sanctioning*

UPMC Health Plan follows a three-phase process for addressing the actions of providers who fail to observe the terms and conditions of the provider agreement or UPMC Health Plan's policies and procedures.

The Quality Improvement Committee (QIC), made up of practicing physicians and UPMC Health Plan employees, sets the sanctioning guidelines and oversees any corrective or disciplinary action involving network Providers.

## **Actions That Could Lead to Sanctioning**

Actions that could lead to sanctioning fall into three main categories: administrative noncompliance, unacceptable resource utilization, and quality of care concerns.

### **Administrative Noncompliance**

Administrative noncompliance is consistent or significant behavior that is detrimental to the success or functioning of UPMC Health Plan. Examples include:

- Conduct that is unprofessional or erodes the confidence of UPMC Health Plan members
- Direct or balance-billing for services
- Failure to coordinate or cooperate with UPMC Health Plan's administrative, quality improvement, and utilization review and reimbursement procedures

### **Unacceptable Resource Utilization**

Unacceptable resource utilization is a utilization pattern that deviates from acceptable medical standards and may adversely affect a member's quality of care.

### **Quality of Care**

A quality of care issue may arise from an episode that adversely affects the functional status of a member or a pattern of medical practice that deviates from acceptable medical standards. For quality of care concerns a severity scale is utilized. The severity level indicates adverse effect or potential adverse effects on the patient.

The sanctioning process and focused monitoring of the provider remain in effect for no less than one year from the date the provider is notified by a UPMC Health Plan medical director. The provider is notified when the process and follow-up activities are satisfied and the sanctioning is no longer in effect. In instances of recurring similar noncompliance activities, UPMC Health Plan reserves the right to expedite the sanctioning process.

## Corrective Action Phases

Corrective action is imposed in three phases, with providers entering successive phases only if they fail to adhere to the corrective action imposed in the previous phase.

### Phase I —Education Phase

The first phase involves reviews and interviews between the provider and a UPMC Health Plan medical director. This phase also includes follow-up notices outlining the action expected of the provider.

### Phase II —Continuing Education Phase

During this phase, a medical director meets with the provider and provides focused monitoring of the provider's progress.

### Phase III —Recommendation for Termination

In the third phase, if the provider has continued to exhibit unacceptable behavior or has not performed to acceptable standards, there will be a recommendation for consideration of termination.

➤ **NOTE:** If the UPMC Health Plan Medical Director determines that based on her/his sole discretion, a member is in imminent danger because of the actions or inactions of a participating provider/practitioner, the UPMC Health Plan's Medical Director may impose disciplinary action including:

1. Immediate suspension or restriction of the practitioner/provider's network participation status; or
2. Phase III - Recommendation for termination from the network

Phase III, Recommendation for termination, may be invoked by the UPMC Health Plan's Medical Director based on the severity level without the provider/practitioner entering Phase I or Phase II of the process.

## *Provider Termination*

The QIC, as part of the sanctioning process, may recommend the termination of a provider contract. The provider will be notified in writing and offered the opportunity to appear at a hearing, if appropriate. The termination process involves the following steps:

**1. Medical director notifies provider about termination.**

The provider will be given notice stating that a professional review action was recommended and the reasons for the proposed action. The provider has the right to request a hearing within 30 calendar days.

**2. Provider may request a hearing.**

If a hearing is requested, the provider will be given notice stating the place, time, and date of the hearing—to occur no later than 60 calendar days after the date of the notice—and the names of witnesses, if any, expected to testify on behalf of UPMC Health Plan.

**3. QIC appoints an Appeals Committee.**

The QIC will appoint an Appeals Committee on an ad hoc basis. The QIC will not select as members of the Appeals Committee anyone in direct economic competition with the provider who is the subject of the hearing or anyone who has previously voted on the action.

**4. Appeals Committee conducts hearing and makes recommendations.**

After the QIC recommends termination of participation status or other sanction, the Appeals Committee will hear the appeal from a provider if the QIC—in its sole discretion—offered the provider the opportunity to appeal. The Appeals Committee will conduct the hearing and recommend to the QIC that it accept, reject, or modify its original recommendation. The right to the hearing may be forfeited if the provider fails, without good cause, to appear.

At the hearing, the provider has the right to:

- Receive representation by an attorney or other person of the provider's choice
- Have a record made of the proceedings, copies of which may be obtained by the provider upon payment of any reasonable charges associated with the preparation of the records
- Call, examine, and cross-examine witnesses
- Present evidence determined to be relevant by the hearing officer regardless of its admissibility in a court of law
- Submit a written statement at the close of the hearing

Upon completion of the hearing, the provider has the right to receive the written recommendation of the Appeals Committee from UPMC Health Plan in an expeditious and appropriate manner, including a written statement giving the basis of the decision.