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Network Communication Bulletin #331

To: All Providers

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VP of Network Management

Date: December 12, 2023

Subject: NCTracks Call Center Closed for Holidays, NC Medicaid Innovations Waiver Provider Rate Increase, Upcoming Rate Changes, Provider Name on Re-Verification Applications, Low Income Energy Assistance Program, Crisis Resources 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, New 988 Resources, New Initiative Provides Payment to Support Relatives, Behavioral Health Reimbursement Rates Increased for the First Time in a Decade, NCDHHS Secretary Kody Kinsley Provides Medicaid Expansion Update, Trillium Forensic Evaluator Training Revised, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Training Series, HOP Training Recordings Available, Criminal Disclosure Compliance, Health Disparities Training, Important Information Regarding the 2023-2024 National Core Indicators Survey, Register for the Next Reentry Simulation, NC Medicaid to Extend Appendix K Temporary Flexibilities until February 29, 2024, Tailored Plan and Medicaid Direct Trainings, Provider RFA Opportunity: Partnerships in Overdose Prevention and Harm Reduction, Quest Analytics BetterDoctor Provider Outreach, Valued Providers Seal Program, Long Term Services and Supports, Open Enrollment: Residential Therapeutic Care for Transgender/Gender Diverse Youth, Need to Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse?

NCTRACKS CALL CENTER CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS

The NCTracks Call Center will be closed on Monday, Dec. 25, Tuesday, Dec. 26, and Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2023 in observance of the Christmas holiday. The NCTracks Call Center will also be closed on Monday, Jan. 1, 2024 for the New Year's holiday. Please note, the Pharmacy Call Center will remain open, operating on a normal holiday schedule (7AM – 6PM).

In keeping with the published NCTracks checkwrite schedule, there will be no checkwrite on Dec. 26, 2023. The last checkwrite of the year will be on Dec. 19, 2023 and the first checkwrite of 2024 will be on Jan. 3, 2023.

The 2023 and 2024 checkwrite schedules can be found under Quick Links on the [NCTracks Providers Webpage](#).

 [NCTracks Home](#)

NC MEDICAID INNOVATIONS WAIVER PROVIDER RATE INCREASE

The NC General Assembly appropriated \$176 million in state and federal recurring funding in the Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2023 (SL 2023-134, Section 9E.15) to raise NC Medicaid Innovations waiver services rates so that Innovations services providers can in turn raise the hourly wages of the direct care workers (DCW) they employ.

Though the legislation does not specify the amount or percentage of the rate increase that must be passed through to DCW wage increases, the General Assembly states an intention of increasing the average hourly wage for DCWs in Innovations services by \$6.50 per hour to move those workers to an average wage of \$18.00/hr. The funding appropriated for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024 does not enable quite that large of a wage increase, but it should support significant movement in that direction.

 [NC Medicaid Innovations Waiver Provider Rate Increase](#)

UPCOMING RATE CHANGES

The NC Department of Health Benefits (DHB) recently announced NC Medicaid Behavioral Health service rate increases that will take effect on January 1, 2024, as well as Innovations Waiver DCW rate increases retroactive to July 1, 2023. Trillium is in the process of assessing the information provided by DHB and preparing an updated fee schedule. Further details will be released regarding the readjudication of impacted Innovations waiver claims.

Details on the rate changes can be found in the Medicaid Communication Bulletins linked below:

 [NC Medicaid Behavioral Health Services Rate Increases](#)


 [NC Medicaid Innovations Waiver Provider Rate Increase](#)

PROVIDER NAME ON RE-VERIFICATION APPLICATIONS

The provider name listed on applications for re-verification must match their legal name, name on the NPPEs Registry, and their name on any license, certification, and/or accreditation.

Providers can check their listed NPPEs name at the [Search NPI Records](#).

If the name does not match, do NOT submit the application. Instead send an email to NCTracksProvider@nctracks.com with required documentation attached. See chart on this page for more information about required documentation:

 [NCTracks Helpful Hints: What is the Process to Update a Name, DOB and/or SSN on a Provider's Record?](#)

 [NCTracks Home](#)

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally-funded program that provides for a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills.

Households including a person aged 60 or older or disabled persons receiving services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services are eligible to sign up for assistance from Dec. 1 – 31. All other households may apply from Jan. 1 – March 31 or until funds are exhausted.

 [More Information](#)

CRISIS RESOURCES 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE








WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CALL, TEXT OR CHAT 988?

You will be connected with a skilled, trained crisis worker who works at the Lifeline network crisis center closest to you. This person will listen to you, understand how your problem is affecting you, provide support and share any resources that may be helpful.

The Lifeline does not “trace” callers, chat or text users. For some individuals, having contact with emergency services can be traumatic and dangerous, and whenever possible the Lifeline recommends alternate options such as collaborating on a safety plan, utilizing mobile crisis teams, collaborating with the individual’s loved ones or professionals, or supporting the individual to get to a Crisis Stabilization Unit, emergency department, or urgent care. [Learn more and get answers to other frequently asked questions.](#)

Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org. Individuals who speak Spanish can now connect directly to Spanish-speaking crisis counselors by calling 988 and pressing option 2, texting "AYUDA" to 988, or chatting online at 988lineadevida.org or 988Lifeline.org. Please add 988 to your phone.

988 is available to anyone, anytime. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Risk factors for suicide include:

-  History of depression or other mental illness
-  Recent life crisis
-  Social Isolation
-  Physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including bullying
-  Previous suicide attempt
-  Substance misuse
-  Interpersonal conflict

NEW 988 RESOURCES

The 988 Partner Toolkit is a one-stop shop for social media, video, print, radio, FAQs, messaging, and other marketing materials for anyone to use to promote awareness of 988. Two new videos focus on teaching people about signs that may indicate someone is struggling with mental health, such as changes in behavior, sleeping too much or too little, increased drug and alcohol use, severe emotional pain, and more. Knowing the six steps to create a safety plan can demystify the process for people in need. This [video](#) walks through the safety plan steps so that people identify warning signs of crisis, coping strategies, and trusted resources. There are also new 988 Lifeline print materials that can be downloaded or ordered.

NEW INITIATIVE PROVIDES PAYMENT TO SUPPORT RELATIVES

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kody H. Kinsley announced a new initiative that provides payment to relatives and family members who step in to care for children in need. The kinship care reimbursement payments are a vital resource that will support positive outcomes for children and families and encourage more people to become kinship care providers.

 [Press Release](#)

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT RATES INCREASED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A DECADE

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services today announced historic Medicaid reimbursement rate increases will soon be implemented for most mental health, substance use, intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) services in North Carolina.

This transformative change is the first increase to the state minimum reimbursement rates for behavioral health services in more than a decade. Raising these rates will strengthen the care workforce who provide these services and increase access to care for every North Carolinian. It will also make [Medicaid expansion](#) more impactful for the estimated 600,000 people who will gain access to these Medicaid health care services.

 [Press Release](#)

NCDHHS SECRETARY KODY KINSLEY PROVIDES MEDICAID EXPANSION UPDATE

NCDHHS Secretary Kody Kinsley shared an update on the progress of Medicaid Expansion, which will launch on Dec. 1, 2023. Expanding eligibility for Medicaid is the most significant investment in the health of North Carolinians in decades, providing health coverage for more than 600,000 people.

Medicaid Expansion will increase access to mental health and substance use treatment and will help build a healthier workforce in NC. It will help working families, as 80% of the people who will benefit from expansion are working families. Find out if you're eligible and more information at medicaid.ncdhhs.gov.

 [Watch Video](#)

TRILLIUM FORENSIC EVALUATOR TRAINING REVISED

Trillium contracted Forensic Evaluators are required to complete the Forensic Evaluator training module on the Provider Learning Campus in accordance with the contract. We would like to let you know that the FE Training has been revised and is now available for FE providers to access.

[Access the Provider Learning Campus here](#) and log in to your account to view and complete the NEW Forensic Evaluator training. Once complete, you may send our Certificate of Completion to Contract.Reporting@TrillumNC.org.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER TRAINING SERIES

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN 2024

This presentation will provide an update on FASD.

- 🌱 We will include discussion of two brief screening tools.
- 🌱 Red Flag indications for screening will be discussed.
- 🌱 A discussion of FASD across the lifespan will be included.
- 🌱 The concept of intervention in the context of the FASD developmental trajectory will be covered.

[See details and register](#)

HOP TRAINING RECORDINGS AVAILABLE

Healthy Opportunities Pilot Trainings are now posted on NCDHHS Website and can be found here: [Healthy Opportunities Pilot Trainings](#)

1. HOP: AMH+/CMA/LME Care Manager Training Session #1 – Recording (10/23/23)
2. HOP: AMH+/CMA/LME Care Manager Training Session #2 – Recording (11/06/23)
3. HOP: AMH+/CMA/LME Care Manager Training Session #3 – Recording (11/20/23)

As a reminder, if you will be a participating HOP TCM Provider, these are required trainings.

CRIMINAL DISCLOSURE COMPLIANCE

Providers must require all staff/applicants to disclose any/all criminal convictions prior to hire according to 10A NCAC 27G .0202 (c). Often, the issue is staff/applicants are asked to disclose criminal convictions, “excluding misdemeanors,” or “excluding minor traffic violations” on their employment application or criminal disclosure statement instead of all criminal convictions. All criminal disclosures statements and employment applications along with applicant responses will be reviewed in accordance with 10A NCAC 27G.0202 (c). Compliance to rule should reflect that the criminal disclosure statement was answered by the staff/applicant and does not allow for any exclusions.

HEALTH DISPARITIES TRAINING

According to the World Health Organization, International Day of Persons with Disabilities was first recognized by the United Nations and is celebrated every year on December 3.

This day is about promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities at every level of society and development. And to raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life.

See more information about the [Health Disparities Training](#).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE 2023-2024 NATIONAL CORE INDICATORS SURVEY

Every year Trillium Health Resources and other LME/MCOs across the state assist the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) with an annual survey of members who receive Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities services. This survey uses standard measures (core indicators) to assess the outcomes of services provided. Areas of concern addressed by the indicators include employment, member rights, service planning, community inclusion, choice, and health and safety.




The survey results are used to inform policy decisions designed to improve the system.

Your assistance and participation is crucial to the success of this project

If you provide I/DD services to members 18 years and older, you may be contacted to assist with obtaining consents and additional background information needed to administer the survey. Survey administration will be completed by a third party contracted with the State (Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, CIDD).

Providers may be contacted to assist with gathering information as early as December 2023. Trillium will provide additional information, including members chosen to participate in the survey, via email. The survey sample and a minimum number of surveys are provided by the State. In order to meet these state requirements, providers may be asked to provide support with contacting members to receive consent for survey participation. Additional information may be requested for those members who choose to participate in the survey.

Requirements for Member Participation in the Survey:

-  Must have an intellectual or developmental disability diagnosis
-  Must receive a Medicaid Funded service from an agency providing I/DD services
-  Must be at least 18 years old

If you are a provider of services for members that meet requirements of participation for the survey, please email Surveys@TrilliumNC.org with the email address for the best contacts to coordinate this survey for your agency. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at Surveys@TrilliumNC.org or 1-866-998-2597 and ask for Jennifer Kelly.

Thank you for your participation in this important survey! We look forward to working together with you to gather important information that will reflect our joint efforts to help members in our area.

REGISTER FOR THE NEXT REENTRY SIMULATION

Save the date of January 30, 2024 on your calendars for a Reentry Simulation to be held in Elizabeth City, NC from 8:30a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

 [Registration is open](#)

NC MEDICAID TO EXTEND APPENDIX K TEMPORARY FLEXIBILITIES UNTIL FEB. 29, 2024

 [NC Medicaid Extend Appendix-K Temporary Flexibilities Until February 29, 2024](#)

Flexibilities extended while the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reviews the Innovations and Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver amendments.

To avoid a disruption in care and support consumers and their families, NC Medicaid is extending Appendix K temporary flexibilities until Feb. 29, 2024, while the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reviews the Innovations and Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver amendments.

For more information, please see [Update: TBI Waiver 1915 \(c\) and Appendix K Flexibilities](#) or [Update: Innovations 1915\(c\) and Appendix K Flexibilities](#).

QUEST ANALYTICS BETTERDOCTOR PROVIDER OUTREACH

Trillium Health Resources has contracted with Quest Analytics for network adequacy and provider directory accuracy.

On our behalf, Quest Analytics conducts provider outreach to validate the data on Trillium's Member-facing Provider Directory. Quest Analytics utilizes BetterDoctor as a solution for Provider Directory accuracy and outreach efforts. BetterDoctor will contact providers by fax, mail, email, and/or a telephone call on a quarterly basis.

The provider letter will explain the process and request the provider validate the data contained in Trillium's Member-facing Provider Directory. The providers will validate and update their data via their input into the BetterDoctor portal.

The Network team will review the validated data and will work with the provider to resolve any inaccurate data issues. If you have any questions about Member-facing Provider Directory validation and outreach, email TrilliumProviderDirectory@TrilliumNC.org or call 1-855-250-1539.

VALUED PROVIDERS SEAL PROGRAM

Visit the [Valued Providers Seal Program](#) web page for more information about the Contracted, Comprehensive Behavioral Health, Large Agency, Evidenced-Based Treatment, Comprehensive I/DD and Integrated Care Provider Seals.



After receiving this recognition, sharing such dedication and innovative care should be as easy as possible.

The [Valued Providers Seal Program Tool Kit](#) is designed for just that. This resource provides tips for sharing news of provider seals on websites, social media, newsletters, and emails, along with pre-written posts and messages.

Trillium can see the impact providers make on our members and communities. We hope the tool kit serves to ensure those members and communities can see it as well.

Contact us at SealProgram@TrilliumNC.org for questions about the Valued Providers Seal Program. Providers can apply for one or multiple seals!

LONG TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Trillium is currently recruiting for Long-Term Services and Supports Member Advisory Committee members that will (LTSS MAC) provides stakeholder input and advice regarding the LTSS covered services under Trillium's Health Resources- Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Tailored Plan that meets all the provisions noted in 42 C.F.R. § 438.110.

Your opinion counts, we would like to become a member and solicit your feedback on the elements of LTSS. The LTSS MAC meets at least quarterly.

The LTSS MAC reviews and provides feedback on relevant Trillium's quality reports. The committee's input will serve as an early warning system for emerging issues related to member experience and quality of care.

Specific concerns shared by the LTSS MAC will be referred to Trillium's Quality Management department, which will help coordinate resolutions, refer for investigations as needed, and report to Trillium's Quality Improvement Committee

If you are interested in serving on this committee, please complete [on-line form](#).

OPEN ENROLLMENT: RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC CARE FOR TRANSGENDER/GENDER DIVERSE YOUTH

Trillium is accepting applications from Level III and Therapeutic Foster Care providers to develop residential services specifically for Transgender and/or Gender-Diverse (TGD) youth. Interested providers must submit an application to apply for consideration.

[Submit Questions](#)

[Application](#)

NEED TO REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE?

EthicsPoint is a secure and confidential system available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for reporting suspected violations of fraud, abuse and confidentiality breaches. You can access EthicsPoint through website submission at [EthicsPoint - Trillium Health Resources](#) or by calling toll free 1-855-659-7660.

Any questions about this Communication Bulletin *that does not already have an email listed for questions from that specific section*, may be sent to the following email: NetworkManagement@TrilliumNC.org. These questions will be answered in a Q&A format and published on Trillium's website.