

Outlook

A Newsletter for Alliance PPO Clients – Fall 2004

From the President's Desk

This has been an incredibly busy year at Alliance. I can hardly believe we're more than half-way through 2004. The months have flown by very quickly, and there's no sign of things slowing down. We've been steadily improving our processes, making it easier for participants, payors and physicians to interface with us.

Our network continues to expand, with the addition of several high quality hospitals and health care facilities in Virginia and West Virginia. These state-of-the-art facilities provide the finest care available to our participants, at negotiated rates that are affordable to our payors.

Inside this issue, we've included an overview of our Utilization Management process. Utilization Management services are critical to ensuring the quality and appropriateness of care. As health care costs continue to escalate, it is more important than ever to be mindful of utilization trends that can impact overall health care expenses.

We remain focused on offering products that provide the quality and value you have come to expect from Alliance. We understand how important it is to offer our participants choice and accessibility. Alliance is one of the largest PPOs in the mid-Atlantic region, and we maintain our practitioner and customer base by striving to provide outstanding service.

We value your business, and depend upon your feedback to let us know if we're hitting the mark. Your participation in our annual surveys is essential and greatly appreciated. Please know that we take these surveys very seriously, and use the results to continuously improve our service to you.

Both within Alliance, and outside of the Company as well, it seems we are all working longer hours. Despite the hectic pace of today's marketplace, I hope you took the opportunity this summer to enjoy time away from the office. Whether you spent it with family and friends, or all by yourself, it's good to give yourself a break. You earned it.

Sincerely,



John DeRosa
President

Discounts on Optical Wear

Did you know that Alliance participants are eligible to receive discounts on optical wear at certain contracted optical centers? Participants can call our Member Services Department at 1-800-342-3289 to get a list of the centers. The centers are also listed in the Alliance PPO *Directory of Health Care Professionals*. Participants should be sure to identify themselves as Alliance participants when requesting their savings on frames and lenses.



We've Got a New Look

Take a closer look at our logo, and you'll notice there's something a little different about it. We have a new tagline that reads "A MAMSI/UnitedHealthcare Company." Alliance's parent company, MAMSI, merged with UnitedHealthcare in February, and since that time, we've been working diligently to integrate our businesses. Our new logo is an outward sign of that integration. While we've seen many changes over the past few months, please be assured that the most important things haven't changed. Our payors can still rely on us to deliver exceptional value with a robust network of health care practitioners and facilities, backed by outstanding customer service.

ALLIANCE PPO

A MAMSI/UnitedHealthcare Company

Alliance Online...Coming to a Computer Near You

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new Web site, which is scheduled to go live in the fourth quarter of this year. At www.alliancepollc.com, payors, participants and practitioners can access timely information with the click of a mouse. Payors will be able to download frequently used forms, check claims status, and access the Payor Customer Service Manual and the *Outlook Newsletter*. Your participants can quickly search for a preferred doctor or health care facility, find up-to-date information on common medical conditions or learn more about Alliance Network Services.

Be sure to add our Web site to your favorites. Whether you're looking for the latest information about Alliance products and services, or the best person to contact for help, alliancepollc.com will prove to be a great resource. And, if you have found that Alliance brings value to your organization, share our Web site with your business colleagues. Our products and services may also be beneficial to them.

Utilization Management Brings Value to our Customers

When navigating the complex world of health care, it's much easier to find your way around with a tour guide. At Alliance, one of the guides our payors can rely upon is Lennita Anderson-Selvey. Lennita is the Alliance Utilization Management Liaison.

Lennita is a registered nurse who works directly with payors, providing assistance with any projects or issues related to their utilization management services. The Alliance Clinical Care Coordination Department (formerly known as Utilization Management or UM) and MAPSI (behavioral health) provide value for our customers by reviewing cases for medical necessity through pre-authorization and pre-certification of services, as well as conducting telephonic and on-site reviews of inpatient care and coordinating discharge planning.

Through quarterly reports, Lennita gives payors a snapshot of their groups' medical/surgical and behavioral health utilization trends. The reports allow our customers to look at their overall utilization, and see exactly which areas may be driving their costs. Payors can easily identify potential savings from an inpatient perspective, as well as actual savings from negotiated rates for care provided by non-acute care. This information also helps our customers plan for their business expenses and forecast medical costs.

We are also in the process of making Online Analytical Processing (OLAP), a password-protected reporting tool, available to our payors. OLAP will allow a payor to access utilization management information from a Web-based platform. Once released, payors will be able to use OLAP to confidentially filter utilization data by various parameters, including date, facility, diagnosis, procedure and geographic location. This data will be updated regularly, and will give payors the freedom to view utilization trends whenever they like – based on criteria that best meet their needs.

In addition to quarterly reports, Lennita is also available to assist with:

- surveys or questionnaires regarding utilization management services.
- attending meetings to present or explain reports.

If you have utilization management questions, or if you'd like to request any of our specialized services, please call Lennita Anderson-Selvey at 301-545-5363, or at 1-800-884-5188, ext. 5363.

Here We Grow Again

2004 has been a busy year for Alliance. In the past few months, we have added several new health care facilities to our network.

Bluefield Regional Medical Center joined the Alliance network in June, giving Alliance participants access to this 240-bed acute care facility, which is also a Level Three regional trauma center. With a staff of more than 120 physicians representing nearly every medical specialty – from pediatrics and emergency medicine to neurology and plastic surgery – Bluefield Regional Medical Center provides high quality health care for residents of southern West Virginia and southwestern Virginia.

With the addition of Valley Health Systems in May, Alliance participants now also have access to an impressive array of high-quality hospitals serving Virginia and West Virginia, including Winchester Medical Center, Warren Memorial Hospital, Shenandoah Memorial Hospital and Morgan County War Memorial Hospital. Other Valley Health System facilities included in the Alliance network are Shenandoah Valley Health Services, Gateway Home Care, Surgi-Center of Winchester, Winchester Open MRI, Purcellville Imaging, and Valley Regional Enterprises.

The counties served by Valley Health System in Virginia include Frederick, Winchester, Clarke, Warren, Shenandoah, Fauquier, Rappahannock, Page and Western Loudoun, including Bluemont, Roundhill, Purcellville and Hamilton. In West Virginia, the counties of Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral and Grant are served.

Did Alliance Make the Grade?

We are in the midst of conducting this year's two surveys: Access and Availability, and Participant Satisfaction. This information is very important, and we extend our thanks to the payors and participants who participated.

The Analysis of Access and Availability survey helps to ensure Alliance participants have adequate access to practitioners, facilities and services. It also helps us meet National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) requirements.

We understand that quality health care begins with access. However, it also requires outstanding customer service. That's why we conduct Payor and Participant Satisfaction surveys in alternating years. Each year, we analyze the results of our Participant or Payor survey to see if we're meeting customer expectations, as well as the goals we set for ourselves. The 2004 Participant Survey was mailed in early July. We hope as many participants as possible will respond, and we thank them in advance for their feedback.