



## New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc.

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TO: Chief Sector Stewards

FROM: Sharon Smith, Health Benefits Specialist

DATE: November 17, 2008

RE: Empire Plan/Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program

Please notify your members of the following change in the Empire Plan.

Effective 1/1/09, the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program will be administered by OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions/United HealthCare. ValueOptions will no longer administer the program. The State of New York placed this program out for bid early this year and OptumHealth was awarded the contract. NYSCOPBA's recommendation was to continue with ValueOptions, but to no avail (we have filed a grievance in regard to Article 12.14 of the contract in this regard).

Any member who received treatment through this program between July 1, 2008, and December 31, 2008, will automatically receive transition of care benefits through March 31, 2009, for services received from the same provider, even if that provider does not participate in OptumHealth's network. Individual letters will be sent to those individuals notifying them of the change and their transition period. Effective April 1, 2009, if their provider remains out-of-network, coverage will be paid under the Basic Medical portion of the plan (resulting in out-of-pocket costs to the member). No action is required by members to continue coverage during the transition period.

OptumHealth is rigorously recruiting providers presently in ValueOption's network, hoping to have as little disruption as possible to members' provider base. They indicate recruitment is going well. Members are encouraged to nominate their providers to join the network. As long as the providers meet credentialing criteria (standard to all carriers), they will be allowed to participate.

To access benefits, members can continue to call the Empire Plan 800 number (800-769-7447) (Option 3). To check a provider's network status, they can call that same 800 number or go to [www.EmpirePlanMHSA2009.com](http://www.EmpirePlanMHSA2009.com). A new member website will be available 1/1/09.

I have attached a "Frequently Asked Questions" form to help with this transition. However, should anyone have additional questions, feel free to have them contact me.

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cc: NYSCOPBA Executive Board  
NYSCOPBA Jt. Committee on Health Benefits

## MHSA Transition of Care Benefit Frequently Asked Question

**Q: What is the transition of care benefit?**

**A:** The transition of care benefit allows you to continue to receive network benefits even if your provider has not joined the OptumHealth network as of January 1, 2009. All levels of care are covered under the transition of care benefit.

**Q: How do I access my transition of care benefit?**

**A:** You do not need to call or complete any forms to access the transition of care benefit. If you received network benefits between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008, you will automatically be given the transition of care benefit through March 31, 2009, for services received from the same provider, even if that provider is not in the OptumHealth network. Please note that these benefits apply to covered services received between January 1, 2009 through March 31, 2009.

**Q: If I already have certification from ValueOptions and will be using the transition of care benefit, will my certification from ValueOptions transfer over, or do I need to call OptumHealth?**

**A:** You do not have to call OptumHealth, but you may call if you have any questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and press Option 3 and select the 2009 MHSA option.

**Q: I just checked the website and my provider is not currently in the OptumHealth network. What are my options?**

**A:** The transition of care benefit allows you to receive network benefits, even if the provider you were seeing in 2008 is not part of the OptumHealth network. When the transition period ends on March 31, 2009, you must use an OptumHealth network provider to receive the highest level of benefits. You may call us at any time to access network benefits. If you continue treatment with your provider after March 31, 2009 and your provider is not part of the OptumHealth network, your treatment will be covered under the non-network benefit, and you will have higher out-of-pocket costs.

**Q: How can my provider become part of the OptumHealth network?**

**A:** If your provider is not currently in the OptumHealth network, you may nominate your provider by calling 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and press Option 3 and select the 2009 MHSA option, or your provider may call OptumHealth directly at the same number.

**Q: My dependent may be receiving inpatient treatment at the end of the year and I'm worried about their care. How will it be handled?**

**A:** ValueOptions will continue to monitor the care of anyone who is confined to a hospital or residential treatment facility on December 31, 2008, and remains confined on January 1, 2009. Once discharge to another facility or another level of care occurs, all treatment will be managed by OptumHealth.

**Q: What should I do if I need MHSA services before the end of the year?**

**A:** If you need treatment that will be received prior to January 1, 2009, call 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and press Option 3 and select the 2008 MHSA option for ValueOptions.

**Q: What if I need treatment after the beginning of the year and I am not eligible for the transition of care benefit?**

**A:** To find a network provider for treatment on or after January 1, 2009, call 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and press Option 3 and select the 2009 MHSA option for OptumHealth.