



New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association

102 Hackett Boulevard - Albany, NY 12209
(518) 427-1551 www.nyscopba.org nyscopba@usa.net



TO: NYSCOPBA Chief Sector Stewards

FROM: Sharon Smith, Health Benefits Specialist

DATE: August 28, 2019

RE: Expansion of Empire Plan's Network for the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program (Beacon Health)

NYSCOPBA has just been notified that effective 8/1/19, the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program under the Empire Plan (currently contracted with Beacon Health) has expanded their network to include licensed mental health counselors (LMHC), licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFT) and physicians assistants (PA), resulting in approximately 1,000 additional network providers. This increase should help in addressing problems enrollees may have finding an in-network provider who accepts new patients.

The categories are defined as follows:

- Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC) are trained in counseling, psychotherapy and prevention. They work with individuals, couples, families, groups and organizations using brief techniques, such as crisis intervention and solution-focused approaches, or longer term approaches when treating chronic mental health disorders or disabilities;
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT) are trained in individual psychotherapy and family systems to assess and treat mental, emotional and behavioral disorders and address an array of relationship issues within the context of marital/couple, family, relational and group therapy. They provide individual, couple, family, relational and group therapy; and
- Physicians Assistants (PA) are licensed and qualified by academic and practical training to provide patient services under the supervision and direction of licensed physicians who are responsible for the performance of the PA.

Members should continue to contact the Empire Plan at 1-877-769-7447 (Option 3) for assistance in receiving the most appropriate services with in-network providers.

Please share the above information with your membership; and should you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

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