



New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association

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TO: NYSCOPBA Chief Sector Stewards

FROM: Sharon Smith, Health Benefits Specialist

DATE: September 25, 2019

RE: Health Insurance Updates

Last week, NYSCOPBA received several health insurance updates (below). Please share these updates with your membership.

1. Change in the Opt-Out Program – for members currently enrolled in the Opt-Out Program, be advised you are no longer required to re-enroll in the Program during the Option Transfer Period for the 2020 plan year. You will automatically remain enrolled and receive the payout monies.
2. For those unaware, effective August 1st, Beacon Health Options expanded their network of participating providers for the Empire Plan to include licensed mental health counselors (LMHC), licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFT) and physician assistants (PAs), adding another 1,000 network providers (approximately) to their network.
3. Effective September 16th, gender reassignment surgery and other surgeries, services and procedures associated with gender reassignment (including those performed to change a member's physical appearance to more closely conform secondary sex characteristics to their identified gender) became covered under the Empire Plan **if** a behavioral health provider determines the surgery or procedure is medically necessary. That behavioral health provider must be licensed by the state in which they practice and be experienced in treating gender dysphoria, as well as provide a written assessment documenting the member has a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, the capacity to make a fully-informed decision and consent for treatment, and is 18 years of age or older. Coverage also includes cross-sex hormone therapy, puberty-suppressing medications and laboratory testing to monitor the safety of hormone therapy.
4. Effective October 1st, the Empire Plan is extending the age range for coverage of the Gardasil 9 vaccine (prevents cervical cancer and other malignancies, and works against the human papillomavirus, HPV) as a preventive care service through age 45 (currently covered under the plan for enrollees ages 9-26). The FDA approved the Gardasil 9 vaccine for

use by men and women ages 27-45 years old about a year ago. Consequently, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the CDC recommended extending the age range for coverage through age 45. The CDC adopted the ACIP recommendation this past June with an effective date of October 1st. The vaccine is covered at no cost to members using a participating provider. Also, the age range extension applies to the Gardasil 9 vaccine only, not to any other HPV vaccines.

5. For members in the Southern and Mid-Hudson Regions Only:

- a. we have been informed that the contract between Blue Cross and NYU Langone has again been extended through 12/31/19. Contract discussions continue and I will keep you updated.
- b. We received notification that the contract between Blue Cross and Stony Brook University Hospital (including Eastern Long Island Hospital and Southampton Hospital) is in discussion. Should an agreement not be reached, services provided at these facilities will be paid out-of-network effective 11/1/19. I will keep you updated.

Should you have any questions on any of the above, feel free to contact me.

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