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February 2024



Guidelines for Reimbursement of Health Coach Services Now Available!

Practices that utilize health coaches and other non-clinical staff now have a more dependable pathway for reimbursement of services provided by these workers, now that all three Tennessee managed care organizations (MCOs) and TennCare officials have agreed on guidelines for using specific reimbursement codes.

After nearly two years of work, BlueCare, UnitedHealthcare, and Wellpoint (previously Amerigroup) have agreed on common guidelines for coverage and reimbursement for patient services provided by health coaches in team-based care. In addition, the medical officers have worked with their organizations to ensure submitted claims using these specific codes are accepted and paid. The codes can also be used for Medicare and some commercial plans as well.

Below are links to details on the guidelines or visit our [website](#).



Colbie Andrews, a health coach at UTHSC Health Hub Uptown, works with a client.

“This makes it possible for practices to have some funding for health coaches,” says Cy Huffman, MD, Chief Population Health Officer for BlueCare Tennessee. Dr. Huffman is chair of the TN-HHN Population Health Subcommittee, a group that also includes the Chief Medical Officers of United Healthcare and Wellpoint.

A lack of approved reimbursement codes to engender sustainability has been seen as a barrier for Tennessee primary care practices interested in hiring health coaches. Now that services provided by health coaches can be more reliably reimbursed, it is hoped that more practices will add health coaches.

“We think that every primary care practice ought to have one or more health coaches,” says Jim Bailey, MD, the principal investigator for the TN-HHN. “Research has proven that health coaches can help get patients essential preventive services like support for weight loss (i.e., Diabetes Prevention Program), diabetes education, and counseling for tobacco cessation. These are all services that are critical to our

Our March 6 Learning Collaborative also will provide information on the guidelines as well as the opportunity to ask questions. If you are not already receiving invitations to our Learning Collaboratives, please contact Brandy Bledsoe at bbledso8@uthsc.edu to receive a Zoom link to this important presentation.

For more information go to our [FAQs](#), [Service Codes document](#), and [Health Coach Standards](#).

Note: Our Learning Collaboratives are now on Zoom.

Please contact Brandy Bledsoe at bbledso8@uthsc.edu if you need assistance.

Upcoming Presentations

February

02/29/2024 Health Coaching Certification: Benefits, Training Opportunities, and Shared Experiences from Practitioners **Susan Butterworth**
Susan Butterworth, PhD, leads this session, an overview of the health coaching certification process that UTHSC offers to both clinical and non-clinical staff. She will discuss the benefits of getting a health coach certification, including how to take advantage of the new agreement by managed care organizations (MCOs) in Tennessee to accept billing codes for multiple health coaching services. Practitioners who recently became certified as a health coach will share how they currently use their health coaching skills and provide 1-2 case studies.

March

03/06/2024 Coding and Billing Updates for Health Coach and Pharmacist Sustainability **Cy Huffman, Ashley Ellis**
Cy Huffman, MD, Chief Population Health Officer for BlueCare Tennessee, and our Director of Practice Engagement Ashley Ellis, PharmD, MBA CDECS, will discuss sustainability of non-clinical staff for improved cardiovascular outcomes. Dr. Huffman has been overseeing the work on guidelines for using reimbursement codes for services provided by health coaches. They will be available to answer questions.

Note: Learning Collaboratives email invitations come from Brandy Bledsoe, Senior Program Coordinator, at bbledso8@uthsc.edu.

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Sign up to receive our newsletter. Each month we will have updates, a calendar of upcoming Learning Collaborative, and more.

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UHSC Tennessee Population Health Consortium

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