PrimePartners
for Case Managers

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Thank You!

Elizabeth Warfield, RN, BSN, PHN, Special Needs Plan Care Manager

PrimeWest Health extends our sincere thanks and appreciation for all of the time, dedication, and hard work you put into serving PrimeWest Health members every day! County case managers are the heart of PrimeWest Health's Care Management program, and we are so thankful for each and every one of you. We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season!

Welcome to Our New Care & Population Health Management Staff!

We are excited to introduce you to the new staff members who have joined us over the past few months. Get to know a little about each of them below.

Tasha Jevnager, RN, Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator

Tasha and her family live in Alexandria, MN. She enjoys spending time with family as well as camping, hiking, yoga, kickboxing, and spending time at the many beautiful lakes in the area. Tasha is a registered nurse (RN) and serves as the Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator for Beltrami, Big Stone, and Pipestone counties. She joined the team on July 25.

Amber Wajer, RN, Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator

Amber grew up in southern Minnesota and moved to Alexandria with her family four years ago. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, listening to music, crafting, and cleaning/organizing. Amber is an RN and serves as the Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator for Meeker, McLeod, and Renville counties. She joined the team on October 10.

Renea Weigel, LICSW, Behavioral Health Manager

Renea and her family reside in Danube, MN, where they farm. She and her family enjoy outdoor activities, sports, and travel. Renea has a master's degree in social work and is a licensed independent clinical social worker. She joined the team on August 8.

Tips for Overcoming the Challenges of the Holiday Season

Tasha Jevnager, RN, Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator

Overview

The holiday season can be an exciting time of the year. Many families decorate their homes, bake treats and other delicious foods, and get together with family and friends. However, this time of the year can also be difficult for those who struggle with anxiety and depression. The financial strain that often comes with the holidays, the pressure of social activities, and unrealistic expectations can make the season overwhelming for many.

The holiday season also coincides with colder temperatures and shorter days. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression related to the change in seasons that most commonly affects people in the fall and winter. Symptoms include mood changes, loss of energy and interest, and oversleeping (NIMH).

Tips

The following are tips you can offer members who seem to be struggling this time of year:

- **Set realistic expectations.** Encourage members to keep their expectations realistic as a way to keep stress at a manageable level. Specific tips include making a list of things to accomplish and then prioritizing items on the list. This helps the member focus on what's most important to them. Remind members to be honest with themselves about what they can do. Encourage them to enjoy what they *are* able to do and not to get sidetracked by what doesn't get done.
- **Volunteer.** People who are feeling down, lonely, or missing loved ones can often find a sense of purpose and connection by helping others. Ideas include helping serve a meal in the community, volunteering to wrap presents for someone who can't, and helping an elderly community member go shopping.
- **Find support.** A strong support system can help people get through the season. Let members know that needing extra support doesn't make them a "burden" to their family and friends. Tell them about local support groups, outpatient clinics, and other professionals who can help them.
- **Address grief.** Feelings of sadness and grief related to the loss of a friend or loved one are common during the holidays. Their absence may feel particularly hard during special occasions. Let members know those feelings are valid and encourage them to incorporate memories of their loved one into the season. Looking at photos, sharing stories, or lighting a special candle are all small but meaningful ways to remember a loved one.
- **Consider SAD lights.** Those who struggle with SAD may benefit from a light therapy box. These are designed to deliver a healthy and therapeutic dose of light to help with symptoms. Members should talk with their health care provider to determine what light therapy box would best fit their needs. Special considerations should be taken for people with both SAD and bipolar disorder. Members with any type of eye issue, such as cataracts, glaucoma, or eye conditions from diabetes, should talk to their eye care professional before beginning any form of light therapy (Mayo Clinic).
  - Light therapy boxes may be covered by PrimeWest Health. County case managers can call the Provider Contact Center at **1-866-431-0802** (toll free) for more information. Members can call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** (toll free).

Sources:

- Mayo Clinic, "Seasonal Affective Disorder Treatment: Choosing a Light Box," March 30, 2022, www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/in-depth/seasonal-affective-disorder-treatment/art-20048298.
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), "Seasonal Affective Disorder," accessed October 28, 2022, www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder.

Follow-Up Visit after a Mental Health Hospitalization: Aim for Seven Days

Renea Weigel, LICSW, Behavioral Health Manager

Studies have shown that patients who start treatment soon after a mental health hospitalization are less likely to have negative health and social outcomes. One of PrimeWest Health's goals for 2022 has been to identify best

practices for reducing disparities in follow-up appointments after a mental health hospitalization. We know that there are many barriers to follow-up care such as transportation, a shortage of mental health providers, and limited appointment availability.

PrimeWest Health's goal is to make sure all members have access to mental health services within seven days of an inpatient hospitalization. As a county case manager, you play a crucial role in coordinating follow-up care with the hospital discharge planner and stressing the importance of trying to get the member seen within seven days to ensure the best possible outcomes. You also play a big role in helping members overcome barriers to care they may face (e.g., transportation or child care).

Most follow-up visits are completed by a primary care physician, but in the case of a mental health hospitalization, the following specialty providers can complete the follow-up visit. Utilizing these specialty providers may help a member be seen sooner.

- Addiction Medicine Provider
- Child/Adolescent Psychiatrist
- Child Psychiatrist
- Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Clinical Social Worker
- Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician
- Forensic Psychiatrist
- Geriatric Psychiatrist
- Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor
- Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor
- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Licensed Psychological Practitioner
- Licensed Social Worker
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- Master's Degree Psychologist
- Neuropsychiatrist
- Neuropsychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Psychiatrist/Neurologist
- Psychologist
- Psychotherapist
- Social Worker

Please also consider telehealth as a way to ensure members are seen within seven days. Many mental health clinics offer telehealth as an option. If you need help locating telehealth resources, please call the Provider Contact Center at **1-866-431-0802** (toll free).

Dental Benefit Change: Coverage of Nitrous Oxide (D9230) for Non-Pregnant Adults

Leah Anderson, Dental Services Coordinator

Effective September 1, 2022, nitrous oxide/analgesia, anxiolysis (D9230) is a covered benefit for non-pregnant adults age 21 and over. One unit is covered per date of service when used to accomplish a covered dental service. D9230 is not covered when used in conjunction with a non-covered service.

Nitrous oxide is a safe and effective sedative that, when mixed with oxygen, can be inhaled through a small mask that fits over a patient's nose. Use of nitrous oxide during dental procedures can help manage pain and help patients feel more comfortable and relaxed (Mouth Healthy). It can also help patients who have a fear of the dentist or who struggle to manage anxiety during dental visits (ADA). The effects of nitrous oxide typically wear off very quickly after the mask is removed (Mouth Health). Nitrous oxide can be used during several dental services including, but not limited to, periodontal scaling and root planing, removal of decay, filling placement, and tooth extraction.

If you work with members who struggle with dental phobia or anxiety, please let them know about the availability of this benefit and encourage them to schedule a dental visit. Let members know to discuss their concerns and the potential use of nitrous oxide with the dental office when they call to schedule their visit. Members should provide dental clinics with their medical and prescription history so that dental providers can determine if nitrous oxide will be a safe and effective option for them.

Sources:

- American Dental Association (ADA), "Nitrous Oxide," November 29, 2021, www.ada.org/resources/research/science-and-research-institute/oral-health-topics/nitrous-oxide.
- Mouth Healthy, "Nitrous Oxide," ADA, accessed October 17, 2022, www.mouthhealthy.org/all-topics-a-z/nitrous-oxide.

Unite Minnesota: Connecting Health and Social Care

Hillary Robinson, Unite Us

Unite Us is dedicated to improving access to resources needed to address social determinants of health (SDOH) and connecting health and social care through a coordinated care network of health and social service organizations. Unite Minnesota is the care network serving Minnesota. Network partners can send and receive electronic referrals, address people's social needs, and improve health across communities. With Unite Minnesota, you can do the following:

- Easily refer and connect members to local resources, such as services for housing, transportation, and mental health
- Increase efficiency and capacity with secure, smart referrals
- Measure the impact of your organization and the services you deliver
- Improve members' well-being through access to a variety of services
- Track outcomes of all referrals and services delivered
- Identify gaps in needs to proactively address barriers to care and increase health equity

If you work with members in need of social care resources or if you would like to learn more about the Unite Minnesota network, please contact Angie Schmitz, Unite Us Community Engagement Manager, at **angie.schmitz@uniteus.com**.

Medications for Treating Substance Use Disorders

Katie Brand, PharmD, Pharmacy Manager

As noted in the Winter 2022 issue of ***PrimePartners***, medication, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapy, has been shown to successfully treat substance use disorders (SAMHSA, "Medication"). This article looks at medications used to treat alcohol and opioid use disorders and how they are covered by PrimeWest Health.

Alcohol use disorder medications

The three medications approved for treating alcohol use disorder are acamprosate, disulfiram, and naltrexone.

Acamprosate is for those who are not using alcohol when treatment begins and who are motivated to maintain abstinence (SAMHSA, "MAT"). This medication reduces the reward response to alcohol consumption, thereby reducing the cravings for alcohol (Zaderenko, "Alcohol"). It does not prevent withdrawal symptoms that may occur when a person stops using alcohol. Acamprosate is an oral tablet taken three times daily (SAMHSA, "MAT").

- PrimeWest Health covers acamprosate for all members with the exception of members who have Medicare coverage through a source other than PrimeWest Health.

Disulfiram is used to treat chronic alcoholism and is most effective in those who are in the initial stage of abstinence or who have gone through the detoxification process (SAMHSA, "MAT"). If alcohol is consumed, this medication produces an unpleasant reaction that can include nausea, sweating, flushing, and tachycardia. Disulfiram is an oral tablet taken once daily (Zaderenko, "Alcohol").

- PrimeWest Health covers disulfiram for all members with the exception of members who have Medicare coverage through a source other than PrimeWest Health.

Naltrexone is often considered a first medication for people who want to cut back or stop drinking (Zaderenko, "Alcohol"). This medication reduces cravings by blocking opioid receptors, which inhibits the reward response. Because it blocks opioid receptors, it should not be taken in combination with opioids. Naltrexone is available in two forms: (1) an oral tablet, taken once daily; and (2) an injectable, given once monthly (SAMHSA, "Naltrexone").

- Oral tablets: PrimeWest Health covers naltrexone oral tablets for all members with the exception of members who have Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health.
- Injectable formulation (Vivitrol®)
  - Members with Medical Assistance (Medicaid) only (excluding members who have Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health): PrimeWest Health covers Vivitrol without a prior authorization.
  - Members with Medicare through PrimeWest Health: PrimeWest Health requires a formulary exception to cover Vivitrol.
  - Members with Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health: Vivitrol is not covered.

Opioid use disorder medications

The three most common medications used to treat opioid use disorder are buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone.

Buprenorphine is for those who have abstained from opioids for at least 12 – 24 hours and are currently experiencing mild-to-moderate withdrawal symptoms. This medication reduces withdrawal symptoms and suppresses cravings for opioids (SAMHSA, "Buprenorphine"). Buprenorphine is available as a monoproduct or as a combination product and comes in multiple formulations for opioid use disorder, including sublingual tablets and films, buccal films, injections, and implants (Zaderenko, "Management").

- PrimeWest Health-covered formulations can be found on our website via the ***Formulary/List of Covered Drugs*** or the Drug Search feature. Instructions for using both can be found in the following article, "Using the PrimeWest Health ***Formulary/List of Covered Drugs*** and Drug Search."

Methadone is for those who are experiencing withdrawal symptoms. It aims to reduce and stabilize withdrawal symptoms and cravings (Zaderenko, "Management") by blunting or blocking the effects of opioids. Methadone is available in oral tablets, oral diskettes, oral solutions, and injections. By law, only Opioid Treatment Programs certified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) are allowed to dispense methadone for the treatment of opioid use disorder (SAMHSA, "Methadone").

- Medical Assistance (Medicaid) programs (excluding members who have Medicare coverage through a source other than PrimeWest Health): PrimeWest Health requires a prior authorization for all methadone products dispensed from a retail pharmacy. Methadone administration and/or services given in a provider's office by a methadone provider are covered when notification is submitted to PrimeWest Health.
- Medicare programs: PrimeWest Health covers methadone injections, oral solution, and oral tablets for the first seven days. A prior authorization is required after seven days.
- Members with Medicare from a source other than PrimeWest Health: Methadone is not covered.

Naltrexone is for those who have abstained from short-acting opioids (hydrocodone, oxycodone, etc.) for at least seven days and from long-acting opioids (extended release morphine, fentanyl patches, etc.) for 10 – 14 days. This medication works by blocking the effects of opioids (SAMHSA, "Naltrexone"). Naltrexone is available in two forms: (1) an oral tablet, taken once daily; and (2) an injectable, given once monthly (Zaderenko, "Management").

- Oral tablets: PrimeWest Health covers naltrexone oral tablets for all members with the exception of members who have Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health.
- Injectable formulations (Vivitrol)
  - Members with Medical Assistance (Medicaid) only (excluding members who have Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health): PrimeWest Health covers Vivitrol without a prior authorization.
  - Members with Medicare through PrimeWest Health: PrimeWest Health requires a formulary exception to cover Vivitrol.
  - Members with Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health: Vivitrol is not covered.

Questions

If you have questions, please contact **Katie Brand**.

Sources:

- SAMHSA, "Buprenorphine," September 27, 2022, www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/medications-counseling-related-conditions/buprenorphine.
- SAMHSA, "MAT Medications, Counseling, and Related Conditions," March 4, 2022, www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/medications-counseling-related-conditions#medications-used-in-mat.
- SAMHSA, "Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)," July 25, 2022, www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment.
- SAMHSA, "Methadone," September 27, 2022, www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/medications-counseling-related-conditions/methadone.
- SAMHSA, "Naltrexone," September 27, 2022, www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/medications-counseling-related-conditions/naltrexone.
- Zaderenko, Sergio, ed., "Alcohol Use Disorder," accessed October 19, 2022, DynaMed and Micromedex.
- Zaderenko, Sergio, ed., "Management of Opioid Use Disorder," accessed October 20, 2022, DynaMed and Micromedex.

Using the PrimeWest Health *Formulary/List of Covered Drugs* and Drug Search

Katie Brand, PharmD, Pharmacy Manager

PrimeWest Health members, providers, and county case managers have two options for finding out if a medication is covered using the PrimeWest Health website.

Formulary/List of Covered Drugs

Providers and county case managers can access these documents via the Formularies page of our website at **www.primewest.org/formularies**. Formulary updates, various criteria sets, and formulary exception forms are posted on this page in addition to the ***Formulary/List of Covered Drugs***.

If a member needs help finding this information, you can provide them with following steps:

1. Visit the PrimeWest Health website at **www.primewest.org/members**.
2. Select *Programs*.
3. Select the correct program.
4. Select *List of Covered Drugs* under "Member Materials" or "Other Important Plan Information" in the left navigation.

Formulary updates and formulary exception forms are also posted on the member program pages in addition to the ***Formulary/List of Covered Drugs***.

Drug Search Tool

Members, providers, and county case managers can also use the drug search tool. This tool is available on the PrimeWest Health website and is accessible via the following steps:

1. Visit the PrimeWest Health website at **www.primewest.org**.
2. On the right side of the page, select *Drugs* under the "Search For" heading.
3. Select the correct program.
4. Select *OK* to leave the PrimeWest Health website and go to the MedImpact benefit platform. Note: Drug coverage for Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC) members who have Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health can be found by reviewing the "Medicaid Over-the-Counter Drug List for Providers, Pharmacists, and Counties" document, which opens when you click the link for this population.
5. For PrimeWest Senior Health Complete and Prime Health Complete members, continue to #6 below. For other programs (except SNBC members with Medicare through a source other than PrimeWest Health), select *Drug Price Search* at the top of the page.

6. To search for a medication, enter the drug name and the member's city, state, or zip code. Select *Search*.
7. The results will display the cost to the member, whether a prior authorization is needed, any special requirements for coverage, and a map of pharmacies near the location entered.

Important Dates

✓ County case management supervisor meetings

Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month, and will take place remotely or in person depending on the size of the agenda. Watch your emails for additional information.

- November 17
- December 15

Contact Information

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You can find current and past issues of *PrimePartners* at **www.primewest.org/primepartners**.

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