



205 East Water Tower Lane  
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June 2, 2015

Dear Regional Behavioral Health Board Members,

I am writing in regard to some concerns we continue to hear in relation to provider referrals for substance abuse treatment.

Optum's goal is to ensure that people are getting access to the right care, at the right time to help them in their journey toward recovery. Our focus is on recovery-based care which emphasizes customized individual treatment plans and programs for each person, taking into account his/her goals and strengths. When a member calls Optum and indicates a need for substance use disorder services (SUDS), Optum works to ensure they have access to those services and are referred appropriately to a provider that is credentialed and state-approved to provide SUDS. In addition, Optum consistently recommends that a SUDS referral be obtained if it is not indicated when processing utilization management requests.

While referrals are not tracked by specialty in our call system, we can verify that our SUDS provider directory listings (which are used by staff that help with referrals) are up to date with current information. Providers and members can also access our entire directory of providers, including SUDS providers, on our website at [OptumIdaho.com](http://OptumIdaho.com).

Optum also has a focus in helping to ensure all members are able to access integrated mental health and substance use health care. To meet this need, we work to link providers to address a person's whole health. According to SAMSHA, "addressing both mental health and substance use issues at the same time produces better outcomes for individuals with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders. Without integrated treatment, one or both disorders may not be addressed properly."

Therefore, developing collaborative opportunities to help link substance use and mental health providers to address a member's whole health needs is a priority Optum continues to work on. To that end, we are working diligently to bring education, training sessions and on-site support to assist in this process. To also assist in the education process, we will be sending a Provider Alert in June to all network providers about the requirements for completing a global appraisal of individual needs (GAIN) which providers of substance use disorder services are required to use for assessing Member substance use disorder treatment needs.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me at 208-914-2012 or via email [Rebecca.divittorio@optum.com](mailto:Rebecca.divittorio@optum.com) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca diVittorio".

Becky diVittorio, Executive Director

CC: Amy Jeppesen, President of AACT Idaho  
Ross Edmunds, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare