

May 2020

This newsletter alerts providers to upcoming changes and other information or procedural updates from Empower.

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May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and organizations across the nation will be drawing attention to the various—and often-surprising—way mental illness affects people's lives. This May, a number of new research findings highlight the need for increased understanding of, empathy for, and respect of people facing mental health issues.

Mental Illness is normal

People with mental health issues have long felt that they are different from others. Indeed, discussions of mental illness tend to speak about “people with mental illness” as if they are a foreign group few of us ever encounter. The reality is that mental illness is so common, in fact, that a recent study claims that it's a life unmarred by mental illness that's the real anomaly.

According to the study, which followed people ages 11-38 and tracked their mental health, a mere 17% avoided mental illness. Forty-one percent had a mental health condition that lasted for many years. Forty-two percent had a short-lived mental illness. This suggests that, sooner or later, mental illness becomes an issue for most people. Depression, anxiety, and substance abuse were the most common diagnoses in the study.

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Worldwide, Depression is the Leading Cause of Disability

The leading cause of disability isn't cancer or chronic pain, though public health campaigns might make you think otherwise.

According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide. What's more, it's held that place for many years.

Even more troubling, despite burgeoning awareness, the rate of depression is not getting better. Particularly in developing nations, people often do not receive treatment for symptoms of depression. And between 2005-2015, the rate of depression actually increased by 18%.

Environment Matters for Mental Health

Much discussion of mental health focuses on genetics, brain chemicals, and other biological phenomena. It's true that mental illness is biological, but that does not mean that all cases of mental illness are hard-wired. The environment can affect the behavior of genes, as the emerging study of epigenetics is making ever more clear. Stressful and deprived environments can alter the way genes behave, triggering mental illness. For example, recent research has linked growing up with food insecurity to an increased risk of mental health difficulties.

The environment in which people grow up also teaches them how to handle everything from daily stress to serious trauma. People may learn depressive thinking from their parents, for instance, or they may experience trauma in early childhood that leaves them with lasting mental health difficulties.

Mental illness certainly has a biological component, but to believe that it is solely hard-wired and unavoidable is to believe that treatment doesn't work. That's not true. Treatment helps the brain re-learn new ways of processing information as it helps the client cope with difficult emotions. And just as the environment can shape people toward mental illness, treatment can help pull them away from it.

The goals of better understanding mental health diagnoses and improving societal empathy should not be limited to the month of May, but it's certainly a good time to refocus our efforts.

For more information go to the following link:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/when-your-adult-child-breaks-your-heart/201705/mental-health-awareness-month>

Since 1949, Mental Health America and our affiliates across the country have led the observance of May is Mental Health Month by reaching millions of people through the media, local events and screenings.

While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health.

In 2020, our theme of Tools 2 Thrive will provide practical tools that everyone can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency regardless of the situations they are dealing with.

We always intended to focus MHA's Mental Health Month toolkit this year on resiliency, offering tools to thrive at any time. We now believe that these tools, even those that we all may have to adapt for the short term because of social distancing will be more useful than ever.

Our toolkit includes sample materials for communications and social media as well as printable handouts on the following topics:

- Owning Your Feelings
- Finding the Positive
- Eliminating Toxic Influences
- Creating Healthy Routines
- Supporting Others
- Connecting with Others

**Additionally, the toolkit includes a new infographic about mental health and COVID-19.*

You can access the toolkit by clicking this link:

[Mental Health America 2020 Toolkit](#)

Excerpts: When your adult child breaks your heart—mental health awareness month; Mental Health America: The 2020 mental health month toolkit is now available

Coronavirus Provider Alerts

Empower is taking steps to prepare for the unique challenges related to the developing COVID-19 outbreak and resulting declared state of emergency in Arkansas. The uncertainty posed by a public health emergency can cause stress and anxiety among many individuals. Therefore, core to our plan is ensuring that members have access to routine and emergency services.

The following is a list of alerts related to COVID-19:

- ◆ [Coronavirus - Provider Alert Summary 4/27/20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Additional Services Ready to Bill 4-23-20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus-FQHC & RHC Flexibilities in Service Provision 4-21-20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus-Additional Services Ready to Bill 4-17-20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Services Ready to Bill 4.14.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Mental Health Diagnosis 4.14.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Master Treatment Plan Services 4.10.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Marital and Family Behavioral Health Counseling 4.10.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Telemedicine Crisis Intervention 4.10.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Mobile Clinics and COVID-19 Screenings 4.7.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - EIDT/ADDT Nursing 4.7.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Autism EPSDT 4.7.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - PT, OT, ST Assistant Telehealth 4.3.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Nurse Practitioners Telehealth 4.3.20](#)
- ◆ [COVID-19 Lab Fees 3-26-20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Behavioral Assistance 3.24.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - New Modifier for Supplemental Support Services 3.24.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - PT, OT, ST Telehealth 3.24.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - BH Telehealth 3.20.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Physician Telehealth 3.20.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Developmental Disability CES Waiver Billing 3.16.20](#)
- ◆ [COVID-19 CMS Codes 3.13.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus - Provider Voluntary Self-Report 3.13.20](#)
- ◆ [Coronavirus 3.12.20](#)

As we execute our plan, we will keep you updated via alerts, our [website](#), and our [Facebook](#) page. Please click [here](#) for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19.

Empower has a page dedicated to Coronavirus/COVID-19 updates. Go to our website and click on “Coronavirus”.

For Up to Date and Additional Key Information regarding COVID-19:

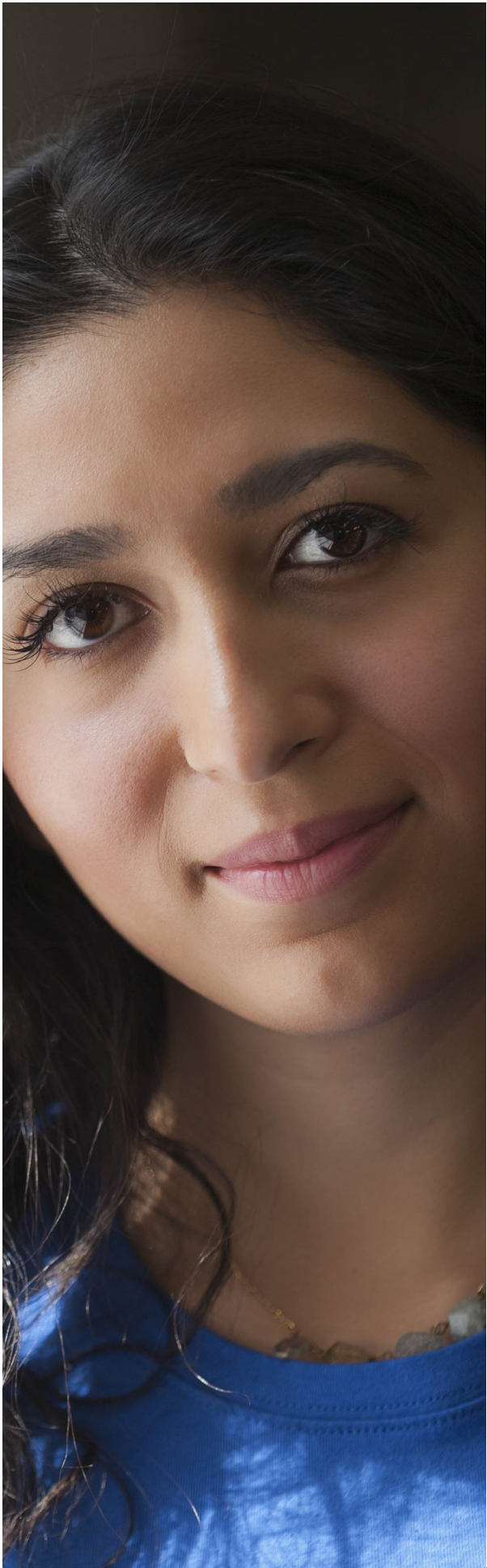
CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

Arkansas Department of Health

<https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/>





Provider Closings due to COVID-19

Empower needs your assistance to ensure members have necessary access to needed care. Please report the following to empower.network@empowerhcs.com due to COVID-19:

- Any closings
- Changes in open or closing times
- Implementing special or extended services

Provider Alert

Corrected—Assistant Surgeon— Prior Authorization Requirements

Effective 5/1/2020, Assistant Surgeon services will need to use of modifiers 80, 81, and 82 billed with the same procedure code billed by the primary physician. Assistant surgeon services are reimbursed only when provided by a physician.

Prior Authorization will not be required for Assistant Surgeon Services at this time.

If you have questions about this information, please contact Provider Services at 855-429-1028 or email:

empowerhealthcaresolutionsPR@empowerhcs.com

Avoid Claim Denials and Rejections

Empower is committed to paying claims appropriately and timely. In order to avoid claim rejections or claim denials, please make sure the following information is up to date with Arkansas Medicaid and with Empower.

- Provider name (as noted on current W-9 form)
- National Provider Identifier (NPI) –does not apply to atypical providers
- Medicaid Identification Number – does apply to atypical providers
- Tax Identification Number (TIN)
- Taxonomy code
- Physical location address
- Billing name and address (as noted on current W-9 form)

Empower's Special Investigations Unit

Empower's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) reviews and monitors claims and billing practices of providers by conducting audits to ensure compliance with Federal and State documentation and billing requirements, as well as to monitor the providers for fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA).

The SIU is required by law to recover any identified overpayment. Providers are expected to follow the Empower Provider Handbook and all requirements set forth by the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Medical Services (DMS).

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SIU activities, are initiated by referrals, or identified by, the SIU team that indicated potential FWA. The SIU receives referrals from internal and external sources such as:

- Government agencies – federal, state and other regulatory agencies
- Empower staff
- Providers
- Members
- Empower’s compliance and ethics hotline

SIU Audit Process

All referrals are reviewed and evaluated by Empower SIU staff to determine the appropriate next steps. Potential actions may include:

- Accepting the referral for investigation and conducting claims data analysis and/or an audit of the provider’s records
- Sending the referral to a more appropriate Empower department for review and handling
- Closing the referral without investigation because the referral does not represent a potential FWA issue or the associated risk is low.

When conducting an SIU audit, the Auditor assigned to the case will review the provider’s claims data for suspicious billing activity and select a random or targeted sample of member claims for audit. The provider will be notified of the audit and the request for member records.

The auditor will review the records submitted by the provider and determine if the services were documented and billed properly per Arkansas Medicaid rules and other applicable requirements.

Upon completion of the audit, the provider will receive an audit report detailing the audit findings. If the provider disagrees with the findings and requests an appeal, the appeal will be reviewed by the Empower SIU Appeals Committee and the provider will be informed of the Committee’s final decision.

When billing and/or documentation errors are identified, the following corrective actions may be required:

- Submitting a Corrective Action Plan identifying the steps the provider will take to correct the deficiencies
- Repaying the claims that were not adequately supported or billed correctly
- Referring the provider to Empower’s Credentialing Committee for potential contract termination or suspension of referrals

If fraud is suspected or confirmed during the audit, the SIU will follow regulatory and contractual requirements, which may include notifying Arkansas Medicaid and/or law enforcement.

Reporting FWA

To report Fraud, Waste or Abuse to Empower’s SIU:
Call the Empower Compliance and Ethics Hotline at 844-487-0329

Website: <https://empower.ethix360.com/>

Email: SIU@beaconhealthoptions.com

Mail: Empower Healthcare Solutions, LLC
PO BOX 211446
Eagan, MN 55121

Resources:

Stay in the know with these useful links!

Empower Resource Links:

- [Provider Alerts](#)
- [Provider Billing FAQ](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [Clinical Practice Guidelines](#)
- [Provider FAQ](#)
- [Empower Ethix360](#)
- [Provider Handbook](#)

Arkansas DHS Resource Links:

- [DMS: PASSE](#)
- [Office of PASSE Ombudsman](#)
- [PASSE Information for Providers](#)
- [Provider Enrollment](#)

Upcoming Webinars

Provider Orientation—This webinar will cover Empower related information including provider responsibilities, provider resources, member rights and responsibilities, eligibility, covered services, utilization management, care coordination, claims submission, quality improvement, the Empower portal, and more.

Provider Orientation		
Tuesday, May 19, 2020	10:00 am—11:30 am	Register Here!
Tuesday, June 16, 2020	10:00 am—11:30 am	Register Here!

Provider Portal: Prior Authorization and Claims—This webinar will cover a portal overview including member eligibility, claims submission, covered services, utilization management, submitting a prior authorization, and reimbursement methods.

Provider Portal: Prior Authorization and Claims		
Wednesday, May 6, 2020	11:00 am—12:30 pm	Register Here!
Wednesday, June 17, 2020	11:00 am—12:30 pm	Register Here!

Assisting Providers with Independent Assessments at Empower—This webinar will cover how to effectively manage your members' Independent Assessment data including scheduling, assessment definitions, Empower IA Events, and Saturday options.

Assisting Providers with Independent Assessments		
Thursday, May 21, 2020	11:00 am—12:00 pm	Register Here!
Thursday, June 25, 2020	11:00 am—12:00 pm	Register Here!

Open Forum Calls— Password 584493—This forum is intended to answer questions about Empower claims, utilization management, care coordination, and the CES Waiver Transition. Please remember that PHI should not be shared on these calls.

Open Forum Calls		
Every other Monday, April 13, 2020 through July 6, 2020	12:00 pm—12:30 pm	Join Here!

Educational Opportunities:

The following is a list of available trainings offered by Empower Healthcare Solutions:

- Acute and Psychiatric Residential Treatment
- Community and Employment Supports (CES) Waiver: An expansive overview of services, descriptions, and codes
- Assisting Providers with Independent Assessments at Empower
- Care Coordination Overview
- Person Centered Service Plan
- Incident Reporting for Empower Providers
- Empower Provider Orientation
- InterQual and Medical Necessity Evaluations
- Arkansas InterQual Inpatient Provider Training
- Provider Portal: Prior Authorization and Claims
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment and Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF)
- Inpatient Authorizations: Navigating Identifi and Medical Necessity
- Outpatient Services and Home and Community Based Services
- Personal Care Services
- Overview of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Day Treatment Services
- Developmental Disability Services

To access a training slide deck click [here](#) and go to Educational Opportunities.

For more information or to schedule a training for your organization, please contact empowerhealthcaresolutionsPR@empowerhcs.com



Important Contact Information

Provider Services

855-429-1028

Member Services

866-261-1286

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Incident Reporting

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Provider Relations

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Special Investigations Unit

SIU@beaconhealthoptions.com

Utilization Management

utilizationmanagement@empowerhcs.com



To visit our website please go to:

www.getempowerhealth.com

On our website you will find:

- Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Contracting with Empower
- Cultural Competency Plan
- Forms and Resources
- Incident Reporting
- Provider Alerts
- Provider FAQ
- Provider Billing FAQ
- Provider Handbook
- Provider Portal
- Pharmacy Provider Guideline

Please feel free to share this newsletter.

If you would like to receive the newsletter, provider alerts, or training information please register for the provider distribution list at the following link.

[Provider Signup](#)

Division of Medical Services
(DMS)

toll-free numbers:

Beneficiary Eligibility

800-482-8988

Beneficiary Coverage

800-482-5431

Office of PASSE Ombudsman

844-843-7351