

# Coordination and Continuity of Care

## Coordination of Care with Primary Care Physicians (PCPs)

PacifiCare Behavioral Health is committed to ensuring that behavioral health care and primary care services are well coordinated. Behavioral disorders can have a medical basis or implications for the member's physical health. Medical/surgical problems, or their management, may have implications for the member's behavioral health. Appropriate, confidential, and timely information sharing and careful medication monitoring is especially important when the member is receiving psychotropic medications and/or has a new or continuing medical problem.

Coordinating behavioral health and medical care is most effective when a partnership is formed among the Primary Care Physician, the member, and the behavioral health care specialist. This allows for an exchange of information about medical conditions and medications that can influence behavioral health and medical care treatment strategies.

It is the provider's responsibility to help the member understand the importance of coordinating care among appropriate health care providers. Although in rare instances a particular patient may decline to give consent, it is PBH's expectation that the majority of patients, with the encouragement of the provider, will agree to allow coordination of care.

For these reasons, PBH mails a *Health Care Coordination Form* to every office-based practitioner to whom PBH makes a referral. The form provides the Primary Care Physician with brief but essential information about the patient's diagnosis and treatment plan. The form doubles as a signed release for the exchange of information between the behavioral health care provider and the PCP. The one-page form can be easily included in the patient's medical records (and can only be shared with you given the permission of the patient). In addition, PBH mails a coordination of care reminder letter with all authorizations following the initial referral. Please see the Index of Forms for a copy of the *Health Care Coordination Form*. **This form must be completed for all patients seen.**

All PBH network providers, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, marriage and family counselors, and psychiatric nurses, are responsible for actively coordinating the behavioral health care they deliver with primary care.

### Physician Consultation Service

PCPs can call PBH for clinical consultation during business hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00AM to 5:00PM, Pacific Time) by calling (800) 292-2922. This is a dedicated service that is staffed by skilled behavioral health specialists at our clinical offices.

## Coordination of Care Within Behavioral Health

PacifiCare Behavioral Health is committed to ensuring that behavioral health care is well coordinated among PBH practitioners when more than one practitioner is involved in a member's care. When the member is receiving behavioral health care from a non-prescribing behavioral health provider and psychotropic medication from a network psychiatrist, appropriate information should be shared between them in a timely fashion.

PBH providers should use their own patient consent forms to obtain permission to share information with other behavioral health practitioners.

## Continuity of Care

PBH is committed to ensuring that members with behavioral health problems receive effective, confidential, and timely care throughout the continuum of services within PBH, including outpatient and inpatient care and partial hospitalization.

PBH practitioners must obtain the member's consent to share information when referring the member to another level of behavioral health care.

The high acuity of patients who have been hospitalized for a behavioral health disorder warrants particular attention to continuity of care through providing these patients with prompt access to an outpatient appointment following discharge from a higher level of care. PBH practitioners must give high priority to providing patients with outpatient appointments as quickly as possible, preferably within seven days, following discharge from inpatient status or partial hospitalization.

## **PBH Outpatient Prescription and Laboratory Policies**

PBH clinicians with prescriptive authority should remember:

- ◆ PBH benefit plans do not cover medications. PBH is not responsible for determining which medications will be covered under a specific formulary.
- ◆ For PBH members who also have PacifiCare medical insurance, providers may receive a fax copy of the PacifiCare Health Systems outpatient drug formulary by calling (800) 711-4555, entering the formulary catalog #1550 and their fax number. The list will be faxed immediately. For prior authorization, call the Prescription Solutions medical provider line at (800) 711-4555.
- ◆ Laboratory tests for medications may require coordination with the primary care physician or medical group.
- ◆ PBH recommends that providers work with members to review the procedure for coverage of medications and laboratory services under their medical plan.

PBH providers can contact the Provider Helpline at (800) 716-1166 for assistance with medication and laboratory service issues.