

### Panel discussion on network provider adequacy for Audiologists in the El Paso region

Aron Head provided an introduction/reminder of the November conversation and existing concerns:

- 1) Current costs don't cover services
- 2) Providers weren't getting reimbursed for services
- 3) Medicaid reimburses at the cost at invoice cost, but it must be submitted by mail, which produces delays of 8-12 months
- 4) If the invoice doesn't include a warranty start date, the MCO must recoup

Dr. Jorge Guzman: El Paso Health has a new audiologist that was just credentialing in the last 2 months. (Later clarified they have 8 in network, this is just a new add.)

Emily Elizarde (Superior): Have a number of audiologists in their network, both individual and group practices. Spread of services around 5 groups; one group seeing 85% of claims. Looked at a report of a member not being able to receive services, but no instances where a member had to receive services through alternative avenues because there were no providers.

Robert Leonhardt (Amerigroup): There are providers available for single case agreements, should the need arise.

Jennifer Leal (El Paso): They are not aware of any issues in El Paso. While they don't have an issue contracting with providers, some providers simply don't contract with Medicaid and cite administrative burden and reimbursement.

Aron Head (Amerigroup): Have not seen member complaints in the last 12 months. Is anyone aware of barriers being communicated from members, or was this a surprise?

Leal: Surprised to hear of network adequacy concerns.

(General consensus. Health plans are available to help coordinate and connect services, when concerns arise.)

Leonhardt: Anytime claims are not processing correctly, identifying it to the MCO helps them find a root cause and address problems. MCOs will also look for errors.

Dr. Jose Gonzalez: Access is available in the community, but sometimes the challenge may be getting into schedules.

Rollins: Have also identified opportunities to educate providers that they can submit invoice electronically and not through the mail.

Gonzalez: COVID still seems to be an issue. Reduction of administrative burden for the practitioner should always be considered. A lot of providers still don't trust electronic submissions. Suggested that gold carding seems to be a good move.

Mary (speech language pathologist): What we're hearing from audiologists when they refer is that the providers do the diagnostics, but aren't fitting them. And others aren't doing it, either. Dr. Chow is one. Some others are credentialed, see kids, and do testing, but they don't do fittings.

Head: In these cases, we strongly recommend members reaching out to their health plans to make sure plans can help make the connections. Because plans aren't getting these requests.

## Action items and future agenda topics

- Evaluation of TxHealth Steps



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- Separate meeting to talk about sickle cell again, due to calendar issues
  - Next meeting May 17