



Texas Children's
Health Plan
A Subsidiary of Texas Children's Hospital

In this issue

Consult product lists

ImmTrac

Coordination of benefits

Prior-authorization procedures

Providers to evaluate TCHP

Helmet usage

Recognizing provider offices

eSTEPP aids claims management



Provider News

April 2004

TCHP recognizes excellence in treating acute pharyngitis, offers education course

Texas Children's Health Plan (TCHP) would like to recognize 33 providers for their excellence in treating members with acute pharyngitis.

For the past several years, TCHP has conducted a study assessing the degree to which providers are following recommendations outlined in TCHP's Treating Pharyngitis Practice Guideline. Each year the study has shown steady improvement.

The study utilizes administrative data to assess the rate of members having a single diagnosis of acute pharyngitis and a prescription for an antibiotic filled within three days of their doctor visit and the number of members that were tested for strep within three days of the visit.

Of the 99 PCPs who had 10 or more member encounters qualifying for our 2003 study, 33 providers followed the guideline recommendations 90 to 100 percent of the time.

Special recognition goes to the following providers. Congratulations!

Eric Anderson, MD
Debra Bootin, MD
Michael Bornstein, MD
Isairis Fernandez, MD
Asmaa Fotouh, MD
Deborah Gant, MD
Wagih Gendi, MD
Jacobo Goldberg, MD
Bernadette Haggerty, MD
Nam Hoang, MD
Arnold Kagan, MD
Abbas Kapasi, MD
Thomas Leach, MD
Kin Lock, MD
Keith McPherson, MD
Abel Paredes, MD

Gurney Pearsall, MD
Alfred Phillips, MD
Razaali Razak, MD
Noha Salem, MD
Marie Salmeron, MD
Patti Savrick, MD
Don Schaffer, MD
Rebecca Schwanecke, MD
Eduardo Segura, MD
William Stanley, MD
Joan Stoerner, MD
Jackie Wanebo, MD
Kellie Williams, MD
Audrey Winer, MD
Maria Wong-Domenech, MD
Galina Yoffe, MD
Barry Zietz, MD

Continuing education classes offered

A free online continuing education course is available for both physicians and nurses now through September 2004 addressing the diagnosis and management of acute pharyngitis in children.

The course is sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH). To access information about the course, visit the CAQH Web site at www.caqh.org and click on the "save antibiotic strength" box.

Participants can obtain 1.25 hours in category 1 continuing medical education units or 1.2 nursing contact hours in pediatric-related subject matter.

Antibiotic resistance has been identified as one of the world's most pressing public health problems, according to the CDC. A major contributing factor to the problem is the misuse of antibiotics. Learn what you can do to help decrease the growing problem of antibiotic resistance.

Providers should consult product lists before referring

Texas Children's Health Plan offers three HMO products: the Children's Health Insurance Program, Texas Children's Individual Medical Coverage and Texas Children's STAR Health Coverage. Because contractual relationships may vary from one TCHP provider group to the next, providers must know exactly which products are included in their TCHP contract.

When referring a member to a specialist for services, it is important to know if the physician to whom the

member is being referred participates in the member's plan. This information can be found in the "Directory of Participating PCPs" and the "Directory of Participating SCs." TCHP distributes these lists to all participating providers on a quarterly basis.

Information regarding plan participation can be found immediately under each physician's name on the list. The list also indicates practice limitations such as age limitations.

It is not necessary to issue a paper

referral form to TCHP CHIP and STAR members. Instead, primary care providers can issue verbal orders for a referral to in-network specialists, subject to individual specialists' practice requirements. Members of Texas Children's Individual Medical Coverage continue to require paper referrals for visits to in-network specialists.

Providers who have additional questions about referrals should contact a TCHP Provider Relations representative at 832-824-2695.

ImmTrac allows statewide access to immunization records

ImmTrac, a statewide immunization registry developed by the Texas Department of Health and Electronic Data Systems, provides access to a statewide immunization database.

With a parent's consent, the ImmTrac database can receive vaccination information for a child from anywhere in Texas. This information includes input from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Women, Infant and Children clinics, Medicaid, the Integrated Client Encounter System, and private health care providers. With ImmTrac, authorized providers can view an electronic

record of a child's immunizations. This will help ensure that when it is time for an immunization, the child will receive only the shots needed.

It is important that authorized providers comply with the requirements of ImmTrac as stated in Chapter 161 of the Health and Safety Code. Providers should:

1. Protect the confidentiality of patients in accordance with section 159.002, Occupations Code.
2. Inform a parent, managing conservator or guardian of a patient about the registry.

3. Require the written consent of a parent, managing conservator or guardian of a patient before any information relating to the patient is included in the registry.
4. Permit a parent, managing conservator or guardian to withdraw consent for the patient to be included in the registry.

For further information regarding ImmTrac, contact the Texas Department of Health at 1-800-252-9152 or e-mail ImmTrac@tdh.state.tx.us.

Adapted from the Texas Department of Health Web site

STAR members' benefits coordination require special attention

Texas Children's Health Plan receives a Third Party Resources file from the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) on a monthly basis. The file contains a listing of STAR members who are believed to have other insurance coverage that is the primary payor. In these cases, STAR Medicaid is the "payor of last resort."

On a monthly basis, TCHP loads HHSC's Third Party Resources file into the claims payment system. Claims for members who have "other insurance" must be submitted to TCHP with an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statement from the primary insurance carrier to be considered for payment. Claims submitted

without an EOB from the primary insurance carrier will be denied for payment by TCHP with the following message:

OC – Submit Primary EOB

After reviewing insurance information with their patients, providers occasionally identify members whose coordination of benefits (COB) information is incorrect in the State's files. In order to initiate a correction, the following actions must be taken.

- The member must notify Maximus that they do not have other insurance coverage by calling the STAR Link hotline at 1-800-846-7307.
- The member also must notify TCHP

Member Services at 832-824-2600 that they do not have other insurance coverage.

- Providers must resubmit outstanding claims to TCHP for payment once the correction has been made to TCHP's claims payment system.
- If a member notifies TCHP that they do not have other insurance coverage but fails to notify the State, claims denials will persist the following month. This is because TCHP COB records are overwritten monthly by the State's file, which is assumed to be the most current information available. For further assistance with coordinating STAR members' benefits, please contact your Provider Relations representative.

Helpful resources provide current information on STDs

It is important to Texas Children's Health Plan that providers and members have the most current information on the prevention, detection and effective treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STD), including HIV.

For up-to-date information, contact the Texas Department of Health's Bureau of HIV/STD Prevention at 512-490-2505 or call the Texas HIV/STD InfoLine (English and Spanish) at

1-800-299-2437. Its Web site, www.tdh.state.tx.us/hivstd, also is a helpful resource.

Providers and members also can call national organizations for information and brochures on the prevention, detection and effective treatment of STDs, including HIV. Call the National STD Hotline at 1-800-227-8922 or the National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-342-AIDS (2437).

Recommended treatment for staphylococcus aureus

Staphylococcus aureus infections resistant to oxacillin (MRSA) are becoming increasingly common in the community.

Texas Children's Hospital data indicate that about 70 percent of community-acquired staphylococcus aureus cultured in both inpatients and outpatients are now resistant to oxacillin. These CA-MRSA infections require treatment much different from that used in the past. These infections are generally susceptible

to vancomycin, gentamicin and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole and variably susceptible to clindamycin (90 to 95 percent).

Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole given orally is the recommended treatment for mild to moderate infections in the office setting, ideally after culture. Clindamycin can be given when group A streptococcus is a possibility.

From the Medical Director

Provider Relations representatives improve communication

In an effort to encourage positive communication, each participating provider office has been designated a Provider Relations representative. The Provider Relations representative is available to assist with any issues that

may arise regarding TCHP and has the ability to advocate between a provider's office and any department within TCHP.

Providers who have not had the opportunity to meet with their Provider

Relations representatives should contact the Provider Relations Line at 832-824-2695 to schedule a meeting. TCHP's Provider Relations representatives are listed below.

| TCHP Provider Relations representatives | Geographic territory | Phone number |
|---|----------------------|--------------|
| Mike Banda | North, northwest | 832-824-6974 |
| Denise Blakeslee | North, northeast | 832-824-6979 |
| Denise Evans-Turner | South, southwest | 832-824-2963 |
| Lucie Lara | East | 832-824-6890 |
| Susie Mancillas | West | 832-824-6970 |
| Roland Munguia | South | 832-824-6855 |



Texas Children's Health Plan

A Subsidiary of Texas Children's Hospital

Preventive health and immunization guidelines enclosed

Enclosed with this newsletter are reference copies of TCHP's 2004 pediatric and adult preventive health and immunization guideline recommendations, adopted by the Medical

Advisory Committee on January 15, 2004. An update to the pediatric immunization schedule is expected later this year. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with them.



Provider offices meet vaccine recommendations

Texas Children's Health Plan would like to recognize 59 provider offices for their excellence in vaccine storage and handling practices.

TCHP conducted a study last fall to assess how well vaccines were being stored and handled, as outlined in TCHP's Vaccine Storage and Handling Practice Guideline. The study showed, on average, provider offices were following 93 percent of the recommendations; an improvement of nine percentage points from the plan's baseline study in 2002.

Each office surveyed was assessed for compliance with 24 different vaccine storage and handling recommendations. During the 2003 study, 138 different provider offices were assessed. Individual office scores ranged from 56.5 percent to 100 percent.

"The success of efforts against vaccine-preventable diseases is attributable in part to proper storage and handling of vaccines." (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Oct. 24, 2003.)

Congratulations to the following 59 provider offices meeting 100 percent of Texas Children's Health Plan's vaccine storage and handling recommendations. We applaud your efforts!

Airline Pediatric Clinic
 Allcare Medical Center
 Allen H. Kline, MD
 Hubert Ho, MD
 Andy Wei, MD
 Arturo Bautista, MD
 Asmaa T. Fotouh, MD
 Bear Creek Pediatric Clinic, PA
 Bruce C. Kennedy, MD, PC
 Charles G. Hess, MD
 Childrens Specialty Care Clinic of
 NW Houston
 Cleveland Pediatric Clinic
 Cullen Health Center
 Cypresswood Clinic Associates
 FM 1960 Pediatric Group
 Fort Bend Family Health Center
 Friendswood Pediatrics
 Heena N. Thakkar, MD FAAP
 Houston Pediatric Associates
 Humble Pediatric Associates - Humble
 Humble Pediatric Associates - Kingwood
 Jorge Barer, MD
 Maria Rossell, MD
 Nava Miller, MD
 Jose Interiano, MD
 Katy-Mason Pediatric Clinic
 Kids N' Teens Clinic, PA
 L. Kin Szeto, MD, PA
 Maria Nikolaidis, MD
 Mario J. Portocarrero, MD
 Martha R. Lozano, MD

Mary Geda, MD
 Memorial Pediatric Associates
 Najam and Najam, MD, LTD, LLP
 Nguyen S. Thai, MD
 Northeast Houston Pediatric Clinic
 Northeast Pediatric Assoc. of Humble
 Northshore Pediatrics
 Northwest Pediatric Clinic
 Northwoods Pediatric Center, PA
 Parking Way Pediatrics
 Payne Pediatric Associates, PA
 Pediatric Associates of Kingwood
 Pediatricians of West Houston
 Pediatrics of Pasadena
 Pediatrics of Pearland
 Pediatrics of SW Houston, PA
 Peggy Wongs, MD
 People's Community Health Center -
 Pediatric Department
 Rathna Sastry, MD
 Richard Thaller, MD
 South Texas Medical Clinics, PA -
 Pediatrics
 Strawberry Community Health Center -
 Pediatric Department
 Sugar Land Pediatric Center, PA
 Tots and Teens Pediatrics, PA
 Town & Country Pediatric Associates
 Vadala/Parkerson - The Woodlands
 Vinona Vohra, MD
 Woodlands Pediatric Associates

Determining procedure for obtaining prior authorizations

Providers often find it difficult to remember whether the primary care provider or the specialist should initiate a prior authorization for services.

Listed below are two scenarios designed to help alleviate the confusion.

Scenario 1:

A PCP refers a Texas Children's Health Plan member to an in-network specialist. The specialist determines hospitalization is needed. Who is responsible for obtaining the authorization?

Solution:

The TCHP provider with the most current medical information about the member should initiate the Prior Authorization Request. In this case, the in-network specialist should initiate the request.

Services requiring prior authorization must be phoned in to 832-824-7648, or faxed to Medical Management at

832-825-2499. Use the Prior Authorization Request form.

Scenario 2:

A PCP refers a Texas Children's Health Plan member to a specialist. The specialist evaluates the patient and determines if the patient needs emergency surgery. The available surgeon is not in the TCHP network. Who is responsible for getting the authorization?

Solution:

If the treating physician is an out-of-network provider, then the PCP is responsible for obtaining the authorization.

In this instance, the PCP should initiate the prior authorization. The surgeon is not included in the TCHP network and would not have access to TCHP's medical management policies and procedures.

Providers who have questions about authorizations should call TCHP's Provider Relations department at 832-824-2695.

Provider Relations plans to conduct after-hours survey

Texas Children's Health Plan primary care providers will receive an after-hours survey phone call from Provider Relations in April. The annual survey is part of an effort to ensure TCHP members are able to access care on an after-hours basis. The brief survey measures each office's ability to comply with established after-hours accessibility standards.

TCHP Provider Relations will call each PCP after normal business hours to ensure that access to medical care is available

24 hours a day, seven days a week. TCHP guidelines require PCPs to have an answering service that is able to reach the physician, an answering machine indicating how to reach the physician or another provider accepting calls. Providers should return pages or messages within 30 minutes.

Results of the April survey will be reported to the Medical Advisory Committee and distributed to participating providers within two months.

Increase helmet usage with 17-second intervention

Houston law requires bicycle riders younger than 18 years old to wear helmets. However, only nine percent of child bicyclists needing care in the emergency room were known to be wearing helmets.

"17-second intervention"

You can make a significant increase in helmet usage by having a "17-second intervention" with your pediatric patients older than 4 years.

Ask them:

- Do you ride a bike, skateboard, scooter or skates?
- Do you have a helmet? Do you always wear it when you ride?

Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent, so please take 17 seconds to educate your patients on the importance of helmet usage.

Provide helmets

Texas Children's Center for Childhood Injury Prevention can provide you with low-cost helmets for your patients to purchase. Call 832-824-2938 and we can fax you a helmet order form. Bell bike helmets cost \$7.50 each and Bell multi-sport helmets cost \$10 each. Prices include shipping, and the minimum order is 12 helmets.

Visit www.texaschildrenshospital.org and click on Parent Resource Center to download bicycle safety fact sheets to distribute to your patients.



eSTEPP

A Web-based system

With the click of a mouse, log on to eSTEPP and view claims status and verify member eligibility . . . in real time.



Texas Children's
Health Plan
A subsidiary of Texas Children's Hospital

Contact your Provider Relations representative for more information.

Verify TCHP member eligibility prior to treatment

Providers are responsible for verifying Texas Children's Health Plan member eligibility prior to providing care. Tools that can help include member identification cards, telephone verification, Fax Recall and eSTEPP.

Member identification cards

Both commercial and Medicaid HMO members should present an identification card at the time of service. Commercial HMO members who have not yet received an identification card may present an enrollment form as proof of eligibility. Medicaid HMO members may also present Form 3087 or Form 1027 from the Texas Department of Human Services as proof of identification, in addition to the HMO identification card.

Form 3087 is the monthly Medical Care Identification that the Health and Human Services Commission mails to all

Medicaid-eligible members. Form 1027 is the initial Medicaid Verification Letter. The form or letter will indicate the month of eligibility and whether the member is a STAR or traditional Medicaid member.

Telephone verification

HMO identification cards identify members; they do not confirm eligibility. Member eligibility can change on a monthly basis without notice. In addition to asking members to show a member identification card, providers should call TCHP's Member Services department to verify eligibility. Providers also can use the Fax Recall or eSTEPP systems to collect eligibility information.

TCHP recommends that providers verify eligibility through all available means prior to providing care to members.



Fax Recall

An automated system

With a simple phone call, check eligibility, benefits and claims status . . . 24 hours a day, Monday through Saturday.

- Call 832-825-7921
- Enter member's identification number
- Enter provider's fax number
- Information sent to provider within three minutes



Texas Children's
Health Plan
A subsidiary of Texas Children's Hospital

Contact your Provider Relations representative for more information.

Providers asked to evaluate Texas Children's Health Plan

Each March, Texas Children's Health Plan mails "Provider Satisfaction Surveys" to all network primary care providers and specialists. Providers have the opportunity to assess TCHP's performance in each area of the organization, includ-

ing Claims Operations, Medical Management, Member Services and Network Development. Please take a moment to complete the survey. Providers' candid answers will help TCHP improve its service to providers.