

Special Bulletin

For professional and facility providers

March 31, 2023

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Highmark is encouraging all of our providers to use Alcohol Awareness Month, this April, to educate their patients about the downfalls of alcohol use and abuse. Alcohol has many negative effects on an individual's mental and physical health, including depression, liver disease, and cardiovascular disease.

Out of the 133.1 million people who drink alcohol in the United States, 60 million are considered binge drinkers and 16.3 million binge drinkers are also heavy drinkers¹. Meanwhile, alcohol use has been attributed to 30 percent of suicides, 40 percent of fatal burn injuries, 50 percent of drownings and homicides, and 65 percent of fatal falls². About 33 percent of injuries seen at trauma centers and 29 percent of all motor vehicle accident fatalities involve alcohol use.

To help providers who see patients struggling with their mental health due to alcohol use, we have created the Behavioral Health Toolkit for Primary Care Physicians. This toolkit includes screening tools, guidelines, and various resources to assist in treating patients who misuse alcohol or have an alcohol use disorder.

To access the Behavioral Health Toolkit:

- Go to the **Provider Resource Center**
- Select **EDUCATION/MANUALS** in the left-hand menu
- Click **Behavioral Health Toolkit For Primary Care Physicians**

-
1. [“Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health”](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 2. [“Rethinking Drinking: Alcohol and Your Health”](#) – National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the National Institutes of Health

This information is issued on behalf of Highmark Blue Shield and its affiliated Blue companies, which are independent licensees of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. Highmark Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Shield and certain of its affiliated Blue companies serve Blue Shield members in 21 counties in central Pennsylvania and 13 counties in northeastern New York. As a partner in joint operating agreements, Highmark Blue Shield also provides services in conjunction with a separate health plan in southeastern Pennsylvania. Highmark Inc. or certain of its affiliated Blue companies also serve Blue Cross Blue Shield members in 29 counties in western Pennsylvania, 13 counties in northeastern Pennsylvania, the state of West Virginia plus Washington County, Ohio, the state of Delaware, and 8 counties in western New York. All references to Highmark in this document are references to Highmark Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Shield and/or to one or more of its affiliated Blue companies.