

Special Bulletin

For professional providers

November 3, 2023

Reminder: 24/7 Availability Requirements for Highmark Credentialed Practitioners

Highmark requires that all credentialed network practitioners be available *24 hours a day, seven days a week (24/7)* to provide coverage for members. These 24/7 availability requirements can be accomplished either directly or through an on-call arrangement with another Highmark credentialed participating practitioner in the same network(s) and of the same or similar specialty. 24/7 coverage includes providing such care services as triage, appropriate treatment, and/or referrals for treatment.

Availability Options

An answering service, pager, or direct telephone access whereby practitioners or their designees can be contacted is acceptable.

Behavioral Health

For behavioral health providers, a referral to a crisis line/center is acceptable if a prior arrangement has been made whereby the crisis line/center can reach the provider (or his/her designee), if needed.

The following specialties are exempt from the 24/7 requirement:

- Audiologists
- Certified diabetic educators (CDE)
- Dermatopathologists
- Dietitians/nutritionists
- Massage therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Pathologists (only if working outside of the acute care setting)
- Oral and maxillofacial pathologists (only if working outside of the acute care setting)
- Physical therapists
- Preventive medicine specialists

- Read-only practitioners and psychologists (who perform neuropsychological testing or psychological evaluations only)
- Speech/language pathologists

For more information, see the following sections in the *Highmark Provider Manual*:

- **Chapter 1, Unit 4: Highmark Member Information** > *1.4 Member Access To Physicians and Facilities > Accessibility Expectations for Providers.*
- **Chapter 4, Unit 1: PCPs and Specialists** > *4.1 PCP and Medical Specialist Accessibility Expectations > Accessibility Expectations for Providers.*
- **Chapter 4, Unit 2: Behavioral Health Providers** > *4.2 Accessibility Expectations for Behavioral Health > Accessibility Expectations.*

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