Managed care update

We have revised our list of insurance and managed care companies because of the ever-changing nature of the industry. This past year included many mergers among these companies. Counselors should note that these changes could offer opportunities as the companies expand into new areas. This is a good time to consider applying to become a provider to these companies. Remember, persistence may pay off when applying to become a provider or even when asking to be considered for an increase in reimbursement rates.

As a service to American Counseling Association members, this column will include the short list of the largest insurance and managed care companies. The full list of nearly 60 companies is available to ACA members at counseling.org/Counselors/PrivatePracticePointers.aspx. The list has direct links to provider relations information on the web as well as details outlining the number of insured lives covered, necessary paperwork and reimbursement rates. We believe this is the most comprehensive information available. Information on the number of covered lives is taken from a study by Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government. We compiled information regarding payment and paperwork requirements from insurance and managed care websites as well as surveys of licensed counselors. ACA is not responsible for the accuracy of the information.

Top 11 insurance, managed care and employee assistance providers

Blue Cross/Blue Shield (Various states)
Covers 98 million lives
Each state has its own Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Online: bcbs.com/bluefinder/
- Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield (New York)
- Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield/Wellpoint (National)
  anthem.com/home-providers.html

Magellan Behavioral Health Services (National)
Magellan Behavioral Health
Covers 24 million lives
5565 Sterret Place, Suite #500
Columbia, MD 21044-2611
800.788.4005
.magellanprovider.com
$60 with $20 copay, 20 visits per year, preauthorization needed, medium amount of paperwork

ComPsych Behavioral Health Corp. (National)
Covers 10.9 million lives
NBC Tower 24th Floor
455 N. City Front Plaza Drive
Chicago, IL 60611
800.557.1005
.compsych.com/jsp/en_US/core/provider/credentialing.jsp?cid=46
$60 total, $10 copay/EAP $30, $0 copay, extensive paperwork and utilization review

ValueOptions (National)
Covers 24 million lives
P.O. Box 141927
Irving, TX 75014-1927
800.397.1630
800.535.0108 (Texas)
800.247.6070 (Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio)
Company prefers you call for provider application
.valueoptions.com/providers/Providers.htm
$73 initial assessment, $65 total, $55 with a $10 copay, fast payments

American Psych Systems (National)/APS Healthcare (Maryland)
Covers 20 million lives
6705 Rockledge Drive, Suite #200
Bethesda, MD 20817
800.888.1965
.apshealthcare.com/provider_relations_contacts.aspx
.apshealthcare.com/provider/ProviderHome.htm
$65 (may negotiate rate)

CIGNA (National)
Covers 9.4 million lives
P.O. Box 46270
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
800.442.2353
888.800.8849 ext. 7064
800.274.7603 (Michigan and New York)
cigna.com/health/provider/$50 in network plus $10 copay, extensive paperwork

Ceridian (Lifeworks) (National)
Covers 7 million lives
Minneapolis, MN
800.367.3920
ceridianprovidersolutions.com/Pages/BecomeAProvider.aspx
ceridianprovidersolutions.com

Aetna (National)
Bought Horizon Health
Aetna/Horizon combined covers 20 million lives
UOP Station
P.O. Box 2907
Minneapolis, MN 55402
800.353.1232
.aetna.com/provider/credentialing.html
$75 initial session, $65 individual psychotherapy session (will negotiate)

- Horizon Behavioral Healthcare (National)
  Bought by Aetna
  Covers 5 million lives
  Must be credentialed with Aetna
Managed Health Network (National)
United Behavioral Health Inc./Optum

$60/$40 insurance, $20 copay, moderate paperwork

ubhonline.com/cred/credIndex.html
ubhonline.com/Solutions/Providers
800.250.6176

Covers 43 million lives
Formerly United Behavioral Health (National)

OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions
UniCare in those states
Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield covers
No longer covers Illinois and Texas, but Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield covers UniCare in those states

Wellpoint/Anthem (National)
Covers 13.7 million lives
San Diego, CA
800.728.9493
Call for provider application
wellpointbehavioral.com/pro/pro_index.html
anthem.com/wps/portal/ca/provider
$80 initial assessment, $65 individual

UniCare (National)
Affiliated with Wellpoint and Anthem
unicare.com/

No longer covers Illinois and Texas, but Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield covers UniCare in those states

Marketing to physicians
The October 2009 issue of Psychotherapy Finances (we are subscribers) offers a comprehensive article on how to develop and increase physician referrals. We have long advocated that professional counselors consider informing physicians about the types of services we can provide to their patients. It has been our experience that physicians, both primary care and specialists, welcome our involvement in the care and treatment of their patients. Given the brevity of the traditional office appointment, most physicians recognize the value of counseling in assisting their patients.

We have found the easiest and most effective physician marketing approach is a healthy and satisfied client. Physicians need to be aware of your work with their patients. During your intake or initial session with a new client, request that the client sign a release of information for the physician. The client certainly has the option to decline this release of information, but most realize the value of all health care providers working together. This should be documented in the client’s record. Most managed care companies and some state practice laws require a signed document stating that you requested permission to contact the physician (refer to the informed consent document in the “Private Practice Pointers” section of the ACA website at counseling.org).

Send a short letter to the physician documenting your involvement, diagnosis and treatment approach with the patient. A follow-up phone call to the physician or nurse adds a personal touch and allows the staff to become more familiar with you. Periodic progress reports are also helpful, both in keeping the physician updated and reminding the physician of your involvement. When using snail mail, include a few business cards or brochures with your report.

This provides excellent service to the client while also serving as a professional marketing opportunity. It doesn’t take many clients talking with their physician about how much their professional counselor has helped them to make a good and lasting impression. And it doesn’t take many physicians referring to your practice to generate a nice income stream.

Our schedule of upcoming private practice workshops:
March 26, Omaha, Neb.
April 11, Lincroft, N.J.
April 24, Indianapolis
April 26, Ann Arbor, Mich.
April 27, South Bend, Ind.
June 5, Chicago
Sept. 18-20, New Orleans
For details or to register, visit counseling-privatepractice.com and click on “Seminars.”

ACA members can e-mail their questions to Robert J. Walsh and Norman C. Dasenbrook at Walshgasp@aol.com and access a series of “Private Practice Pointers” on the ACA website at counseling.org.

Letters to the editor:
cf@counseling.org