

Enhanced Care Program and Specialty/Ancillary Providers

BWC continues to work with stakeholders and has launched the Enhanced Care Program, which began July 1. This program, which is designed to encourage higher quality, better coordinated care, was introduced as a pilot in Northeast Ohio for state-fund claimants who have knee injuries only.

How the Enhanced Care Program works

The Enhanced Care Program separates the medical and legal components of the workers' compensation process without affecting any party's due-process rights. For more complex claims, this approach can reduce delays by as much as five weeks – which means claimants will get back to work faster and healthier than before.

To start, claimants in Northeast Ohio who have an allowed claim for knee injuries only will be automatically eligible to participate in the Enhanced Care Program. The physician of record (POR) will have 60 days from the initial determination to treat both the allowed conditions on the claim as well as non-allowed conditions causally related to the workplace accident. The POR will also be expected to coordinate care where appropriate and document a comprehensive care plan with the *Physician's Treatment Request* (ECP-TX), which the managed care organizations (MCOs) must still approve.

The role of the POR

The Enhanced Care Program provides three tangible benefits to physicians who agree to serve as a POR in the program. They are:

1. ***Improved outcomes:*** PORs will be able to treat causally-related conditions without having an explicitly allowed condition with assurance of payment;
2. ***Simplified process:*** PORs will be able to submit one comprehensive care plan and will be required to file the MEDCO-14 only if there's a change in the claimant's restrictions or the claimant's compensation period needs to be adjusted;
3. ***Increased reimbursement:*** PORs will be eligible for a 15-percent incentive payment over and above what BWC pays for New Patient and Established Patient evaluation and management codes as part of its current fee schedule.

The role of a specialty/ancillary provider

Specialists play a crucial role in making the Enhanced Care Program successful. While the POR is expected to lead care management for participating claimants, many PORs will need to use the services of surgeons, therapists and other providers to help facilitate the claimant returning to work quickly and safely.

Succeeding (and getting paid) as a specialty/ancillary provider

Specialists do not need to enroll as a POR to participate in the Enhanced Care Program; a POR will coordinate where appropriate. But because the pilot allows for treatment of both allowed conditions as well as causally-related conditions, specialists should be aware of the following:

1. ***Not yet allowed conditions:*** As part of the Enhanced Care Program, a claimant can be treated for both allowed conditions as well as causally-related conditions not yet allowed;
2. ***PORs will use a new form (ECP-TX) to document their care plans:*** This form will document the strategy the POR will use to provide care for the claimant for both allowed and causally-related conditions;
3. ***Care can begin without waiting for MCO approval:*** A POR – along with other providers that are part of the initial care plan – can collectively begin treating both allowed and causally-related conditions without waiting for MCO approval so long as the care that's rendered is consistent with the "green" section of the Official Disability Guidelines;
4. ***Specialists can be paid for treating causally-related conditions:*** Specialists who are providing services for causally-related conditions can bill against the ECP-TX to receive reimbursement.

More information

To inquire about signing up or to get more information, please email feedback.medical@bwc.state.oh.us. Also, please continue to check www.bwc.ohio.gov where more detailed information is available.