



## Weekly Bulletin – October 04, 2024

This Weekly Bulletin is a benefit of your organization's Employer Membership in the Florida Alliance and is meant to **ONLY** be shared within Employer Member organizations unless approval has been given by the Florida Alliance CEO.



### WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK?

#### **ACTION ITEM:** Trends in Specialty Drug Benefits – Please respond to this important survey ASAP

Our Employer Members identify **drug spending and high-cost claims as top concerns**. The cost of specialty medications is a major contributor to these concerns. Florida Alliance Affiliate Member Genentech in collaboration with Pharmaceutical Strategies Group (PSG) has **invited our Employer Members to participate once again in this year's Trends in Specialty Drug Benefits Survey**. The report generated from this survey is always rated by our Employer Members as being very helpful to their benefits strategy planning and will be published early in 2025.

Click [HERE](#) to access a copy of the 2024 report which was the result of the survey fielded in 2023. Many of our Employer Members participated last year. Key findings from the report published earlier this year were:

- **Specialty Drug Rebates:** Receipt of pharmacy rebates remains high, and receipt of medical rebates is rising
- **Biosimilars:** About a third of plans have a Humira biosimilar in a preferred position
- **Cell and Gene Therapies:** Most respondents believe the affordability of gene therapies will be a moderate or major challenge for their organization in the next 2-3 years
- **Top Challenge:** Access to reliable data on the total cost of care of medications
- **Top Goals:** Manage total cost of care and manage overall specialty trend/specialty drug costs



The new survey should take you about 15-20 minutes to complete. **PSG is offering eligible respondents who fully complete the survey a choice to receive a \$75 gift card or make a charitable donation.** Once you have started the survey, you are able to stop, exit, and resume the survey at your convenience.

Click [HERE](#) to respond to the survey by Friday, October 11.

We will share the new report with you as soon as it is available in Q1 2025 and there will also be a webinar that you will be invited to attend.

For more information, please contact Karen van Caulil at [karen@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:karen@flhealthvalue.org)

### Free COVID-19 Tests are Now Available for Ordering

The federal government has approved yet another round of up to **4 additional free FDA-approved COVID-19 tests to be sent to your home upon request**. These tests are in addition to the 4 free tests you may have already ordered in the past. This investment in free home testing kits is due to concerns about the **potential rise in positive COVID-19 results expected this year**.

In addition, many COVID-19 tests have extended expiration dates. Therefore, you may be able to use your COVID-19 tests after the expiration date that is printed on the box. The FDA has created a list of extended expiration dates that are updated regularly.

Click [HERE](#) to order the COVID-19 tests. Click [HERE](#) to view the FDA authorized extended expiration date list.



**Please consider sharing both links with your employees and plan participants.**

For more information, please contact Hannah McChesney at [hannah@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:hannah@flhealthvalue.org)



### Catalyst for Payment Reform (CPR) – Health Plan User Group (HPUG) Meetings

Our Employer Members are invited to attend any and all of the upcoming HPUG meetings, regardless of which health plan you work with.



Since 2012, CPR staff and its member organizations have appreciated having pointed discussions with major national and regional health plans as part of CPR's HPUGs. **The HPUGs offer a forum for a two-way dialogue on topics of mutual interest to purchasers and plans, including expanding payment reform, benefit and network design strategies, price and quality transparency, and other emerging strategies.** The HPUGs not only allow purchasers to express and align their expectations, but also offer the plans an efficient means to deliver information to CPR members and the members and staff of CPR's regional coalition partners.

**This round of meetings will focus on artificial intelligence (AI). AI is garnering significant attention for its potential to bring positive change in many industries, including health care.** However, with its potential rewards comes risk as well. Below are questions that will be addressed in Aetna, Blue Shield of California, and Anthem's October HPUGs meetings.

- **What are the health plan's current uses of AI for its plan administration?**
- **What are the resulting estimated savings from the health plan's use of AI? How are any savings being shared with purchaser clients in terms of reduced administrative fees?**
- **In addition to the health plan's use of AI for internal administration purposes, how is the health plan collaborating with other stakeholders, including purchasers and providers, in the use of AI?**
- **What safeguards does the health plan have in place to ensure appropriate use of AI? A few areas of potential interest may include claims and/or service denials, breach of HIPAA-protected data, etc.**
- **What is on the health plan's roadmap in terms of deployment of AI in the next a) 2 years, b) 5 years?**

Registration is not required for the meetings. The links to connect are listed below. Please do not share these links with other organizations. **Let us know if it would be helpful for us to send you a calendar invitation with this information.**

Aetna HPUG

Tuesday, October 8, 12:30PM-1:30PM ET

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83272674201?pwd=hprEMnbseN4BSCi0VcXultWR6fQkjS.1&from=addon>

Blue Shield of California HPUG

Thursday, October 24, 2:30PM-3:30PM ET

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88928264318?pwd=QPbaWt1ifAxvy9c4Tv1Frc84A06de.1&from=addon>

Anthem HPUG

Tuesday, October 29, 12:00PM-1:00PM ET

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86925702192?pwd=3QrVC2Q9wIHMIJarF8Jfb77hpTGV71.1&from=addon>

If you have any questions, please reach out to Ashley Tait-Dinger at [ashley@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:ashley@flhealthvalue.org)

## Follow-Up: State Policy Opportunities to Control Healthcare Prices: A Catalyst for Payment Reform (CPR) Report

Last week we shared the State of Healthcare Report for Florida from CPR. Click [HERE](#) to see the report.

At this week's Board of Directors meeting, the report was discussed and a recommendation was made to **form a State Health Policy workgroup** to discuss how best to move the recommendations forward that were made in the report, including **mandatory merger notifications, a prohibition on facility fees for outpatient services, and a prohibition on anti-tiering and anti-steering clauses in network contracts.**



If you would like to participate in the State Health Policy workgroup, please contact Karen van Caulil at [karen@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:karen@flhealthvalue.org)



## EMPLOYER MEMBER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, REPORTS, RESOURCES AND EMPLOYER LEARNING COLLABORATIVES (ELC)

### Mental Health Parity Compliance – New Guidelines



The Department of Labor and the U.S. Department Health & Human Services have issued a document as a helpful guideline for compliance with Non-Quantitative Treatment Limitations (NQTLs) of the Prior Authorization. **These are health insurance benefit design elements that could be “red flags” of potential parity violations.**

Click [HERE](#) to read the full document.

As a reminder you have already received the invitation from [info@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:info@flhealthvalue.org) for the Mental Health Parity Compliance Webinar – Part 1, coming up on Wednesday, October 30, 10:00AM – 11:00AM ET. We are working with Mental Health Parity experts to develop checklists you can use to conduct the needed analysis. The two-part compliance series will include review and sharing of the tools we develop.

If you have not yet received the invitation to the webinar, please contact Lisa Hain at [lisa@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:lisa@flhealthvalue.org).

For more information, please contact Karen van Caulil at [karen@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:karen@flhealthvalue.org)

**ACTION ITEM: 2024 Behavioral Health Tech Conference, Tuesday, November 5 – 7**

As many of you know, the Florida Alliance has been the Regional Employer-Stakeholder Engagement Team (RESET) for the Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use for several years. The Path Forward is now a stand-alone coalition committed to ensuring equitable access to mental health and substance use care, but they still work with RESETs like the Florida Alliance.

We remain involved with this initiative and the Path Forward leadership has asked us to invite you to attend the **Behavioral Health Tech 2024 conference as their guest on November 5-7 at the Arizona Biltmore**. They will cover your travel, accommodations, and conference fees. This conference is the largest event on expanding access to mental health and substance use care through technology, health equity, and innovation. If you do plan to attend the event, do not forget to vote early since you will be out of town for Election Day.

On November 5, you will join a private lunch hosted by the Path Forward, where you will connect with top health leaders and learn how employers and insurers are shaping the future of mental health and substance use care.

If you would like more information about this event, click [HERE](#).



Ashley Tait-Dinger, Florida Alliance Vice President, will be attending. If you are interested in attending this event with Ashley or have any questions, please contact Karen van Caulil at [karen@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:karen@flhealthvalue.org) no later than Friday, October 4.



**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT**

**Fierce Healthcare Article: Employer Benefit Costs Set to Rise by More than 5% in 2025 for the Third Straight Year**

Health benefit costs are on the rise yet again. For the third straight year based on an annual National Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Plans conducted by Mercer, it was found that the total health benefit cost for individual employees is expected to increase by 5.8% in 2025. **As a result, employers are making cost-cutting changes in their coverage plans for 2025.** Changes include increasing deductibles or other out-of-pocket expenses, which shift some of the costs to members. Click [HERE](#) to read the full Fierce Healthcare article.



For more information, please contact Karen van Caulil at [karen@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:karen@flhealthvalue.org)