



Weekly Bulletin – June 05, 2025

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?

Florida Attorney General Issues Subpoenas to Hospitals for Probe into Price Transparency

Health News Florida published an article on Sunday, June 1 reporting that **Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier has initiated an investigation into hospital compliance with federal price transparency laws by issuing subpoenas to several hospitals across the state.** This action follows reports indicating that a significant number of Florida hospitals are not adhering to the Hospital Price Transparency Rule, which mandates that hospitals publicly disclose their standard charges for medical services. **The investigation aims to ensure that hospitals provide clear and accessible pricing information to consumers, promoting transparency, and allowing patients to make informed decisions about their health care.**



None of this comes as a surprise to us, since we have previously shared the Patient Rights Advocate *Hospital Price Transparency Compliance Report* that shows how few hospitals are fully compliant with the federal Price Transparency Rule. Click [HERE](#) to access the latest report.

The Florida Alliance has had the privilege of having Cynthia Fisher, Founder and Chair of Patient Rights Advocate.ORG (PRA), speak at our past events on this topic. PRA funded a price variability study that several of our Employer Members participated in, and we have signed on to letters of support to Congress that were authored by PRA. We will continue to remain actively involved with PRA, especially in light of this new investigation here in Florida.

To view the *Health News Florida* article, click [HERE](#).

Regarding what employers can do to reduce the price being paid for hospital services, the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions developed and we have disseminated the [Hospital Fair Price Resource](#), a comprehensive, centralized platform developed with input from the Florida Alliance and several sister coalitions. This tool is designed to support employers and regional coalitions by providing streamlined access to all National Alliance materials related to fair hospital pricing.

According to the results of the 5th round of the [RAND Hospital Price Transparency Study](#), **Florida ranks #1 for highest hospital prices paid by employers**, tied with Georgia. On average, employers in Florida

are paying **345% of Medicare rates** for combined hospital and physician services, significantly above the national average of **253%**. Early analysis by the Florida Alliance suggests that **facility fees** are a major driver behind these elevated costs.

To better understand hospital pricing, the [NASHP Hospital Cost Tool](#) offers valuable insights into what hospitals actually spend to provide patient care and how those costs compare to their list prices and the actual amounts paid by health plans. Along with the RAND study and [Sage Transparency](#), these resources equip the Florida Alliance and our Employer Members with the data needed to engage in informed, productive conversations with hospitals and insurance carriers. **The overarching goal is to empower employers to be more knowledgeable and strategic in selecting health plans and provider networks. By leveraging these transparency tools, we can evaluate the fairness of negotiated prices and assess how effectively insurance carriers are managing provider contracts.**

Please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions.



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

Employer Member Benefit: Understanding the Impact of Mental Health Disorders on the Workplace – Webinar – Tuesday, June 10, 1:00AM – 2:00PM EDT

Webinar
Understanding the Impact of Mental Health Disorders on the Workplace
Major Depressive Disorder and Bipolar I Disorder
June 10, 2025
1pm - 2pm ET
Featuring:
Kimberly Moore, PharmD
MS Medical Outcomes Science Liaison
AbbVie

Catalyst for Payment Reform is hosting a webinar on Tuesday, June 10 which will explore the impact of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), and Bipolar I Disorder (BP-I) on workplace productivity, focusing on diagnostic criteria, epidemiology, and the significant economic burden these conditions impose. **The webinar examines both direct and indirect costs, including productivity losses, and addresses barriers to care as well as current**

treatment paradigms. The webinar will highlight the differences between MDD and BP-I, the consequences of misdiagnosis, and various treatment approaches, including medication, therapy, and lifestyle interventions.

Led by Kimberly Moore, PharmD, MS, Medical Outcomes Science Liaison at Florida Alliance Affiliate Member AbbVie, the presentation provides a comprehensive overview of the clinical and economic dimensions of MDD and BP-I. Attendees will gain insights into the symptoms and prevalence of MDD, learn about its economic and productivity costs, and explore current treatment guidelines. The webinar will cover the epidemiology and financial implications of BP-I, identify challenges in accessing care, and outline contemporary treatment strategies. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the importance of accurate diagnosis and effective management of these mental health disorders in the workplace.

Related to this topic, the Florida Alliance collaborated with its members through a Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder [Employer Learning Collaborative \(ELC\)](#) to enhance behavioral health benefit

plans, policies, and networks. This initiative aimed to tackle ongoing challenges in mental health and substance use treatment, improving access to care and support. We are seeking funding to continue the ELC this year.

To register for the webinar, click [HERE](#).

Please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions.

Registration is Now Open! Florida Alliance 30th Annual “Best of the Best” event – Thursday, December 11, 9:00AM – 1:30PM EDT

We are excited to announce that registration is officially open for our 30th Annual “Best of the Best” event, proudly hosted by Affiliate Member Winter Park Health Foundation at their Center for Health and Wellbeing in Winter Park, Florida. This event highlights high-value healthcare programs led by forward-thinking employers from across the country. Each year, we spotlight innovative organizations that are redefining benefits design and contracting, sharing proven strategies that are making a real impact.



We are also thrilled to welcome Cora Opsahl, Director of the 32BJ Health Fund, as one of our featured speakers. Cora is nationally recognized for leading transformative, data-driven reforms that have improved healthcare quality and lowered costs for more than 200,000 union members. Her work has resulted in over \$35 million in annual savings. Funding expanded benefits such as fertility coverage while also introducing greater vendor accountability and advocating for healthcare transparency at the federal level.

All Florida Alliance Employer Members receive complimentary registration. Hotel accommodation details will be shared soon. Do not miss this opportunity to learn from the best and connect with industry leaders, driving meaningful changes in employee health benefits.

Details of the event:

- **Date:** Thursday, December 11, 2025
- **Registration:** 8:30AM – 9:00AM EDT
- **Program Time:** 9:00AM – 1:30PM EDT
- **Location:** Center for Health and Wellbeing, 2005 Mizell Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32792
- **Your Member Promo code:** EMPLOYERBOTB122025 (Please do not share this code outside your organization. If you have a colleague at an organization that is not a member of the Florida Alliance, please reach out to Karen van Caulil at [Karen@flhealthvalue.org](mailto:karen@flhealthvalue.org) for a guest code and flyer that you can share with them.)
- **Register** [HERE](#)

Thank You to Our Early Sponsors



Please contact Lisa Hain at lisa@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions or need help registering.

Employer Member Benefit: What Employers Need to Know: ERISA Litigation, the BCBS Settlement, and the Path Forward for Self-Funded Plans



Christin Deacon, J.D.

Christin Deacon, Principal and Founder of VerSan Consulting, LLC, is a frequent speaker for the Florida Alliance and a trusted advisor on a range of critical topics, including the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), employer contract transparency, and the fiduciary implications of health plan oversight. Her expertise also extends to developing effective Requests for Proposals, contract, and data usage language aimed at enhancing transparency and managing costs in employer-sponsored medical and pharmacy benefits. We are grateful to Christin for generously sharing the resources she has helped develop to assist our Employer Members with their healthcare plans.

A wave of recent federal lawsuits is clarifying the scope of fiduciary responsibility under ERISA for self-funded health plans. While outcomes differ, a consistent theme is emerging, courts are scrutinizing how third-party administrators (TPAs), carriers, and plan sponsors manage health plan assets and whether they are meeting their fiduciary obligations. **The briefings below highlight four ongoing or recently decided cases with the potential to significantly affect employers, particularly those with self-insured plans.** Key issues include fee transparency, data access, and conflicts of interest, all critical to sound plan governance.

To view the *Employer Briefing and Lawsuits*, click [HERE](#).

To view the *ERISA Litigation Briefing*, click [HERE](#).

To view *Questions Employers Should be Asking*, click [HERE](#).

Please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions.

Employer Member Benefit: Mental Health Parity Compliance Update

On Tuesday, June 3, the Florida Alliance hosted a webinar led by President and CEO Karen van Caulil, in collaboration with Dr. Henry Harbin and Beth Ann Middlebrook, J.D., to address the confusion and uncertainty many employers are experiencing following the latest federal communication regarding Mental Health Parity compliance. The presentation offered a thorough review of current federal requirements and provided critical guidance to help organizations remain compliant with evolving regulations. The Florida Alliance extends its sincere appreciation to all attendees for their participation and engagement in this important discussion. **The Employer/Healthcare Purchaser Mental Health Parity Toolkit** that we developed with the National Alliance was intentionally designed to exclude reliance on any new provisions introduced in the 2024 Final Rule, in consideration of ongoing litigation (e.g., the ERISA Research Industry Committee lawsuit)

ACTION REQUIRED: Mental Health Parity Compliance for Employers/Healthcare Purchasers
Information and tools to ensure compliance, reduced costs, and a healthier workforce

Employers/healthcare purchasers have a fiduciary responsibility to participants in their employee benefits plans to ensure their vendor partners to comply with the [Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act \(MHPAEA\)](#), which requires that Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder (MH/SUD) benefits are not more restrictive than Medical/Surgical (M/S) benefits.

Key Areas of Focus for Employers/Healthcare Purchasers

- Employers/Healthcare Purchasers Need to Take Action NOW**
 - Employers/healthcare purchaser fiduciary responsibility
 - Department of Labor (DOL)/Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is escalating enforcement
 - DOL/CMS report that most employers/healthcare purchasers are noncompliant in the area of Non-Quantitative Treatment Limits (NQTLs)
 - Do you know how to comply?
- Mental Health Parity Requirements**
 - Three main areas:
 - Financial Requirements (FRs) – e.g., copayments, deductibles...
 - Quantitative Treatment Limits (QTLs) – e.g., # days or visits...
 - NQTLs – e.g., prior authorization, network adequacy, reimbursement rates, exclusions...
 - NQTLs are the most complex to analyze and compare. The Employer/Healthcare Purchaser Toolkit contains tools for documenting comparative analyses for the most common NQTLs.
- Employer/Healthcare Purchaser Action Checklist**
 - Require your TPA/service providers to complete the [NQTL Status Questionnaire](#) (NQTL Status Tool) (and embedded QTLs) (specific to your plan information)
 - Document communications with TPA/service providers when requiring them to perform comparative analyses
 - Talk to your broker, consultant, and/or legal counsel about their ability to resolve the requests you receive from TPA/service providers
 - Require TPA/service providers to correct insufficient responses, noncompliant areas, and disparities in outcomes data
 - Require TPA/service providers to update and have available their comparative analyses as such, especially if new or different NQTLs or programs are implemented (e.g., value-based purchasing, narrow networks...)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: This Employer/Healthcare Purchaser Resource is sponsored by the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions and the Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value. Funding for development of the Toolkit was provided by the Community Coalitions Health Institute, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, an affiliate of the National Alliance, by the Mental Health Treatment and Research Institute LLC, a tax-exempt subsidiary of The Rowman Family Foundation.

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and the possibility of a stay or rollback. As such, the Toolkit remains a valid and reliable resource for compliance and enforcement purposes.

To view the recording, slides, and updated resources, including the cover email discussed during the meeting, click [HERE](#).

Please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions. Please keep Karen apprised of your progress, barriers you are encountering, or pushback with the various analyses.



HEALTH OBSERVANCES

National Health Observances: Engaging Employees Through Awareness

The National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalition's Health Advancement Team develops Health Observance content and information that our Employer Members can use in wellness communications with employees/plan members. We realize that you may need significant lead time to gain the necessary approvals to use this content, so we share this information with you as soon as we receive it. We have urged the National Alliance to share their content at least 2-3 months in advance.

June Health Observances



Pride Month, celebrated each June, honors the LGBTQ+ community and serves as a vital reminder of the importance of equitable, inclusive health care for all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Pride Month highlights the ongoing health disparities faced by LGBTQ+ populations, including higher rates of mental health challenges, substance use, HIV, and barriers to accessing culturally competent care. Discrimination, stigma, and a lack of provider understanding often discourages individuals from seeking the care they need. Pride Month calls on healthcare systems, providers, and policymakers to address these gaps by promoting inclusive practices, supporting LGBTQ+ health education, and ensuring safe, affirming environments where all patients can receive respectful, high-quality care. It is a powerful opportunity to advance health equity and reinforce that everyone deserves compassionate, comprehensive health care.

To view the article *Pride Month Activities for Enhancing LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency in Health Care*, click [HERE](#).

June is Men's Health Month, a national observance dedicated to raising awareness about the unique health challenges men face and encouraging early detection and treatment of diseases that impact them. It is an important time to highlight the value of regular check-ups, preventive screenings, and healthy lifestyle choices that can significantly improve men's overall well-being. From heart disease and cancer to mental health and chronic conditions like diabetes, this month serves as a reminder for men to take proactive steps toward better health. Whether it is scheduling an annual physical, talking to a healthcare provider about concerns, or making small



changes like improving diet and exercise routines, Men's Health Month encourages men, and those who support them, to prioritize wellness and longevity.

To access the *Mental Health Networks 2025 Men's Health Month Toolkit*, click, [HERE](#).

July Health Observances



July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, to spotlight the mental health challenges faced by racial and ethnic minority communities across the United States. **This observance raises awareness about significant disparities in access to care, such as lower rates of treatment among Black, Hispanic, Asian**

American, and Native American communities and the cultural, socioeconomic, and structural barriers that exacerbate them. With stigma, lack of culturally competent care, language barriers, and social determinants like poverty and discrimination playing key roles, this month serves as a call to action for healthcare systems and public health agencies to deliver inclusive, culturally responsive support.

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month encourages meaningful conversations, community-driven resources, and policy advocacy to reduce stigma, improve equitable access, and uphold the mental well-being of all communities well beyond July.

To read the *Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Mental Health Month* article, click [HERE](#).

Related to this topic, the Florida Alliance held an [Employer Learning Collaborative \(ELC\)](#) for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder to enhance behavioral health benefit plans, policies, and networks. This initiative aims to tackle ongoing challenges in mental health and substance use treatment, improving access to care and support.

August Health Observances

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM), an annual observance that underscores the vital role vaccines play in protecting individuals and communities from preventable diseases. Throughout the month, public health organizations, healthcare providers, and community leaders collaborate to raise awareness about the importance of staying up to date on vaccinations across all stages of life, from infancy to older adulthood. NIAM serves as a timely reminder, especially as families prepare for the back-to-school



season, to ensure that children receive required immunizations for school entry. It also emphasizes the need for adults to review their vaccination status, including boosters for diseases like tetanus, shingles, and influenza. **By promoting routine immunizations, NIAM aims to prevent outbreaks of diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and COVID-19, highlighting that vaccines are a safe, effective, and essential component of public health.** Engaging in conversations with trusted healthcare providers during this month can help individuals make informed decisions about their health and contribute to the well-being of the broader community.

The Northeast Business Group on Health, with input from the Florida Alliance, developed the [Creating a Vaccination-Friendly Culture](#) flipbook as a resource designed to support employers in building workplace environments that promote and normalize vaccinations. This comprehensive tool offers evidence-based guidance, best practices, and messaging strategies to help organizations encourage vaccine confidence and improve immunization rates among employees. By addressing common concerns, outlining

effective communication tactics, and providing real-world examples, the flipbook empowers employers to take a proactive role in protecting the health and well-being of their workforce while supporting broader public health goals.

For more about vaccine awareness, click [HERE](#).

Please contact Hannah McChesney at hannah@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Cigna Announces New Deal for Copay Caps on Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk Weight Loss Drugs



Florida Alliance Healthcare Advisory Member Cigna has introduced a new benefit to make weight-loss medications more affordable for its members. **Through an add-on to its pharmacy benefit management plans, Cigna will cap out-of-pocket costs at \$200 per month for the weight-loss drugs Wegovy and Zepbound, produced by Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly, respectively.** This initiative aims to alleviate the financial burden on patients, as these medications have list prices around \$1,000 per month. The new \$200 monthly cap will also

contribute toward patients' deductibles, potentially making these treatments more accessible to a broader population.

This move by Cigna comes amid growing scrutiny over the high cost of weight-loss drugs and efforts by manufacturers to offer more affordable options. For instance, Novo Nordisk recently announced temporary discounts for cash-paying customers, pricing Wegovy at \$199 for the first month until June 30, after which the price increases to \$499 per month. Similarly, Eli Lilly has reduced the price of its Zepbound drug for out-of-pocket payers, with certain doses now priced at \$499 per month. Cigna's new pricing approach is part of a broader trend among insurers and pharmaceutical companies to address the affordability and accessibility of effective weight-loss treatments.

To read the article, click [HERE](#).

Please contact Ashley Tait-Dinger at ashley@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions.

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