



Greetings ATCA Membership:

We would like to bring to your attention some of the recent progress and activities of the ATCA Medicaid and Third Party Payer Workgroup. For the past year the group has been working to develop and promote a set of suggested changes to the current Alaska Medicaid benefit for tobacco cessation counseling and medications. The document outlining these recommendations is attached.

Recently, the workgroup received pre-notification that the following changes to the benefit have been recommended by the Medicaid Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Committee. Please note that the changes are NOT YET in effect. Medicaid staff anticipate that the “programming” for these changes will be submitted sometime this summer (2009). In the past when changes occurred to medication coverage and protocol, an official explanatory letter from the State Medicaid Pharmacy Program has been disseminated to providers. We anticipate that this will happen again but wanted to give the ATCA membership advance notice of the workgroup progress.

Recommendations from the DUR Committee are as follows:

- 1) Prior authorization requirements will be removed for all covered cessation pharmacotherapies except for nicotine nasal spray. However to retain some control, new “to be determined” maximum quantity limits will be implemented for NRT and Chantix.
- 2) The committee recommended that the “fail first” on patches requirement be eliminated so clients can try any of the covered NRT options first.
- 3) The committee did NOT recommend allowing the use of more than one cessation medication at a time (otherwise known as combination therapy).
- 4) The committee did NOT recommend adding coverage for the nicotine inhaler.
- 5) Acceptance of Tobacco Treatment Specialists as Medicaid approved providers and changes regarding Purpose of Visit (POV) are not within the scope of the DUR Committee. For more information on these please see the attached “Suggested Changes” document. The ATCA Medicaid and

3rd Party Payer Workgroup will continue work to address these through other avenues.

Please note that the group is also working on strategies to promote better cessation coverage with 3rd Party Payers in Alaska. Strategies and goals for this initiative are still under development and will be shared at a later date.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this notice, or if you would like to join the workgroup in future efforts, please contact the workgroup chairperson, Andrea Thomas, at andrea.thomas@searhc.org or Christine Brubaker at csbrubaker@anthc.org.

We would like to thank a few supporters for their extra effort in helping to achieve these changes:

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Respectfully,
The ATCA Medicaid and 3rd Party Payer Workgroup