

The Truth About Medical Provider Networks

There has been much talk and confusion regarding the new Medical Provider Networks (MPN) created under SB 899 to extend the period of control over an injured worker. An MPN is a group of health care providers set up by an insurer or self-insured employer and approved by the Division of Workers' Compensation Director. To date 631 MPN's have been approved in the state of California.

As an employer, you are required to use the MPN that your insurance carrier has selected for their insured or if you are self-injured your company can develop their own MPN. Some insurers and self-insured, have chosen to wait and see how the MPNs work before committing to one, as SB 899 does not mandate that everyone must use MPNs.

Many of MPNs that have been created and approved are made up of existing Preferred Provider Networks. The major ones being used are First Health, Corvel, Blue Cross Prudent Buyer, Concentra/Focus, and State Fund Preferred Providers. These existing networks are very large and some insurers have selected a smaller group from the network as their MPN.

HealthFirst Medical had been a participant in all the Preferred Provider Networks that existed before the creation of MPNs. We did have to re-credential our providers for some of the networks which has been completed. HealthFirst is confident in stating that we are on all the major MPNs being used by insurers in the state of California.

So where does the confusion exist? The original MPN put together by Concentra, did not include any of the occupational medical clinics or their providers that were in the Concentra/Focus preferred provider network. We had to have companies that had been using our clinic for years nominate HealthFirst to the Concentra network. We had been told before the MPN was created that HealthFirst

would be grandfathered in, but it did not happen. We have since contracted with Concentra/Focus and are now part of the general Concentra MPN, as well as select Concentra MPNs for Sedgwick, ESSI, Cambridge and Broadspire.

Another confusing point is that Concentra not only has an MPN that they have provided to insurance companies, but they also have Occupational Medical clinics. When some companies have been told they must use the Concentra MPN, they've been confused and thought they had to use a Concentra clinic. ***If you are told to use the Concentra MPN, you can continue to use HealthFirst Medical as we are a participant in the network.***

For all of you that are pleased with the services that HealthFirst Medical provides to your company and your employees, and are told you must use another clinic by your insurance company, please check with your marketing representative before making any changes. Chances are there is a mistake and you will be able to continue using our clinic.

For more information about MPN's call your marketing representatives: Alex Saulus 562-926-3440 x 308, Linda Smith 562-926-3440 x309 and Billie Scelza 562-949-9438 x 208.

E-Mail Address

HealthFirst Medical would like your e-mail address in order to communicate with you in a more efficient manner. We will be able to inform you of upcoming seminars and respond to your inquires without bothering you. Please e-mail your address to: andreamos@healthfirstmedical.net or yolandaamador@healthfirstmedical.net. Thank you!

May is Skin Cancer and Melanoma Awareness Month

May is National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month. Do your part and make your employees aware of the importance of skin cancer prevention, early detection and treatment of basal cell, squamous cell, and melanoma. It is estimated that during 2005, about 1 million new cases of basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma and about 59,580 new cases of malignant melanoma will be diagnosed. Skin cancer will claim the lives of approximately 10,590 Americans. Although death rates from basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas are low, these cancers can cause considerable damage and disfigurement if they are untreated. If detected early, approximately 95% of these carcinomas can be cured.

What should your employees do to prevent these skin cancers?

- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure, especially between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps
- When outdoors use sunscreens rated SPF 15 or higher. Apply them liberally, uniformly, and frequently.
- When exposed to sunlight, wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, broad brimmed hats, and UV-protective sunglasses.
- Examine your skin, head to toe, every 3 months.

(Source: CDC and Skin Cancer Foundation)

Tips for Prevention of Back Injuries

There are a number of specific measures that can be taken to ensure a healthy back. These are just a few of them that can help your workers:

- Exercise regularly. Low-impact aerobic exercises protect the back by keeping muscles strong and supple. Swimming is the best exercise, brisk walking and bicycling are also good.
- Shed some pounds as excess weight puts excess stress on the back.
- Always bend from the knees, never the waist.
- Don't try to lift something that is too heavy.
- Avoid twisting while lifting as this increases the chance of injury.
- Maintain good posture. Stand with the back straight, pelvis tucked, shoulders down, head erect and chin tucked in.
- Avoid sitting too long. No other position puts as much pressure on the back muscles and discs. If standing for long periods, change your position often.
- Push instead of pull as this allows the leg muscles to power the job. (Source: Health Central)

Changes in Company Information?

Contact: _____

Insurance Carrier: _____

Other: _____



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