

Important Notices for Medicaid Members

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Because Life.™

Health benefits or health benefit administration may be provided by or through Highmark Wholecare, coverage by Gateway Health Plan, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (“Highmark Wholecare”).

Highmark Wholecare Disease Management Programs

Managing a long-term health problem, or chronic condition, can be challenging. But Highmark Wholecare is here to help. Our Disease Management Programs are designed to keep you healthy and reduce your hospital visits.

By joining a program, you'll work with our Care Management team. They'll help you connect with the right doctors, set realistic health goals, and learn practical ways to better manage your condition. We'll also work with you to address your specific needs and concerns.

To enroll in a program, call Care Management at **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711)**, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

We currently offer support for these conditions:

- Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)
- Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)
- Diabetes

And we're adding more programs all the time.

These programs are completely free and voluntary. You can join whenever you're ready. You can decide to leave or rejoin your program at any time. It's your health journey, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

If at any time you'd like to leave your program, call **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711)**, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Ensuring Quality Care and Service

Highmark Wholecare's Quality Improvement and Utilization Management (QI/UM) Program helps make sure you are receiving the best health care and services possible. Highmark Wholecare is always looking at how well we help you:

- Get care to keep from getting sick.
- Get care for health issues you have had for a while.
- Know about the medicines you take.
- Stay out of the hospital.
- Have access to doctors.
- Make and keep doctor visits.
- Share health information with doctors.
- Get care in a way that respects your culture.
- Stay healthy and safe.

The QI/UM Program uses tools to see how we are doing and to help set goals for the future. Some of these tools include survey results, medical record reviews, and the Healthcare Effectiveness Data Information Set (HEDIS®). We also work with our doctors to keep an eye on the care and services our members are getting to figure out what we can do to improve.

Highmark Wholecare has a QI/UM Work Plan that details what is included in our QI/UM Program. This Work Plan is checked every three months to look for issues so that we can address them.

Highmark Wholecare also reviews its QI/UM Program every year to see how well we are meeting the health care and service needs of our members. The evaluation of the QI/UM Program from 2024 is done. We met many of our goals, put new programs in place, and learned where we can improve.

As part of the QI/UM Program review, Highmark Wholecare conducts Performance Improvement Projects (PIPs). PIPs are studies that meet state contract requirements based on either clinical care or non-clinical services. PIPs address key quality areas of focus for improvements.

If you would like more information about our QI/UM Program, QI/UM Work Plan, a summary evaluation of the 2024 QI/UM Program, or outcomes from the PIPs, call Member Services at **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-654-5984)**.

Medical Necessity Determinations

“Medically necessary” means that a service, item, or medicine does one of the following:

- It will, or is reasonably expected to, prevent an illness, condition, or disability.
- It will, or is reasonably expected to, reduce or improve the physical, mental, or developmental effects of an illness, condition, injury, or disability.
- It will help you to get or keep the ability to perform daily tasks, taking into consideration both your abilities and the abilities for someone of the same age.

If you need help understanding when a service, item, or medicine is medically necessary or would like more information, call Member Services at **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-654-5984)**.

Direct Access to Women’s Health

In addition to family planning services, Highmark Wholecare covers women’s health services that are offered within the network. This includes women’s health specialists, routine and preventive care, and follow-up care, such as mammograms and Pap tests. You do not need a referral for these services as long as you see a doctor or provider within our network. Check your Member Handbook or call Member Services at **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-654-5984)** to make sure the test or service you need is covered.

Second Opinions

You have the right to ask for a second opinion if you are not sure about any medical treatment, service, or non-emergency surgery that is suggested for you. A second opinion may give you more information that can help you make important decisions about your treatment. A second opinion is available to you at no cost other than a copay.

Call your doctor to ask for the name of another Highmark Wholecare network provider to get a second opinion. If there are not any other providers in Highmark Wholecare's network, you may ask Highmark Wholecare for approval to get a second opinion from an out-of-network provider.

Prior Authorization

Some services or items need approval from Highmark Wholecare before you can get the service. This is called prior authorization. For services that need prior authorization, Highmark Wholecare decides whether a requested service is medically necessary before you get the service. You or your provider must make a request to Highmark Wholecare for approval before you get the service.

Statement About Incentives

Highmark Wholecare makes decisions on member usage of health care when the care and services are proper. The care and services must also be a covered benefit. Highmark Wholecare does not reward doctors, nurses, or others for denying care. We do not allow decisions that would cause the under usage of care. Highmark Wholecare screens for both over and under usage of care. This ensures we are making the right decisions.

Continuity of Care and You

It is key for your doctors, such as your primary care provider (PCP) or specialists, to share advice. By talking with each other, your doctors can be sure that they have all the facts they need to make the best choices when treating you and helping you to stay healthy. Take part in your health!

Be sure to tell your doctors about:

- Any and all illness and health problems you have.
- Any drugs ordered by a doctor that you take.
- Any surgeries you have had.

Clinical Practice and Preventive Health Guidelines

Highmark Wholecare helps doctors make sure you get the best care every time. Highmark Wholecare has guidelines to help keep you healthy. We have guidelines that help you stay healthy, such as child immunizations, and wellness visits. There are guidelines for certain conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, depression, and pregnancy.

It is also important for your doctors, like your primary care provider (PCP) or specialists, to share information with one another. Talking with each other helps your doctors stay informed about the care you get from other providers. Your doctors can take care of you best when they know about all of your care. Play an active role in your health!

Be sure to tell your doctors about any of the following:

- Illnesses and health problems you have.
- Medicines prescribed by your provider.
- Any surgeries you have had. This will help your doctors give you the best care possible.

To see the complete listing of physical and mental health guidelines, visit the **PA Medicaid Guidelines for Providers**. For a paper copy, call Member Services at **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-654-5984)**, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

Practitioner Excellence Program

Highmark Wholecare wants our members to have the best health care. This is why we have the Practitioner Excellence Program. We know how important doctors are in caring for our members. We work together to give the best health care to our members and their families.

Which doctors are included in the program?

- Primary Care Providers
- Dentists
- Obstetrician/Gynecologists

If you have questions, call Member Services at **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711)**.

Highmark Wholecare Notice of Privacy Practices

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Highmark Wholecare is required by law to protect the privacy of your health information and non-public personal (financial) information. This protection extends to all forms of communication (oral, written, and electronic) of this information. Also, Highmark Wholecare is required to give you this notice about how it uses or shares (“discloses”) your health and personal (“non-public”) information. We are required to notify you if you are affected by a breach of unsecured health information.

In order to provide services to you, Highmark Wholecare may share your health information with:

- You or someone who acts for you.
- Doctors and health care providers who care for you.
- Our contracted vendors who help us provide services to you (such as member services support and pharmacy benefit management).
- Other government programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, to manage your benefits and payments.
- State and federal agencies that have the legal right to receive such data.
- The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, if necessary, to make sure your privacy is protected.

Highmark Wholecare may use or share your health information in various ways, including for:

- **Treatment:** While we do not provide treatment, we may share health information that your doctor or other health care provider requests to help them with your medical treatment. For example, we may disclose what prescriptions you have filled to help your doctor prescribe the appropriate medication.
- **Payment:** To help pay for your covered benefits, we may use and share your health information in a number of ways, including to conduct utilization and medical necessity reviews; coordinate your care; determine eligibility for your plan benefits; pay for your health care; and respond to complaints, appeals and requests for external review. For example, we may use your health information to decide whether a particular treatment is medically necessary and what the payment should be.
- **Health Care Operations:** We may use and share your health information for our health plan operations, including administrative, financial, legal, and quality improvement activities that are necessary to run our business. These activities include coordinating and managing your care; contacting you for appointment reminders, medication management, or disease management programs and alternative treatments that may interest you; checking the quality of our services and making improvements where necessary; and arranging legal services, audit services, and fraud and abuse detection programs. For example, we may use your health information to provide disease management programs for members with specific conditions such as diabetes or asthma.

Highmark Wholecare may also use or share your health information as permitted or required by law:

- For public health activities (such as reporting disease outbreaks; child abuse and neglect; reporting domestic violence; preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability).
- For government health care oversight activities (such as fraud investigations, audits, and activities related to oversight of the health care system).
- For judicial and administrative proceedings (such as in response to a court order).
- For law enforcement purposes or when required by law, for example, locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person; complying with a court order or subpoena; and other law enforcement purposes.
- For purposes of national security.
- To comply with workers' compensation or similar laws.
- For research studies that meet all privacy law requirements such as research related to the prevention of disease or disability.
- To avoid a serious and likely threat to health or safety.
- To create a collection of information that can no longer be traced back to you.
- To group health plans, to coordinate plans, and to permit the plan to administer benefits.
- To coroners, medical examiners, funeral directors, and organ donations.
- To your school when proof of immunization is required by law.
- To others involved in your health care (if you are not present or able to agree to these disclosures of your health information, we may use our professional judgment to determine whether the disclosure is in your best interest).
- For underwriting purposes if needed, however, we are not allowed to use or share your genetic information to decide whether coverage can be given or at what price.

Marketing

If we receive compensation from another company for providing you with information about other products or services (other than drug refill reminders or generic drug availability), we will obtain your authorization to share information with this other company.

Sharing information for other purposes

Highmark Wholecare must have your written permission (an “authorization”) to use or give out your health and claims information for any purpose that is not listed in this notice. Giving us permission to use or give out your health and claims information will not be a condition for getting health care and will not be used to determine your eligibility for enrollment or benefits, or for paying claims. You may take back (“revoke”) your written permission at any time, except if Highmark Wholecare already took action based on your permission.

We will restrict uses and disclosures concerning HIV/AIDS, mental health, and drug and alcohol treatment or other particular categories of health information based on state law if state law is stricter or provides safeguards not included in federal regulations.

Some examples of when we need your permission to use or give out your information are:

- For fundraising.
- For selling your protected health information (PHI).

You have the right to:

- **Get a copy of your health and claims information.** You can ask to see or get a copy of your health or claims records and other health information we have about you. We will provide a copy or a summary of your health or claims records within 30 days of your request.
- **Ask us to correct health and claims records.** You can ask us to change your health and claims records if you feel they are incorrect or incomplete. We may say “no” to your request but we’ll tell you why in writing within 60 days. If Highmark Wholecare cannot change your records, you may have a statement of your disagreement added to your personal medical information.
- **Get a list of those with whom we’ve shared information.** You can ask for a list (called “an accounting”) of the times we’ve shared your health information within the last six years. You must tell Highmark Wholecare the dates for which you are requesting the list. The list will not cover information that was given to you or your personal representative, or information given for health care payments, for Highmark Wholecare business operations, or for law enforcement needs.
- **Request Confidential Communications.** You can ask us to contact you in a specific way, for example, on a home or office phone or to a different address. We will consider all reasonable requests, and must say “yes” if you tell us you would be in danger if we do not.
- **Ask us to limit what we use or share.** You can ask us not to share certain health information for treatment, payment or our operations. We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if it would affect your care.
- **Choose someone to act for you.** If you have given someone medical power of attorney, or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can act for you and make choices about your health information. We will make sure the person has this authority before we take any action.
- **Get a copy of this privacy notice.** Contact us for a separate paper copy or email copy of this Notice.

What is the non-public information that Highmark Wholecare collects and shares about you?

- It is personal information but is non-medical, for example, the information you completed on your enrollment application that identifies who you are and how you can be contacted.
- Also, it is information collected for a request for services by you or your doctor.
- Also, it is information collected to answer a question or concern from you.

With whom does Highmark Wholecare share your non-public information?

- With health care providers, for example, physicians, hospitals, long term care agencies, durable medical equipment providers, and pharmacies.
- With those who plan your benefits and your care, for example, for utilization reviews; external reviews; and case management.

How does Highmark Wholecare protect your non-public information?

- Highmark Wholecare does not make your non-public information available to anyone other than those necessary to provide medical or health plan services to you.
- Highmark Wholecare does not give out your non-public information, except if required or permitted by law.
- Highmark Wholecare does not give out your non-public information to anyone unrelated to providing your care under the health plan unless you or your representative gives permission.
- You have the right to give or withhold permission for other uses or disclosures of this information, except as required by law.

Questions and Complaints

If you have a question about this notice or believe Highmark Wholecare has violated your privacy rights as stated in this notice, you can file a complaint by contacting:

Highmark Privacy Department
120 Fifth Avenue Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: **1-866-228-9424**

For more information on filing a complaint or your rights stated in this notice, you may call our Member Services at **1-800-392-1147** or **1-800-685-5209 (TTY: 711)**. Filing a complaint will not affect your benefits. Translations services are available at no cost to you.

You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
Centralized Case Management Operations
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Suite 509F, HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201

Customer Response Center
Phone: **1-800-368-1019 (TTY/TDD: 1-800-537-7697)**
Fax: **1-202-619-3818**
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website at **hhs.gov/ocr**.

Change to the terms of this notice

Highmark Wholecare is required to follow the terms in this privacy notice. Highmark Wholecare has the right to change the way your medical information is used and given out and to apply those changes to all the information we maintain about you. If Highmark Wholecare makes any material changes they will be posted on our website. You will be notified within sixty (60) days of the change.

The initial privacy practices were effective April 14, 2003. These privacy practices have been revised as of October 5, 2023.

Your managed care plan may not cover all your health care expenses. Read your member handbook carefully to determine which health care services are covered.

Highmark Wholecare complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, creed, religious affiliation, ancestry, sex gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation.

Highmark Wholecare does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, creed, religious affiliation, ancestry, sex gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation.

Highmark Wholecare provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:

- Qualified sign language interpreters
- Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)

Highmark Wholecare provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:

- Qualified interpreters
- Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact **Highmark Wholecare** at **1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-654-5984), Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.**

If you believe that **Highmark Wholecare** has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, creed, religious affiliation, ancestry, sex gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation, you can file a complaint with:

Highmark Wholecare
Attn: Grievances Department
P.O. Box 22278
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711)
Fax: 1-412-255-4503

The Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 223, Health and Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675
717-787-1127 (TTY: 711)
Fax: 717-772-4366
Email: RA-PWBEOAO@pa.gov

You can file a complaint in person or by mail, fax, or email. If you need help filing a complaint, **Highmark Wholecare** and the Bureau of Equal Opportunity are available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at [OCRPortal.hhs.gov](https://ocrportal.hhs.gov), or by mail, phone, or email at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201
1-800-368-1019 (TTY: 1-800-537-7697)
OCRMail@hhs.gov

Complaint forms are available at hwc.fyi/complaint-form.

ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, free language assistance services are available to you. Appropriate auxiliary aids and services to provide information in accessible formats are also available free of charge. Call 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) or speak to your provider.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. También están disponibles de forma gratuita ayuda y servicios auxiliares apropiados para proporcionar información en formatos accesibles. Llame al 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) o hable con su proveedor.

注意：如果您说[中文]，我们将免费为您提供语言协助服务。我们还免费提供适当的辅助工具和服务，以无障碍格式提供信息。致电 1-800-392-1147（文本电话：711）或咨询您的服务提供者。

सावधान: यदि तपाईं नेपाली भाषा बोल्नुहुन्छ भने तपाईंका लागि निःशुल्क भाषिक सहायता सेवाहरू उपलब्ध छन्। पहुँचयोग्य ढाँचाहरूमा जानकारी प्रदान गर्न उपयुक्त सहायता र सेवाहरू पनि निःशुल्क उपलब्ध छन्। 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) मा फोन गर्नुहोस् वा आफ्नो प्रदायकसँग कुरा गर्नुहोस्।

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русский, вам доступны бесплатные услуги языковой поддержки. Соответствующие вспомогательные средства и услуги по предоставлению информации в доступных форматах также предоставляются бесплатно. Позвоните по телефону 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) или обратитесь к своему поставщику услуг.

تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فستتوفر لك خدمات المساعدة اللغوية المجانية. كما تتوفر وسائل مساعدة وخدمات مناسبة لتوفير المعلومات بتنسيقات يمكن الوصول إليها مجاناً. اتصل على الرقم 711 (TTY: 1-800-392-1147) أو تحدث إلى مقدم الخدمة".

ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd aladispozisyon w gratis pou lang ou pale a. Èd ak sèvis siplemantè apwopriye pou bay enfòmasyon nan fòm aksèsib yo disponib gratis tou. Rele nan 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) oswa pale avèk founisè w la.

LU'U Ý: Nếu bạn nói tiếng Việt, chúng tôi cung cấp miễn phí các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ. Các hỗ trợ dịch vụ phù hợp để cung cấp thông tin theo các định dạng dễ tiếp cận cũng được cung cấp miễn phí. Vui lòng gọi theo số 1-800-392-1147 (Người khuyết tật: 711) hoặc trao đổi với người cung cấp dịch vụ của bạn.

УВАГА: Якщо ви розмовляєте українська мова, вам доступні безкоштовні мовні послуги. Відповідні допоміжні засоби та послуги для надання інформації у доступних форматах також доступні безкоштовно. Зателефонуйте за номером 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) або зверніться до свого постачальника.

注意：如果您說[中文]，我們可以為您提供免費語言協助服務。也可以免費提供適當的輔助工具與服務，以無障礙格式提供資訊。請致電 1-800-392-1147（TTY：711）或與您的提供者討論。

ATENÇÃO: Se você fala [inserir idioma], serviços gratuitos de assistência linguística estão disponíveis para você. Auxílios e serviços auxiliares apropriados para fornecer informações em formatos acessíveis também estão disponíveis gratuitamente. Ligue para 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) ou fale com seu provedor.

মনোযোগ দিন: যদি আপনি বাংলা বলেন তাহলে আপনার জন্য বিনামূল্যে ভাষা সহায়তা পরিষেবাদি উপলব্ধ রয়েছে। অ্যাক্সেসযোগ্য ফরম্যাটে তথ্য প্রদানের জন্য উপযুক্ত সহায়ক সহযোগিতা এবং পরিষেবাদিও বিনামূল্যে উপলব্ধ রয়েছে। 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) নম্বরে কল করুন অথবা আপনার প্রদানকারীর সাথে কথা বলুন।

ATTENTION: Si vous parlez Français, des services d'assistance linguistique gratuits sont à votre disposition. Des aides et services auxiliares appropriés pour fournir des informations dans des formats accessibles sont également disponibles gratuitement. Appelez le 1-800-392-1147 (TTY : 711) ou parlez à votre fournisseur.

សូមយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ប្រសិនបើអ្នកនិយាយ ភាសាខ្មែរ សេវាកម្មជំនួយភាសាភតិកតិច្នៃគីមានសម្រាប់អ្នកជំនួយ និងសេវាកម្មដែលជាការជួយដល់សមាជិក ក្នុងការផ្តល់ព័ត៌មានតាមទម្រង់ដែលអាចចូលប្រើប្រាស់បាន គឺអាចរកបានដោយភតិកតិច្នៃផងដែរ។ ហៅទូរស័ព្ទទៅ 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) ឬនិយាយទៅកាន់អ្នកផ្តល់សេវារបស់អ្នក។

주의: [한국어]를 사용하시는 경우 무료 언어 지원 서비스를 이용하실 수 있습니다. 이용 가능한 형식으로 정보를 제공하는 적절한 보조 기구 및 서비스도 무료로 제공됩니다. 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711)번으로 전화하거나 서비스 제공업체에 문의하십시오.

ध्यान आपो: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો તો મફત ભાષાકીય સહાયતા સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. યોગ્ય ઓક્ટીલરી સહાય અને એક્સેસિબલ ફોર્મેટમાં માહિતી પૂરી પાડવા માટેની સેવાઓ પણ વિના મૂલ્યે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. 1-800-392-1147 (TTY: 711) પર કોલ કરો અથવા તમારા પ્રદાતા સાથે વાત કરો.