

The *INNOVATOR*

Pharmacy Benefits

Each year our program pays out approximately \$4M for pharmacy benefits when injured workers receive either retail or mail order medications through the program's pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) team partner, Alius Health. Through this partnership the program saves over \$4.6M compared to fee schedule/usual customary rates. However, it can be difficult to ensure that all pharmacy benefits are funneled through the PBM. Some of the obstacles include:

- By statute we cannot require the injured worker to use a specific PBM.
- Competing with physicians' offices that dispense medications.
- The prevalence of other third-party billers in the marketplace.

When pharmacy bills bypass our PBM, our only recourse is to review the bills retroactively and try to obtain discounts for any prescriptions that were obtained from a network pharmacy provider. Absent this, we typically pay those bills at 100% of billed charges, which is significantly more than we would otherwise pay.

One way to capture a larger percent of the program's pharmacy charges is through the utilization of the program's First Fill program. Getting injured workers to use the network from the outset of their injury helps reduce the amount of pharmacy leakage. In FY22 only 111 injured workers out of 1,215 utilizing PBM utilized First Fill.

Engaging First Fill is easy. When a work injury first occurs, an injured worker may need prescriptions before the claim has been filed with MCI or deemed compensable. First Fill allows an injured worker to receive their initial injury-related medications while claim compensability is determined. The program is designed so the injured worker can receive treatment and start the recovery process while eliminating out-of-pocket expenditures. A claim number approval from the benefit coordinator is not required for the service.

A First Fill card is created on the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of Workers' Compensation website: covwc.com. Once at the website, click the *Services* tab and then click *Pharmacy Network*. Here you will find a link to the First Fill pharmacy card. It is important to complete the template accurately and in its entirety. The information is necessary for the pharmacy to properly bill medications and for claim identification. A passphrase (see covwc.com to obtain), injured worker First and Last Name, the last four digits of the injured worker's social, and date of birth are required. After completing the template, a card can be provided to the injured worker by printing, emailing, texting, or by fax.

The injured worker should present their new First Fill card to a participating pharmacy. Presenting the card will ensure the medications are billed with no co-pay or out-of-pocket expense to the injured worker. Not sure if the injured employee's pharmacy is participating? To confirm, you can search by zip code using the *Find a Pharmacy* link or by calling Alius Health at 740-661-4463. Alius Health office hours are M-F 9am – 7pm EST. Alius Health's contact information is also available on the First Fill card.

The First Fill card is a temporary card, meaning it is only active for a one-time fill of initial medications. It will allow up to a 15-day supply of medications. Most common

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work-injury-related medications are covered by the card. However, there are occasions when a medication may require prior authorization. If authorization is required, the pharmacy will receive direct messaging to contact Alius Health for assistance in obtaining approval. Alius will confirm approval by contacting the benefit coordinator.

Once the necessary approval has been granted, Alius Health will notify the pharmacy for processing. If the injured employee experiences difficulties using the card or has questions about the First Fill service, they can contact Alius Health.

Since compensability is still being determined, Alius Health will most likely not have received the employee's claim information yet. When calling Alius Health, it will be helpful to indicate assistance is needed with a First Fill card. The representative may ask additional questions for identification purposes and to help determine the best course of action.

Once the First Fill card has been used, Alius Health will receive notification. They will monitor the transaction to confirm whether the claim has been deemed compensable. Once the claim has been accepted and it is determined additional medications are required, the benefit coordinator will send claim information to Alius via the electronic data interchange (EDI) process. Alius will then mail a permanent replacement card to the injured worker.

Agency locations need to determine the best way to implement the First Fill process. It is important that the First Fill card be provided to the injured worker as soon as it is practical to do so following the employer's knowledge of accident/injury. There are various ways the card can be distributed to the injured worker. Some of the most common methods of distribution include texting, email, faxing, hardcopy, and being included with an injury packet or placed on an employer's intranet site.

If you need guidance on this matter please contact your agency's assigned Agency Relations Representative.

Key Program Metrics

Metrics included in the below table give you an idea of certain key volume, costs, savings and performance measures and provides some historical context by comparing first quarter 2023 to the first quarters of FY20-22.

Metric	Q1FY20	Q1FY21	Q1FY22	Q1FY23
<i>Total Open Inventory</i>	3,209	2,834	2,679	2,578
Indemnity	2,189	2,011	1,921	1,822
Medical Only	1,020	823	758	756
<i># Claims Received</i>	1,910	1,418	1,522	1,401
Indemnity	132	111	120	112
Medical Only	916	653	583	667
Record Only	862	654	819	622
Closing Ratio	99.9%	100.5%	100.3%	99.2%
# Compensability Decisions	1,070	822	747	797
Ave Compensability Lagtime (days)	8	13	11	10
# Medical Bills Adjudicated	13,290	12,118	9,635	8,913
\$ Medical Bills Paid (in millions)	\$6.61	\$6.75	\$5.67	\$7.30
Cost Avoidance (in millions)	\$4.70	\$4.64	\$3.82	\$4.44
Ave Medical Bill Turnaround Time (days)	13	7	6	8



Thanksgiving Safety

Thanksgiving is a great time to gather family and friends to eat a delicious meal, watch football, or travel to see loved ones. You may be surprised to know that there are many hidden dangers in getting that meal from the supermarket to the table. Hosting a large holiday meal can be stressful and overwhelming, so it is crucial always to keep safety in mind.

Some of the top safety hazards are food, fire, and travel. It is important to note that food poisoning, choking, and cuts and burns while preparing food are near the top of the list. Fires from outdoor turkey fryers, kitchen stoves, and holiday candles are frequent uninvited dinner guests. Motor vehicle accidents on the highway are elevated during the holiday travel season.

Make sure your kitchen is a safe place. Keep your kitchen floor free of tripping hazards. Keep unsupervised children away from stoves and crock pots. Do not leave the house while your food is cooking. Keep baking soda or a fire extinguisher handy in case of a kitchen fire. Make sure your smoke alarms have fresh batteries and that they are working correctly. Ensure all burning candles are kept away from flammable items and children and not left unattended. Wash your hands after handling raw or undercooked poultry. Wash cutting boards with anti-bacterial soap between uses to prevent cross-contamination. The USDA recommends cooking a turkey at a minimum of 325 degrees. Verify the internal temperature of the turkey reaches 165 to 180 degrees with a food thermometer to ensure the turkey is cooked thoroughly to avoid any illness caused by consuming undercooked poultry.

Kids in the Kitchen

Kids like helping out in the kitchen and cooking tasty snacks for their friends and family. Preparing yummy treats can be lots of fun, but it's important that kids who like to cook know how to be safe in the kitchen. These tips can help you figure out what they are old enough to do on their own—and when it's time to ask an adult for help.

Even the best chefs rely on their assistants to help them out in the kitchen. Before they get to cooking, they must get a grownup's permission. If they plan to use a recipe, look it over with them first to decide what they can do independently and what you need to help them with. After they start, ensure they are never afraid to ask for help.

Helping out in the kitchen is fun. From mixing up cake batter to cutting shapes out of cookie dough, helping a grownup in the kitchen can be lots of fun. So, if they're not old enough yet to cook on their own, not to worry; being the chef's helper is the most important job in the kitchen.

Cooking for All Ages: All kids are different—and a grownup *should always decide what is safe for you to do in the kitchen—but here are some guidelines you can use.*

Kids aged 3–5 can:

- Get ingredients out of the refrigerator
- Measure and mix ingredients together in a bowl
- Pour liquids into a bowl
- Wash fruits and vegetables under cold water
- Use a cookie cutter to cut shapes out of cookie dough or sandwiches
- Lick the cake batter off of a spoon (yum!)

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Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Workers' Compensation

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Kids aged 6–8 can:

- Open packages
- Use a butter knife to spread frosting, cream cheese, peanut butter, or soft cheese
- Peel vegetables
- Measure ingredients
- Stir ingredients in a bowl
- Set the table

Kids aged 9–13 can:

- Begin to follow a recipe
- Open cans
- Use electrical kitchen appliances, such as a microwave oven, when a grownup is present
- Use a grater to shred cheese and vegetables
- Turn stove burners on and off and select oven temperature when a grownup is present
- Help plan the meal
- Make a salad

Kids aged 14+ can:

- Operate the stove or oven without an adult present
- Heat food in the microwave without an adult present
- Drain cooked pasta into a colander
- Take a tray of food out of the oven

Driving Safely During the Holiday Season

In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for people aged 1–54, and about 36,100 people were killed in crashes in 2019. Early estimates indicate that crash deaths increased to 38,680 in 2020—a 7% increase in fatalities, despite people driving less.

Motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of death for U.S. teens. About seven teens aged 13–19 die daily from motor vehicle crash injuries. Per mile driven, teen drivers aged 16–19 are nearly three times as likely as drivers aged 20 or older to be in a fatal crash. Get supervised driving time with your teen over the holidays while not in school. Practicing driving under your supervision in different kinds of weather helps provide your teen with valuable driving experience in varied conditions (when the weather is not too severe or dangerous).

Children are safest when car seats and booster seats are used correctly. Buckle children the right way in the right seat and learn how to avoid the most common mistakes.

Driving helps older adults stay mobile and independent; however, the risk of being injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash increases as people age. If you are an older driver, ask your doctor or pharmacist to review prescription and over-the-counter medicines to reduce side effects and interactions that could affect your ability to drive safely. Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year. Wear glasses and corrective lenses as directed. Plan your route before you drive. Find the safest route with well-lit streets, intersections with left-turn signals, and easy parking.

Motor vehicle crash deaths and injuries can be prevented. To help everyone stay safe on the road during the holiday season, always buckle up, and monitor weather and road conditions. Always drive at safe speeds, and stay off your cell phone. Never drive impaired.



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Following these tips will help keep you and your loved ones safe during the holiday season.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/features/holiday-road-safety/index.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html

http://www.seasonedwithlove.com/kitchen_safety_tips.htm

https://www.manhattanfire.org/content/kids/FPW20%20Childerns%20Lessons%2C%20Activities%20and%20More_Part3.pdf

Reporting Accidents for Out-of-State Employees

If your agencies employ employees that reside and perform job responsibilities outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia and are injured, what do you do?

The short answer is you handle it just as you would for an employee that resides and works in the Commonwealth of Virginia! File the claim through foi.sedgwick.com just as you would if the injured worker was working in Virginia and let us know in the comments section what the situation is. For example, provide us with information like: the injured worker resides in West Virginia but works at a location within Virginia or the injured worker resides in Virginia but was injured while attending a work conference in New York. Our benefit coordinators will handle the claims under the Virginia jurisdiction unless circumstances dictate otherwise. If required to handle the claim based on another state's jurisdiction, the program does have a policy available for coverage. If confirmation of that policy is needed please contact Pam Goetz @ pam.goetz@dhrm.virginia.gov.



Tips for Teamwork

4-digit zip code extension required by Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission

<https://tools.usps.com/zip-code-lookup.htm?byaddress>

USE THIS USPS TOOL TO LOOK UP THE INJURED WORKER OR AGENCY ZIP CODE EXTENSION

Agencies should include the extension as part of the IW or agency address at the time of claim entry.

FROI Submission Reminders! If you are a named user within the FROI application and submit new accident reports to MCI, you will receive an email reminder on any claim that remains in your list that hasn't yet been submitted to MCI at 3, 5, and 10 days. If for some reason the claim should not be submitted to MCI, please delete it.

Need help developing a panel of physicians? Access the PPO network via the program's website:

<https://covwc.com/> or directly at <https://www-lv.talispoint.com/careworks/>

You may also contact Client Services for help in validating or establishing a panel:

ClientServices@CareWorks.com or call (800) 734-4460 Option 1

Don't forget about the features within the FROI application (also referred to as VLW) that allows Named Users to upload claim-related documents and photos and the addition of claim-related notes or annotations. Both features should save you time and reduce the number of emails and telephone calls through the timely sharing of information.

Short Subject title

Type the body of your text here and select "OK" to upload.

Add Annotation

Subject: Additional days out of work reported

Annotation: Mr. Smith reported that Mr Anderson was out of work last week due to his injury. He went to the doctor, but we have not received any medical note or further information. I called and left a message for Mr. Anderson.

OK Cancel

Attachments
File Size Limit: 100MB
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