

# Value Connection

Arkansas Health Network's Newsletter

Fall 2021

## ***Excellence is a Habit - Sustained Success for AHN in 2020***

As we all navigate the ongoing resurgence of COVID-19 from the Delta variant, AHN was thrilled and humbled to learn that our MSSP-ACO saved CMS a total of \$14,318,907 in 2020, achieving an overall quality score of 98.18%. We earned 58.9% of our potential 60% of shared savings – \$8,435,625! This is a record-breaking four years in a row that we were able to achieve savings and receive shared savings in this program and see continued success.

Additionally, AHN attained the highest quality score (81%) of all CINs within CommonSpirit Health for our CHI St. Vincent 2020 employee health plan population, resulting in AHN earning significant pay-for-performance earnings. Everyone at AHN thanks you and your teams for your work that contributes to this success!

We remain steadfast in constantly improving & growing our Value Based Agreements (VBAs). As a “National Best Practice”, we also remain focused on directly “exporting” our VBA capabilities to the residents of Arkansas through our Direct-to-Employer initiative. With your collaboration, we are enhancing our network fidelity efforts. We appreciate you and your staff for the great care you provide every day to the patients who are part of AHN! We hope you stay healthy and safe.

*Daniel Felton, MD, Board Chair, Arkansas Health Network  
Bob Sarkar, FACHE, President & CEO, Arkansas Health Network*

### **What's in this Issue?**

- ◇ **Board Chairman/CEO Message.....p.1**
- ◇ **MSSP Pathways Transition /eCQM Updates .....p.1**
- ◇ **CMO Note.....p.2**
- ◇ **AHN Highest Quality Score.....p.2**
- ◇ **Arkansas BCBS Medicare Advantage & Fax Updates.....p.2**
- ◇ **Pharmacy Corner .p.3**
- ◇ **Annual Wellness Visits.....p.3**
- ◇ **AHN Compliance Policies Updates...p.3**
- ◇ **MSSP Distributions Celebrations.....p.4**
- ◇ **New Network Additions .....p.4**

## **A New Path for MSSP in 2022 & eCQM Updates**

In 2022, AHN will be transitioning to a new evolution of the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) called Pathways to Success. While Pathways to Success shares a lot in common with the legacy MSSP, it also has made some key programmatic changes to address the needs of CMS and participating providers including (but not limited to) participation tracks, requirements around bearing risk, benchmarking processes, access to waivers. Based on its experience and size, AHN's Medicare ACO qualifies for the most advanced track of the program, known as the “Enhanced Pathway”. Under this track, AHN's potential for both downside risk and upside shared savings will increase from 60% to 75%. Based on its repeated track record of success, AHN's leadership and board members are highly optimistic for AHN to remain a top performer in this program. AHN will complete the full application process in November.

### **eCQM Updates**

In the Spring 2021 Newsletter, MSSP participating groups were advised that the annual quality audit process known as GPRO would be fully replaced in 2022 by eCQM style reporting directly from practice EMRs or registries per a CMS mandate in the 2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) Final Rule. However, thanks to the highly vocal feedback from ACOs and advocacy organization, the requirement to transition to eCQM reporting has been delayed until 2024, as stated in the 2022 MPFS Proposed Rule. AHN will continue to report quality with the traditional GPRO model in 2021 then will develop a transition plan to eCQM reporting throughout 2022 and 2023 for its ACO members.



For more detailed CMS information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/3umh2pxs>. Questions may also be directed to Rachel Longfellow ([RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com)).

## CMO Note: Provider Engagement

As your new CMO & Market VP, I am honored and excited to be part of the amazing AHN team. My priority is meeting with network physicians like you, who are leading the CIN through their exceptional commitment to value and forward thinking. I have been privileged to visit with some of you and have been very impressed with your teams' compassion in providing high-quality, coordinated and patient centered care. Our conversations have highlighted some areas of challenge as well as opportunities to maximize available resources. Despite the ongoing challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic, your practices are going above and beyond to create innovative solutions and best practices to improve patient outcomes. As I settle into my new role, I hope to connect with more of you and at a deeper level to overcome barriers and continue to raise the healthcare quality bar. I look forward to working with all AHN partners to make healthcare in Arkansas better.



For questions or comments, please contact Dr. Lubna Maruf ([Lubna.Maruf@commonspirit.org](mailto:Lubna.Maruf@commonspirit.org))

## AHN 2020 Total Quality Score - CHI St. Vincent Health Plan



Although 2020 was a very challenging year, particularly with COVID-19, AHN's strength as a CIN was validated as they achieved the highest total quality score across CommonSpirit Health for CHI St. Vincent's Health Plan. Based on final Quality scores, AHN earned 81% of the "at risk" bonus totaling \$201,254. Of six total measures, the key quality components contributing to this year-over-year success were **Member Participation (+2.0% improvement)**, **Diabetes Care: HgbA1c Control (+5.3%)**, **Diabetes Care: Nephropathy (+4.3%)** and **Hypertension Care: Controlled Blood Pressure (+4.3%)**. During the year, AHN also achieved a 1.95% cost savings for CHI's plan — the 3rd year in a row CHI has realized a cost savings!

For questions or comments, please contact Rachel Longfellow ([RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com))

## Arkansas BCBS Medicare and Health Advantage Updates

Prior Authorizations (As of 9/1/21)	Prior Authorizations Fax Changes
<p><b>Durable Medical Equipment</b> - the following new HCPCS codes will require a prior authorization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>HCPCS Code K1014 – (Prosthetic Knee) Addition, endoskeletal knee-shin system, 4 bar linkage or multiaxial, fluid swing and stance phase control</li><li>HCPCS Code K1015 - Foot, adductus positioning device, adjustable</li></ul>	<p>To avoid delays in care for members, any <u>new</u> requests need to be sent using the following priority fax numbers:</p> <p><b>Standard Requests – Fax: 1-816-313-3014</b> <b>Expedited Requests – Fax: 1-816-313-3013</b></p>

These changes were also published in the June 1, 2021 Provider News publication found at [Providers News](#). It is important that you become familiar with these utilization management procedures as lack of prior authorization will result in provider financial write off of these services.

For questions or comments, please contact Dr. Lubna Maruf ([Lubna.Maruf@commonspirit.org](mailto:Lubna.Maruf@commonspirit.org))



## PHARMACY CORNER

### High Cost Brand Name Contraceptives / Medication Adherence

#### High Cost Brand Name Contraceptives

Lo Loestrin FE, Balcoltra, Xulane, and Annovera are high cost, brand name contraceptives, which may put undue financial burden on patients and their health plan. Over time, the financial burden to health plans may result in increased premiums to the patient. AHN has identified potential savings for patients and their employers with these medications.

If all AHN patients were converted to a more cost effective contraceptive, there is potential annual savings for both patient and their employers of \$163,711. The tables on the right show the cost of these high cost brand name contraceptives and the more cost effective options.

High Cost Branded Contraceptives	Cost per 28 day Rx
LO LOESTRIN FE	\$137-\$148
ANNOVERA	~\$149
XULANE	~\$119
BALCOLTRA	\$204-\$215

Low Cost Alternative Contraceptives	Cost per 28 day Rx
LEVONORGESTREL-ETHINYL ESTRADIOL	\$15-\$18
NORETHINDRONE-ETHINYL ESTRADIOL	\$11-\$27
JUNEL FE	\$12-\$68
NORETHINDRONE-ETHINYL ESTRADIOL-IRON	\$19-\$23
DAYSEE	\$20-\$56
OTC IRON	~\$9

#### Medication Adherence

Medication adherence, or taking medication correctly as prescribed, is critical to improving chronic disease outcomes and reducing health care costs. With the addition of Medicare Advantage value-based contracts to AHN's portfolio in 2021, there are new quality metrics that measure medication adherence in specific disease states -*hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, and diabetes*. AHN has started a **90 day supply campaign** to patients and providers for maintenance medications to help with medication adherence. Having a 90 day supply of maintenance medications will ensure patients have their essential medications on hand, decrease time and money spent on obtaining prescriptions, and improve quality ratings and disease outcomes.

For questions or comments, please contact Claire Lieblong, PharmD, MBA, BCPS ([CCLieblong@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:CCLieblong@stvincenthealth.com))



**ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS REMINDER:** As we near the 4th quarter of 2021, the Annual Wellness Visit is a great tool for Primary Care Providers participating in the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) and their patients insured through Medicare. Patients should receive their wellness visit prior to the end of the year.

## AHN Compliance Policies Update

Effective July 2, 2021, the AHN Board of Managers has reviewed and approved an updated set of nine Compliance Policies consistent with peer CINs across CommonSpirit Health. Six of these policies are specific to the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) ACO and the remaining two apply to all AHN participating providers. The topics of these policies include, but are not limited to, Beneficiary Referrals, Incentives, and Notifications, Compliance Communications, Data Submission, and Annual Certification. Copies of these policies will be made available to AHN participating providers via a private webpage. All practices will be provided this URL either through an email or a letter addressed to your practices to be distributed in the month of September.

For questions or comments, please contact Rachel Longfellow ([RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com))

## MSSP Distribution Celebrations



Lawrence Family Medicine



Tilley Family  
Medicine



Arkansas Urology



Carfagno Family Medicine

AHN received a total of \$7.1M from CMS for its Medicare Shared Savings ACO performance. The AHN Board approved a distribution of \$1.4M of these earnings to the 555 providers who participated in this program in 2019. Recently Bob Sarkar, CEO and Dr. Maruf, CMO were pleased to celebrate AHN's success and present checks to some of these practices for their portion of these shared savings.

***Congratulations to our participating providers on our shared success!***

For questions or comments, please contact Rachel Longfellow ([RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com))

## New Network Participant Additions

Arkansas Health Network welcomes the following practices to its roster of participants. All new participants are reviewed and approved by the AHN Board of Managers.

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| ◇ Arkansas Neuropsychology & Behavioral Health<br><i>Behavioral Health, Sherwood, 501-537-1388</i>   | ◇ The Pointe Outpatient Behavioral Health Services<br>(affiliate of UHS)<br><i>Behavioral Health Child, Adolescents and Adults,<br/><a href="http://www.thepointebhs.com/">www.thepointebhs.com/</a></i> |
| ◇ Cabot Foot Clinic<br><i>Podiatry, Cabot, 501-941-3797</i>  | ◇ Rivendell Behavioral Health Services, Inc.<br>Inpatient and Outpatient<br>(affiliate of UHS)<br><i>Behavioral Health Child and Adolescent' Benton, 800-264-5640</i>                                    |
| ◇ Family Allergy and Asthma<br><i>Allergist, Little Rock, 501-227-5210, Conway, 501-227-5210</i>   | ◇ Springwoods Behavioral Health Services<br>(affiliate of UHS)<br><i>Behavioral Health Adolescent and Adults, Fayetteville,<br/>479-973-6000</i>   |
| ◇ Heber Springs Counseling Clinic<br><i>Behavioral Health, Heber Springs 501-365-3022</i>  | ◇ James Thrasher, MD<br><i>Endocrinologist, Little Rock, 501-236-6651</i>  |
| ◇ Joint Effort Physical Therapy<br><i>Physical Therapy, Hot Springs, 501-781-2701</i>  | ◇ Tomorrow's Therapy<br><i>Physical Therapy, Lonsdale 501-922-9933, Hot Springs<br/>Village, 501-204-5095</i>  |
| ◇ Little Rock Endocrinology Services<br><i>Endocrinologist, Little Rock, 501-666-3666</i>  |  |
| ◇ Methodist Behavioral Hospital<br><i>Behavioral Health, <a href="http://www.methodistfamily.org">www.methodistfamily.org</a></i>  |  |
| ◇ Methodist Family Health<br><i>Behavioral Health, IP &amp; OP, <a href="http://www.methodistfamily.org">www.methodistfamily.org</a></i>   |  |
| ◇ Pinnacle Pointe Hospital (affiliate of UHS)<br><i>Behavioral Health Child &amp; Adolescent,<br/><a href="http://www.pinnaclepointehospital.com">www.pinnaclepointehospital.com</a></i> |  |

For questions, please contact: Tiffani Butler ([TButler@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:TButler@stvincenthealth.com)) or Hayden Finley ([HLFinley@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:HLFinley@stvincenthealth.com))

The Value Connection Newsletter is designed and written by Rachel Longfellow, Market Director of Operations, Arkansas Health Network. Please email her ([RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com](mailto:RDLongfellow@stvincenthealth.com)) with feedback, future story ideas, or requests to be added to the distribution list. For more information, please also visit AHN's website— [www.arkansashealthnetwork.com](http://www.arkansashealthnetwork.com) or call 501-552-3547.