



From the Medical Director

This marks the 14th Fall Newsletter from Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. (Virginia Premier), to the providers in the network. For the 14th time, we congratulate you and thank you for the tremendous job that you have done in caring for our members!

Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set/ National Committee for Quality Assurance (HEDIS/ NCQA)

Our HEDIS results and final ratings for NCQA are in for the last review. Virginia Premier is happy to announce that we maintained our NCQA rating. Without you we could not have done it. We appreciate all the assistance that you gave our HEDIS nurses and the cooperation overall. We do have some targeted improvements that we will be calling on you to assist with as we continue our improvement processes.

Pharmacy

Our pharmacy benefits manager, EnvisionRx, has continued to perform in a superior fashion. The Preferred Drug List (PDL) is updated quarterly with additions/deletions, status changes, quantity limits, and prior authorization requirements. The PDL can be found on our website at www.vapremier.com. For questions, please call out Pharmacy team at 804-819-5151.

The “Opioid Epidemic” (as it’s called) has escalated in the United States, and Virginia is no exception. This newsletter contains a very informative article by our Pharmacy team, titled, “Opioid Utilization – Challenges and Programs.” It provides valuable information on how to combat this epidemic.

Disease Management Program

The nurses in our Disease Management program are doing a fantastic job. Please contact them for assistance with diabetes, asthma, COPD, and weight loss for any members dealing with these challenges. They are eager to help out. You can contact the Disease Management team on our website at www.vapremier.com or by calling 804-819-5151.



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Upcoming Holiday Schedule

Thanksgiving - Nov. 24
Christmas - Dec. 25
New Year’s Day - Jan. 1

Case Management/ Care Management/Utilization Management and Review

Virginia Premier and Virginia Premier CompleteCare each have a wonderful group of nurses assisting providers with members requiring complex care and other services. Please contact them for help in caring for our members. This marks the ninth year for our Complex Case Management program and we hope that you have found the assistance very helpful. We welcome your feedback. The Virginia Premier and Virginia Premier CompleteCare Utilization Management team does daily reviews for outpatient services as well as inpatient reviews. If you need advice in any of these areas please call 804-819-5151 to speak to the nurse.

Clinical Practice Guidelines

Please find our Clinical Practice Guidelines on the website at www.vapremier.com in the Provider section under Quality Initiatives. Currently Virginia Premier and Virginia Premier CompleteCare have 14 clinical practice guidelines. The most recent addition – Pain Strategy – was approved this year. Pain management is currently a huge topic. The Virginia Premier and Virginia Premier CompleteCare Committee (which is composed of your peers from across the state) has done an excellent job in discussing and finalizing this guideline.

Please contact your provider service representative for any questions. Look for announcements in the coming days about new programs slated to start in Virginia in the near future.

With warm regards,
 Melvin T. Pinn, Jr., MD, MPH, FAFAP

Introducing Virginia Premier Elite

Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc., is pleased to announce a new health care product for those who receive both Medicare and Medicaid benefits: Virginia Premier Elite (HMO SNP).

A Medicare-approved Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plan, Virginia Premier Elite is an innovative option for anyone in Virginia Premier's service area enrolled in:

- Medicare Parts A, B, and D; and
- Medicaid, either the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Plus (QMB+), or the Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary Plus (SLMB+) program.

In addition to receiving Medicare's standard set of benefits, members of Virginia Premier Elite will have access to dental, vision, hearing, physical therapy services and more. A care manager will help each member access the care and coverage options offered by Medicare, Medicaid, and by Virginia Premier's network of over 10,000 providers. Many of these services, including coverage for various prescription drugs, will come at no cost to the member.

Enrollment starts immediately, and the plan will be active starting January 1. Anyone seeking to enroll can contact Virginia Premier directly at 1-877-739-1370, or through a sales agent. They can also visit us at www.elite.vapremier.com.

Virginia Premier is excited to bring Elite to the Medicare-Medicaid recipients of Virginia: "Together, We Make a Great Team."



Our New MLTSS Program

Virginia Premier is a participating managed care organization (MCO) in the state's Commonwealth Coordinated Care Plus program, focused on the Managed Long Term Services and Support (MLTSS) population. This Medicaid managed care program will begin July 2017, serving 212,750 individuals with complex care needs. Its integrated delivery model includes medical services, behavioral health services and long-term services and supports.

Contracting efforts for MLTSS are ongoing – if you have not been contracted for this program, please reach out to your Provider Services Representative.

Clear Coverage Automates Authorization and Coverage Decisions in Real Time

Using an automated authorization process, Clear Coverage™ helps us collaborate with you, our providers, on coverage decisions in real time. Incorporating InterQual® Criteria and Virginia Premier criteria, Clear Coverage streamlines medical review, benefit, and eligibility verification, allowing for provider transparency and improved partnership.

Easily accessed through our provider web portal at www.vapremier.com, use Clear Coverage for durable medical equipment, home care, therapy, and outpatient authorizations. As of 2016, emergent inpatient authorizations are now available.

For more information, please contact your Provider Services representative.

Important Reminder to all Clear Coverage Users

Please remember to attach the clinical documents with all authorization requests that are not auto-approved and pend for medical review when you submit an authorization using Clear Coverage.

Additionally, you must add the contact name and phone number of the requester in the comments section. Doing so will allow for quicker follow-up if we need more information.



Compliance Concerns

The Virginia Premier Compliance Help Line

Your integrity matters. Virginia Premier maintains a confidential help line at 1-800-620-1438 where you can report any compliance concern. This call is toll-free, anonymous and available 24/7, every day of the year. Bilingual representatives are available if needed.

To report directly to the health plan, call 1-800-727-7536, ext. 55173 or ext. 55011. You can also submit a report online at the link for Compliance Concern Reporting on the Program Integrity page at our website, www.vapremier.com.

Billing a Member

Please remember that providers are prohibited from billing a member for covered services, regardless of whether the provider was paid in full, partially or not at all for the services. Please also keep in mind that a Medicaid member cannot be billed for missing an appointment.

Finance Corner

Reminder for Year End

Changes to your tax identification number, address, Medicaid provider number, legal business name or any other contractual changes require that an updated W-9 be sent along with your changes to the Contracting Department. Doing this can avoid possible IRS regulated fines and/or withholdings from your claim, capitation and/or management fee payments. In addition, any changes made without a W-9 attached will delay your payments.

If you notice that the name on your check is not the name that matches your tax ID name submitted to the IRS, please contact our Contracting team promptly with the correct information.

Holiday Season Fee-for-Service Payment Schedule

In preparation for the holiday season, the fee-for-service check schedule will alter from the normal Friday pay date. Keep in mind, the Postal Service is usually slower during the holiday season, so there may be a delay in receiving your check.



Holiday	Payment Schedule
Thanksgiving	Issued on Friday, November 25, 2016.
Christmas	Issued on Thursday, December 22, 2016.
New Year's	Issued on Friday, December 30, 2016.

1099's

If your total dollar payment for Calendar Year 2016 is more than \$600, you should receive a 1099 by January 31, 2017. If you have not received your 1099 by February 14, 2017, please contact the Claims Payment Technician in the Finance Department.

EFT Payments

We encourage payees to select the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) payment method. It will ensure that you will always get paid directly into your bank account on the actual payment date, with no postal delays. If you would like to be set up for EFT payments, please go to the Virginia Premier website and download the EFT set-up form and follow the instructions included.

For the **Virginia Premier CompleteCare** line of business, you must register with our payment processing partner, PaySpan, to receive payments and remittances electronically. To register, visit www.payspanhealth.com. You will need a registration code, PIN, and your bank routing and account numbers. If you do not know your registration code or PIN, contact PaySpan Provider Services at 877-331-7154, Option 1, 8:00 am – 8:00 pm ET, or send an email to providersupport@payspanhealth.com.

What Can Virginia Premier's Website Do for You?

Authorization Updates

Virginia Premier values the quality care that our physicians and practitioners give to our members. To support them in their work, we've streamlined the way authorization requests are coordinated by the Utilization Management team (using InterQual© criteria).

We've done this by adding a No Prior Authorization Tool (NPA) to our website at www.vapremier.com. To find it from the main menu, just select Providers, Medicaid, and Utilization Management. Then, click the link for "Medicaid NPA Search Tool."

There are two options for conducting the search: CPT code or Procedure Name. As you begin to type the first two plus characters (numeric or alphabetic), a drop-down list will show the coding information.

If you have any questions regarding authorizations or the NPA list, please contact our Utilization Management team at 1-800-727-7536, option 3.

Provider Member Panels

Virginia Premier now offers a web portal for primary care providers (PCPs) at www.vapremier.com. With it, PCPs can access a Member List of all patients paneled to that provider. This listing should be reviewed at least monthly by your office staff. This listing does not necessarily reflect eligibility, so continue to check eligibility through the portal. Please refer to these resources before providing services or referring members to specialists.

If there are any questions regarding the Member Panels or use of the Provider Portal, please contact the Provider Services Department at 1-800-727-7536.

Pharmacy Takeaways

1. Identify and reduce poly-pharmacy and doctor-shopping
2. Individualize outreach to a large population
3. Continually improve quality of care

Pharmacy Team

The Complex Care Pharmacy Team works together to identify and correct potential health risks in our members who utilize eight or more prescriptions in a 34-day period. Some of these risks include:

- Lack of adherence (filling prescriptions) and compliance (taking medications)
- Diabetics not receiving testing supplies
- Duplicate Drug Therapy, where someone receives any of the following from multiple prescribers:
 - Behavioral Health Medications



- Inhalers
- Controlled Substances

There are two Patient Safety Programs monitored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

- Overutilization Monitoring System
 - Opioids
 - Sponsor-Identified
- Medication Adherence (Underutilization)
 - Diabetes
 - Hypertension
 - Cholesterol
 - HIV/AIDS

If you have any questions regarding the Pharmacy Team, please contact Crystal May at (804) 819-5151 ext. 55077.

The Pharmacy Team works closely with Care Management and IMPACT Team to increase quality of care for our members.

Cultural Competency

It's important for providers to see each patient as a unique person, showing them respect and understanding so that patient and provider can find common ground when it comes to setting treatment plans.

Cultural competency plays an important role in this. Providers should keep the following in mind in order to effectively serve patients and families who are from other cultures.

- Learn more about a patient's culture by seeing how their family members interact. Finding out how a family copes with crises can be helpful in developing treatment options or discharge plans.
- Find out how long the family has been here. The less time they have been in the U.S., the more influence their native culture has.
- Some behaviors are rooted in specific cultures. For example:
 - a culture may require same-gender health care providers
 - avoiding eye contact might be a sign of respect, and shouldn't be taken as indifference
- Ask the patient if there is something you don't understand about their culture.
- Keep a list of trained medical interpreters. Unless necessary, don't let family members act as interpreters. Family members may not be objective, and patients may be uncomfortable discussing certain things with family present.
- Note cultural differences that may affect care. For instance, in cultures where women are not allowed to make decisions, a mother may be unwilling to sign a consent form for their child.
- Provide resources and training to your staff on awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences. Search the

Internet for information on cultural competency and cultural diversity. Libraries and book stores are also a good resource.

- Be careful about stereotypes. Don't assume that everyone from a certain country is alike. Culture and beliefs vary widely in the U.S.; the same is true of other countries.

We now offer a Cultural Competency Quiz for providers. Just contact Virginia Premier's Quality team at 1-800-727-7536 and we will send it to you.

Pharmacy News: Opioid Utilization — Challenges and Programs

As detailed in the Summer 2016 newsletter, legislation is now in force requiring that prescribers check Virginia's Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) for every opioid prescription written for more than 14 days. Other safeguards against the abuse of prescription drugs have also been introduced this year. We encourage you to review the Summer 2016 newsletter to review the new rules and initiatives.

CDC Opioid Guidelines developed in March of 2016

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain (Guideline) for primary care clinicians treating adult patients for chronic pain in outpatient settings. You can find it online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>.

The Guideline is not intended for patients who are in active cancer treatment, palliative care, or end-of-life care. The Guideline was developed to:

- Improve communication between clinicians and patients about the benefits and risks of opioids
- Provide safer, more effective care for patients with chronic pain
- Help reduce opioid use disorder and overdose

CDC Recommendations

Below is a summary of the Guideline, along with further details and actions taken by Virginia Premier to address these concerns:

1. OPIOIDS ARE NOT FIRST-LINE THERAPY

Virginia Premier expanded the formulary to include other alternatives for use without a prior authorization:

- Lidocaine Patches (Quantity Limit applies)
- Capsaicin Topical Gel
- Gabapentin and Lyrica (step-1st line Gabapentin and Duloxetine or Amitriptyline)
- SNRIs including Duloxetine
- NSAIDs (oral and topical)
- Muscle Relaxant (Baclofen)
- Tricyclic Antidepressants (i.e. Amitriptyline)

2. ESTABLISH GOALS FOR PAIN AND FUNCTION**3. DISCUSS RISKS AND BENEFITS****4. USE IMMEDIATE-RELEASE OPIOIDS WHEN STARTING****5. USE THE LOWEST EFFECTIVE DOSE**

(50MME/day avoid >90MME/day) MED/MME-Morphine Equivalent Dose/Morphine Milligram Equivalent. The amount of morphine an opioid dose is equal to when prescribed, often used as a gauge of the abuse and overdose potential of the amount of opioid that is being given at a particular time. <http://opioidcalculator.practical-painmanagement.com/index.php>

6. PRESCRIBE IN SHORT DURATIONS FOR ACUTE PAIN**7. EVALUATE BENEFITS AND HARMS FREQUENTLY**

Every three months (i.e., quarterly) is suggested.

8. USE STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE RISK

Virginia Premier added NARCAN (Naloxone spray) for use without a prior authorization.

9. REVIEW PMP DATA AND PMP LEGISLATIVE CHANGES**10. USE URINE DRUG TESTING AT LEAST ANNUALLY****11. AVOID PRESCRIBING OPIOID AND BENZODIAZEPINE CONCURRENTLY**

From the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), August 31, 2016: "Health care professionals should limit prescribing opioid pain medicines with benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants only to patients for whom alternative treatment options are inadequate. If these medicines are prescribed together, limit the dosages and duration of each drug to the minimum possible while achieving the desired clinical effect. Warn patients and caregivers about the risks of slowed or difficult breathing and/or sedation, and the associated signs and symptoms. Avoid prescribing prescription opioid cough medicines for patients taking benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants, including alcohol." (<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm518473.htm>)

12. OFFER TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER

The Add Recictionovery Treatment Service (ARTS) program for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is being expanded for Medicaid and FAMIS members effective April 1, 2017.

13. MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT (MAT)

2016 QI Program, Goals, and Updates

Virginia Premier Health Plan's Quality Program (QP) measures and evaluates the care and services given to members so that we can improve the overall quality of care while keeping it affordable.

We also work to improve the areas where our members live by supporting public health initiatives. Virginia Premier uses a quality improvement (QI) process that identifies factors that may impact our members, so that we can put programs in place to address them. Member satisfaction surveys provide us with feedback on how to improve our services.

Learn more about the program's objectives and goals [here](#).



2016 Provider Education Meeting Schedule

Then attend one of Virginia Premier's quarterly Provider Education Meetings that are held in our service areas. Virginia Premier supports our providers and wants to keep you informed about policy changes and other updates. These meetings give providers and their staff a chance to discuss concerns, ideas, common issues, and to give suggestions with Virginia Premier staff while also receiving the latest news and updates.

Remaining 2016 Provider Education Meetings:

Region	Date	Time	Location
Central	November (exact date TDB)	11am - 1pm	Please contact Taylor Fink at taylor.fink@vapremier.com for details
Western	October 21, 2016	TBD	The Conference Center at Winchester Medical Center 1840 Amherst Street Winchester, VA
Tidewater	November 2, 2016	TBD	Newport News Public Library 110 Main Street Newport News, VA
Southwest	October 20, 2016	TBD	Francis Marion Hotel 387 King Street Charleston, SC

Contact Us

Virginia Premier 1-800-727-7536 (Member Services press 1, Transportation press 2)
Envision Rx Options 855-872-0005 | VSP 1-800-877-7195 / 1-800-852-7600
Smiles for Children 1-888-912-3456 | AT&T Language Line 1-800-774-4344
TTY (Text Service) 1-800-828-1120 | TDD (Voice Service) 2-800-828-1140
McKesson Nurse-line 2-800-256-1982 | Managed Care Helpline 1-800-643-2273
FAMIS Central Processing Unit (CPU) 1-866-873-2647 | Compliance Helpline 1-800-620-1438

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