

BLUE IMPRESSIONS

News for You



Noteworthy Stories

- [Dr. Lerner's Retirement](#)

Did You Know?

- [CareFirst Medicare Advantage PPO Network Update](#)
- [Treat Your Patients to Free Readers from CareFirst](#)

Working With CareFirst

- [Remember to Ask Your Patients for Their New Member ID Cards](#)
- [Important Reminders](#)
- [Steps Your Office Can Take to Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse \(FWA\)](#)
- [Looking for Support? Check Out Our Dental Self-Service Resources](#)
- [Updates to the Dental Provider Manual](#)
- [Holiday Closings](#)

Clinical Corner

- [2025 CDT Code Changes and Fee Schedules](#)
- [Coverage for Oral Appliances Used to Treat Obstructive Sleep Apnea](#)

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- [Medical Provider Newsletter](#)

Noteworthy Stories

Dr. Lerner's Retirement

Please join us in wishing Cheryl Lerner well in the next phase of her career: retirement! Dr. Lerner (AKA "Dr. L.") joined CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) in the fall of 2018. Since then, Dr. L. has revitalized the Dental Clinical area and established an ever-increasing footprint within the sales, product and network teams. She's also worked tirelessly to document and update CareFirst's dental policies, ensuring knowledge is made available to both internal and external customers.

We'll miss her enthusiasm and passion for all things dental, as well as her belief that everyone can become a dentist with enough info. Dr. L. will certainly enjoy retirement—you might even see her on the 2026 USA Olympic Pickleball Team! Happy trails, Dr. L!

[Back to top](#)

Did You Know?

CareFirst Medicare Advantage PPO Network Update

CareFirst Medicare Advantage PPO network providers play an important role in the health and well-being of our Medicare Advantage members. We shared some important reminders to help providers and members alike prepare for 2025.

We hosted two live webinars in January to discuss the MA PPO products. In case you missed it, you can find it in our [Webinar Library](#) at the [Learning and Engagement Center](#). You can also access the recording [here](#).

Have a suggestion for a webinar or learning resource? Contact the Provider Education Team at learning@carefirst.com.

[Back to top](#)

Treat Your Patients to Free Readers from CareFirst

As one of our valued network providers, we'd like to provide a little perk for your patients. CareFirst is offering free sets of reading glasses you can give away at your reception desk. They come in a range of popular strengths and fold in half to easily stash in a pocket or purse.

If you're interested in receiving free readers for your office, reach out to your representative.

[Back to top](#)

Working With CareFirst

Remember to Ask Your Patients for Their New Member ID Cards

2025 has arrived. That could mean new insurance cards for your patients. Your patients' member ID card identifies them as a CareFirst member and gives you important information about their covered

benefits. Make sure to ask your patients for the newest version of their ID cards when providing services.

If a patient does not have their physical card, they can obtain a copy either by logging into My Account on carefirst.com or using the CareFirst My Account app. Your office can also access your patients' newest member ID cards on CareFirst Direct by finding the downloadable PDF on your patient's Eligibility Summary page.

[Back to top](#)

Important Reminders

Recredentialing

In compliance with state regulations and accrediting bodies, CareFirst requires all practitioners to complete our recredentialing process every three years.

CareFirst's recredentialing vendor will contact you six months prior to your due date. The vendor will instruct you on how to submit your paperwork and complete the process. By doing so, you are ensuring CareFirst has the most up-to-date information for your practice.

We appreciate your cooperation. If you have questions, we encourage you to contact the Dental Provider Networks and Credentialing Team at 443-921-0676 or dentalcontracting@carefirst.com.

Availability and Appointment Times

When scheduling your patients' appointments, it's important to remember that—as a participating provider—there are guidelines to your availability and access to appointments:

- Urgent Dental Care: 3 calendar days
- Routine Dental Services: 45 calendar days
- Non-Urgent Specialty Care: 60 calendar days

Adding a New Provider to Your Practice

Practitioners can go directly to the CAQH Provider Data Portal (formerly CAQH ProView) and complete the credentialing application online. Make sure to include the new practice affiliation information.

Once you're done, go to <https://provider.carefirst.com/providers/home.page>, hover over **Join Our Networks**, and under **Dental**, click **How to Apply**. Complete and fax the CAQH Dental Provider Datasheet and Billing Authorization Form to CareFirst at 410-720-5080 or email it to dentalcontracting@carefirst.com.

CareFirst will receive your updated information electronically and begin the process of adding your new practitioner. You'll receive written notification of the practitioner's acceptance, provider number and effective date of participation.

[Back to top](#)

Steps Your Office Can Take to Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA)

Providers play an important role in helping identify and combat fraud, waste and abuse.

Fraud is the act of willfully defrauding or attempting to defraud any healthcare program. It also includes attempting to obtain money or property owned or controlled by a healthcare program under

false pretenses.

Waste is the expenditure, consumption, mismanagement or misuse of resources, processes, systems or controls. It's generally not considered to be deliberate.

Abuse includes actions that may result in unnecessary costs, improper payment, payment for services that fail to meet standards of care, or services that are medically unnecessary, without knowingly and/or intentionally misrepresenting facts to obtain payment.

Anyone can commit FWA. CareFirst and your practice can work together to ensure that we properly use the resources our members and patients share with us.

Steps You Can Take

- Review your Notices of Payment (or ERA-835s, if you have elected to receive electronic remittance) to ensure accurate dates of service, services rendered, treating dentists and charges were reported.
- Protect the privacy of your patients' member identification cards and ask for most recent copies upon each visit. Request photo IDs for new patients to ensure their names match the member ID card.
- Conduct effective training and education for your staff.
- Establish auditing and monitoring procedures and develop effective lines of communication within your practice and with CareFirst.
- Report suspected fraud, waste or abuse as soon as possible.
- Create detailed progress notes with your initials and date at each visit. Keep track of any phone calls, emails or text messages with the patient.

[Back to top](#)

Looking for Support? Check Out Our Dental Self-Service Resources

Three years ago, the CareFirst Provider Education Team redesigned the on-demand learning and resources page available to you on our Provider page. The Learning and Engagement Center—www.carefirst.com/learning—includes a dental course suite under **On Demand Resources**.

Courses available to you include, but are not limited to:

- Course: [CareFirst Direct for Dental Providers](#)
- Course: [Submitting Claims for Dental Providers](#)
- Course: [Pre-Treatment Estimates](#)
- Course: [Dental Provider Networks](#)
- Guide: [Self-Service Guidelines](#)
- Guide: [EDI Brochure](#)
- Guide: [Reference Guide for Required Attachments](#)
- Policy: [Dental Resource Guide](#)

We hope these resources help make doing business with us easier and more efficient.

[Back to top](#)

Updates to the Dental Provider Manual

CareFirst is committed to making it easy for providers to do business with us, so you can focus on giving your patients the best care. To keep you informed of changes and improvements, we have updated our dental provider manual to include information on the newly launched Medicare Advantage (MA PPO) plans for individual members. Follow *BlueImpressions* for updates to the manual throughout the year.

[Back to top](#)

Holiday Closings

CareFirst, CareFirst BlueChoice and The Dental Network will be closed on the following dates:

- Monday, May 26—Memorial Day
- Thursday, June 19—Juneteenth

You should expect to see higher-than-normal wait times the day after a holiday. We encourage you to use our self-service tools, CareFirst Direct and [CareFirst On Call](#), for claim status, eligibility and benefits.

[Back to top](#)

Clinical Corner

2025 CDT Code Changes and Fee Schedules

In December, we provided a list of the new CDT Code changes for 2025. You can review them [here](#). The coverable procedures have been added to our CareFirst Dental fee schedules, which you can access online on our [Provider Portal](#).

For more information on navigating to your fee schedules in CareFirst Direct, please see the following online training resource: [Fee Schedules in CareFirst Direct](#).

[Back to top](#)

Coverage for Oral Appliances Used to Treat Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Dentists who have received training in sleep dental medicine can fabricate custom intraoral appliances to treat OSA patients referred to them by a physician. Producing the appliances is typically covered under a CareFirst medical benefit as long as the claim includes the appropriate supporting documentation (as outlined in our Sleep Disorders medical policy ([2.01.018](#))).

(Intra)oral appliance therapy (OAT) is considered medically necessary and appropriate when the conditions described below are met:

Intra-oral prostheses are considered medically necessary for patients with both documented sleep apnea and confirmed intolerance to standard treatments like CPAP. A custom fabricated mandibular advancement oral appliance (E0486) is used to treat obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) when all the following criteria are met.

- *The beneficiary has a sleep test that meets one of the following criteria:*
 - *The apnea-hypopnea index (AHI) or Respiratory Disturbance Index (RDI) is greater than or equal to 15 events per hour; or*
 - *The AHI or RDI is greater than or equal to 5 and less than or equal to 14 events per hour and*

documentation of:

- *daytime sleepiness, impaired cognition, mood disorders, or insomnia; or*
- *excessive hypertension, ischemic heart disease, or history of stroke.*
- *The beneficiary is not able to tolerate a positive airway pressure (PAP) device; or the treating practitioner determines that the use of a PAP device is contraindicated, or patient refuses a PAP device.*
- *The device is ordered by the treating practitioner following a review of the report of the sleep test.*
- *The device is provided and billed for by a licensed dentist (DDS or DMD).*
- *There is absence of temporomandibular dysfunction or periodontal disease.*

Be sure to provide all the required documentation. This includes: sleep study with diagnosis made by physician; a referral to your practice to have an appliance made; notes on which appliance(s) you are fabricating and why; documentation of periodontal and TMJ disease after evaluation; an affidavit as to why the patient is not trying CPAP or that CPAP failed or was not tolerated. If the patient's AHI is less than 15 events/hr, document the clinical rationale for fabricating the appliance.

Submit to the patient's medical insurance. Always send in a pre-treatment/prior authorization even if not required, just to have all the information on hand if requested later. Note: Additional morning appliances are considered part of the primary treatment/service.

[Back to top](#)

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Medical Provider Newsletter

Check out our *BlueLink* medical newsletter that publishes every two months on our [Provider website](#). From the [newsletter page](#), select *BlueLink* from the menu on the left to display links to the publications.