

Administrative Update: New Guidelines for Provider Self-Services

Providers and payers alike face challenges to keep high costs from limiting access to care. One way to accomplish this is to provide simple channels for you to get answers quickly, responsively and reliably to communicate questions relating to subscriber coverage and payment information.

With that in mind, CareFirst is announcing a new initiative to encourage greater use of self-service channels. Enhancements to our provider portal (CareFirst Direct), voice response system (FirstLine and/or BlueLine), and expanded capabilities through our clearinghouse partners make it easier than ever for you to conduct business electronically with CareFirst.

This initiative has two objectives: improving our service and your access to it by offering multiple self-service channels with extended hours of availability; and allowing our call center to better focus on your complex issues and inquiries. The more routine matters, such as eligibility, benefit or claims status information that can be handled through self-service channels, help free up resources to telephonically address matters requiring special handling.

Effective April 1, we expect providers to use self-service channels to obtain eligibility, benefits or claims status information. Today, more than 50 percent of all telephone inquiries to customer service are for such inquiries – inquiries that can be quickly and reliably addressed online through CareFirst Direct and over the web through clearinghouse channels. We are moving our support for these simple, direct and factual queries to electronic channels and discouraging calls for these purposes.

What does this mean to you?

When calling our service lines, you will be directed to a self-service channel to more quickly address your inquiry. Queries about the most common causes of calls will be answered in seconds through CareFirst Direct or over the web via a clearinghouse partner.

If you use one of our call centers for these simple inquiries, expect a longer wait than you have in the past since we are redirecting our service staff toward more complex issues and away from simpler, more factual inquiries.

Key Points to Keep in Mind About Provider Self-Services

- You will receive a consistent response regardless of the channel you use for your inquiry
- Telephone service representatives rely on the same data available through self-service channels
- Electronic responses save your staff time
- All electronic transactions have an audit trail and can be printed and saved for your records in connection with future inquiries or disputes
- Your billing service or agent, as your representative, should be made aware of and encouraged to use self-service channels

- Our clearinghouse partners -- AllScripts, Emdeon, RelayHealth and RealMed – have in recent years added new and enhanced capabilities that can improve efficiency.
 - AllScripts – capabilities include claims submissions, ERA, eligibility information, and coming soon claims status and EFT. You can call AllScripts (formerly known as Payerpath) at 877-623-5706, ext.2.
 - Emdeon – capabilities include claims submissions, ERA, eligibility information, and coming soon claims status and EFT. You can call Emdeon (formerly known as Webmd) at 866-369-8805.
 - RealMed – capabilities include claims submission, electronic remittance advices (ERA), eligibility information, claims status information and electronic funds transfer (EFT). You can call RealMed at 877-927-8000, ext. 1201, to inquire about engaging their services.
 - RelayHealth - capabilities include claims submissions, ERA, eligibility information, and coming soon claims status and EFT. You can call RelayHealth at 800-527-8133, option 2.
- Our Provider Relations team is ready to train your staff and webinars are available at your convenience to enhance your ability to use self-service tools. To register, visit www.carefirst.com/cpet or call the Provider Seminar Registration line at 877-269-2219.

Getting Started with Online Self-Services

- If you are not a registered user, visit carefirst.com>Provider & Physicians
- Under “Log in to Provider Portal”, select *Register Now* and follow the prompts
- If you are a registered user but perhaps need a refresher, Select the *Your Profile* tab
- *Your Profile* offers a two minute training tutorial to learn more about user management, resetting passwords, and gaining access and more
- Additionally, you can click on *The Center for Provider Education and Training* for access to seminars and webinars
- For better proficiency with our Voice Response Units, visit carefirst.com>Providers & Physicians> Resources>Quick Reference Guides. Select either the *FirstLine* or *BlueLine* Reference Card(s). These documents have helpful hints for you to navigate through the voice response systems.

This strong emphasis on self-service channels has been developed with thorough testing and significant provider feedback. By using them more effectively, you can save time and expense as well as benefit your staff and patients.