New Medicaid Benefits
Children’s Home and Community Based Services

As of October 1, 2019, Affinity Health Plan has covered Children’s Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) for members participating in the Children’s Waiver and provides care management for these services.

These new services give children and their families the ability to improve their quality of life by identifying needs early and providing support in the home or community. Children’s HCBS offer personal, flexible services to meet the needs of each child/youth, where children/youth and their families are most comfortable, and supports them as they work toward individual goals and achievements.

Children’s HCBS are for children and youth who:

• need extra care and support to remain at home/in the community.
• have complex health, developmental and/or behavioral health needs.
• want to avoid going to the hospital or a long-term care facility.
• are eligible for HCBS and participate in the Children’s Waiver.

Continued on page 4
Affinity Launches New VBP Portal

In the first quarter of 2020, Affinity Health Plan will roll out its improved Value Based Payment (VBP) portal called the PopAction Analytics (PAA). Similar to the existing VBP portal, the PAA incorporates claims data and other critical data elements to analyze performance against targets.

Providers can retrieve patient-level actionable data to more efficiently manage patients’ health, benchmark performance against Affinity’s network (actual vs. expected), and quickly visualize referral patterns and associated spend.

Housed in five modules—Improving Risk Score, Care Management, Potentially Preventable Events, Benchmarking, and Reporting — these sections make the following and other reports available in a user friendly interface:

- Chronic Fallout Members (members previously diagnosed as having a chronic illness and whose recent claims do not show that diagnosis.)
- Non-User Members
- Members with Significant Prescriptions
- Members with One Diagnosis Reporting Clinical Risk Group
- Newly Chronic Members
- Chronic Members without Office Visits

The PAA tool helps providers in accomplishing goals such as population health management, improving health outcomes, and increasing reimbursement by highlighting areas of opportunity (e.g., coding, documentation, generic drug alternatives, etc.).

Please contact Adrian Roberts (aroberts@affinityplan.org), Gary Rosario (grosario@affinityplan.org), or Deanna Stewart (dstewart@affinityplan.org) if you have any questions.
**Department of Health Announces Initiative on Overutilization of Lab Services**

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) has announced an initiative to decrease laboratory costs for adults 18 and older in Medicaid managed care. By focusing on non-evidence-based tests and overutilization, NY state aims to reduce the unnecessary laboratory services identified by the American Society of Clinical Pathology’s Choosing Wisely Campaign.

A list of these over-utilized tests can be found at [https://www.choosingwisely.org/clinician-lists/](https://www.choosingwisely.org/clinician-lists/).

Providers should review this list and its recommendations regarding certain laboratory services, as providers’ use of laboratory services will be monitored. **The DOH expects to see a reduction in overutilization.**

Affinity Health Plan appreciates our providers’ cooperation and attention to this new initiative.

---

**DOH Announces Recommended Rapid Initiation of HIV Antiretroviral Therapy**

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the New York State Department of Health (DOH) have announced that the recommended standard of care for HIV treatment in New York includes initiating antiretroviral treatment (ART) on the day of an HIV diagnosis or during the client’s first clinic visit.

The DOH encourages medical facilities to establish policies and procedures to immediately initiate ART in almost all people newly diagnosed with HIV. This recommendation follows New York State Clinical Guidelines and recommendations from the International Antiviral Society (IAS)-USA Panel.

For more information about rapid ART initiation, visit: [https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/aids-hiv-immediate-antiretroviral-therapy.page](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/aids-hiv-immediate-antiretroviral-therapy.page) [http://www.nysria.org/](http://www.nysria.org/)

---

**HIV PrEP Guidelines**

HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is highly effective at preventing HIV among adults and adolescents. The FDA has approved two effective and distinct co-formulated antiviral agents for the prevention of HIV acquisition in adults and adolescents. Affinity Health Plan covers both of these antiviral preparations.

The New York State HIV Clinical Guidelines Program has issued updated clinical guidelines regarding PrEP. The following elements of the updated guidelines will serve to make PrEP easier for individuals to use and easier for clinicians to prescribe and manage.

These updated guidelines are available at [https://www.hivguidelines.org/prep-for-prevention/](https://www.hivguidelines.org/prep-for-prevention/).

New York is currently pursuing a ground-breaking effort to end the AIDS epidemic by the end of 2020. For more about this effort, visit [https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending_the_epidemic/](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending_the_epidemic/).
New Medicaid Benefits
Children’s Home and Community Based Services

Continued from page 1

Members under age 21 will be eligible for the following services:

- community habilitation
- day habilitation
- caregiver/family support and services
- community self-advocacy training and support
- prevocational services (must be age 14 and older)
- supported employment (must be age 14 and older)
- respite services (planned and crisis respite)
- palliative care
- environmental modifications
- vehicle modifications
- adaptive and assistive equipment

Children/youth participating in the Children’s Waiver must receive care management. Care management provides the member with an associate who will procure the services that are right for them.

For more information visit the New York State Department of Health website, www.health.ny.gov.

New Pre-Authorizations Codes

Affinity Health Plan has updated its pre-authorization requirements in response to feedback and concerns from our providers. Some codes have been eliminated (related to allergy diagnosis); others added. Providers should review the newest list, effective January 1, 2020, at https://www.affinityplan.org/Providers/Resources/Pre-Authorization-Codes/Pre-Authorization-Codes/ or on the provider portal home page under Important Updates.

Authorization requirements for Beacon, eviCore, Superior Vision and Dentaquest delegates still go to the respective providers. Pharmacy authorization codes can be found at Affinity’s provider portal. Prior authorization is required for all scheduled inpatient admissions, for using a non-participating provider and for durable medical equipment billed for more than $500.
Affinity Plan’s Medicaid Managed Care now covers medically necessary ovulation enhancing drugs and medical services related to prescribing and monitoring the use of such drugs. This applies to Medicaid members, ages 21 through 44, who are experiencing infertility.

The following ovulation enhancing drugs will be covered for a limit of three cycles of treatment per lifetime:
- bromocriptine
- clomiphene citrate
- letrozole
- tamoxifen

Affinity also will cover services related to prescribing and monitoring the use of such drugs. The infertility benefit includes:
- office visits
- x-ray of the uterus and fallopian tubes
- pelvic ultrasound
- blood testing

Medicaid members may be eligible for infertility services if they meet the following criteria:
- They are 21-34 years old and are unable to get pregnant after 12 months of regular, unprotected sex.
- They are 35-44 years old and are unable to get pregnant after 6 months of regular, unprotected sex.

For more information visit the New York State Department of Health website, [www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov).

**Affinity Health Plan Launches New Provider Portal**

Affinity Health Plan has launched a newly designed provider portal, offering enhanced features and resources to provide you with easier access to information on Affinity’s members across all lines of business.

We’ve updated the design, enhanced navigation and added some useful functions and reports to an already robust portal to ensure that vital information about your patients, our members, is always at your fingertips.

Spend less time on the telephone and find answers to questions about claims, prior authorizations and statuses online. Visit [AffinityPlan.org](http://AffinityPlan.org) and register. (Registered users can use their current log-in.)
Effective February 1, 2020, Affinity Health Plan will be changing its Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetic and Orthotic Supplier (DMEPOS) IPA from ReliaCare to Integra Partners IPA. The Integra Partners network is significantly larger than that of ReliaCare, and as a result most of the DMEPOS providers in our current network will continue to be available to your patients, our members.

Additionally, Affinity will maintain relationships with a limited number of DME providers that offer highly specialized products and services, enabling Affinity to provide the most comprehensive DMEPOS network possible while minimizing service gaps.

To avoid disruption in patient care, Affinity will continue to honor current DME rental agreements based upon authorizations approved prior to February 1, 2020. However, once the authorization expires you will need to refer your Affinity members/patients to a DMEPOS provider within the Integra network or one of the limited specialty providers.

Our online provider directory is available at http://providerlookup.affinityplan.org/ to help you and your patient locate an in-network DMEPOS provider. If you prefer, we can also select a DMEPOS supplier for your patient. You may call our Member Service Department toll free at 877.234.4499, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, if you have questions or need help in finding a new DMEPOS provider. If you use a telephone device for the hearing or speech impaired, you may call 711. You may also contact Integra toll free at 888.729.8818 or via Email at Info@accessintegra.com.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your provider relations representative at ProviderRelations@affinityplan.org.