

Section 7

Practitioner Information

- Primary Care
- The Role of the Primary Care Practitioner
- The Role of the Specialty Care Practitioner
- On-Call Protocol
- Closing Your Practice to New Members
- Practitioner Termination
- Continuity of Care
- Practitioner Information Changes

Primary Care

Neighborhood defines primary care as health care services and laboratory services customarily furnished by or through a credentialed, family practitioner, internal medicine physician, obstetrics/gynecology provider, pediatrician, or nurse practitioner to the extent the furnishing of those services is legally authorized in the State in which the practitioner furnishes them.

The Role of the Primary Care Practitioner

The Primary Care Practitioner (PCP) functions as the central access point for Neighborhood's membership. In choosing to participate with Neighborhood, primary care practitioners have accepted the following responsibilities, also highlighted in the Participating Provider Group (PPG) Agreement:

- Coordinate all care for a Neighborhood member
- Furnish or arrange for the furnishing of covered services for each member and be responsible for the coordination of covered Services to members, including admissions to inpatient facilities, coordination between medical and behavioral health services, in compliance with Neighborhood policies and procedures.
- Establish and maintain medical records for each member that are consistent with current professional standards and medical requirements as set forth in applicable statutes and regulations of the State of Rhode Island.
- Make and maintain necessary and appropriate arrangements to ensure the availability of PCP consultation, at least by telephone, to members on a 24-hour-day, seven days-a-week basis, including arrangements to assure coverage of members after-hours or where the member's PCP is otherwise absent. The covering PCP shall perform such services in the same manner in which the PCP provides services to his/her other patients.
- Establish and maintain written on-call arrangements. Such arrangements shall be forwarded to Neighborhood and shall include, but not be limited to: the practitioner's name, tax identification number; and acceptance of the Neighborhood referral policies and procedures and the fee schedule.
- Maintain an appointment system, the goal of which is to ensure prompt access to medical care on-site. Prompt access is defined as thirty (30) days for routine care and twenty-four (24) hours for urgent medical conditions. For the purpose of this section, routine care shall include care for non-urgent symptomatic conditions and ongoing treatment of a chronic problem, and shall not include office procedures or routine physical exams.
- Be open for operations five (5) days per week per site, with a minimum appointment time of thirty (30) hours per week per site. Exceptions will be considered by Neighborhood's Chief Medical Officer based on the site's availability to provide documented continuity of care and access to services for urgent medical conditions.
- Designate as PCPs, eligible for accepting assignments of Neighborhood members, only those practitioners who are regularly scheduled for at least seventeen and one-half (17.5) hours of appointment time per week.
- Maintain policies and procedures regarding patient education. Patient education shall be an ongoing process which includes but is not limited to: orientation to provider services, self-management of medical problems and disease prevention, presentation of a written patient bill of rights, and assistance in reinforcing Neighborhood member orientation activities.
- PCP shall coordinate, if necessary, medically necessary emergency services on behalf of members as well as educate members on established Neighborhood policies and procedures for obtaining such services.

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- Provide and administer care and services as set forth in the PPG Agreement in accordance with accepted medical practices and professional standards of behavior as set forth by the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, and the laws governing medical practice in the State of Rhode Island, as well as provide and administer care and services with the same standard of care, access, availability, skill and diligence customarily provided to all of his/her patients.
 - Ensure that Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services are provided to all eligible children and young adults up to the age of 21 in accordance with the Rhode Island EPSDT Periodicity Schedule and Neighborhood policies and procedures.*
 - Ensure that all covered services shall be available and shall be provided at such times and places, including the member's home or elsewhere, as necessary and practical as determined by PCP or as recommended by other participating practitioners subject to state regulatory requirements. The PPG shall assure open communication with members regarding medically necessary care or appropriate treatment alternatives, regardless of benefit coverage limitations.
 - Ensure the member's right to consent to or deny the release of identifiable medical or other information, except when such release is not required by law.
 - Ensure the member's right to refuse treatment without jeopardizing future treatment and the member's right to ask for a second opinion in accordance with Neighborhood's policies and procedures.

*Please contact Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-401-459-6020 prompt 3, or go to the Rhode Island Department of Health's website at www.health.ri.gov for a copy of the Rhode Island EPSDT Periodicity Schedule.

The Role of the Specialty Care Practitioner

A specialty care practitioner is defined as a practitioner providing a consultation or ongoing specialty care, which is medically necessary, to a member. Neighborhood has an extensive network of participating (in network) specialty practitioners. Non-participating specialty care practitioners may also consult and/or provide care to Neighborhood members when medically necessary and with prior authorization from Neighborhood's Case Management Program.

The specialty care practitioner is responsible for the provision of covered specialty care services working in collaboration with the member's Primary Care Practitioner (PCP), and shall assure open communication with members regarding medically necessary care or appropriate treatment alternatives, regardless of benefit coverage limitations. The specialty care practitioner is expected to establish and maintain appropriate medical records for each member and to provide appropriate documentation of their findings to the member's PCP within a reasonable timeframe.

On-Call Protocol and Notification

The Primary Care Site is responsible for member care twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week. Primary Care Sites shall arrange for after-hours coverage and accessibility to care outside of the on-site practitioners' availability. During normal business hours, the Primary Care Site directs and manages member care and visits.

After Hours Coverage

Neighborhood will reimburse on-call primary care sites that render services and hands-on treatment to an eligible member in the event that the member's PCP is unavailable. Telephone triage will not be reimbursed by Neighborhood.

On-call practitioners must request an authorization number by contacting Case Management via fax at 1-401-459-6023 within twenty-four hours of rendering service. The authorization request should contain the following information:

- Member's name and ID number
- Date of Birth
- Diagnosis
- Member's Primary Care Site
- Date and time of service
- On-call practitioner name
- Tests performed
- Contact person
- Phone number
- Fax number

Primary Care Sites should notify Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-401-459-6020 or their Provider Services Specialist of their on-call coverage group(s). Primary Care Sites may also complete the On-Call Provider Group Notification Form found in Section 12.

Closing Your Practice to New Members

In order to best meet the needs of his/her current patient population, Neighborhood recognizes that it may be necessary for a Primary Care Practitioner (PCP) or Primary Care Site to temporarily limit the number of Neighborhood members assigned to the PCP/Site by implementing one or more of the following strategies:

- Closing the site to Neighborhood membership with the exception of newborn patients
- Closing the site to Neighborhood membership with the exception of siblings of current patients
- Closing the site to Neighborhood membership entirely.

Notification of the PCP/Site's decision to temporarily close the practice must be forwarded in writing to Neighborhood in advance. When a practitioner notifies Neighborhood in writing that the practice would like to be re-opened to new membership, Neighborhood will reopen the practice as indicated, provided the practice is compliant with the established Access to Care Standards outlined in Section 10. Please contact Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-401-459-6020, or your Provider Services Specialist with questions.

Practitioner Termination

Neighborhood practitioners are contractually obligated to inform Neighborhood sixty (60) days prior to their effective termination date with a participating primary care site, provider group or the Network to ensure coordination of care for their assigned members or members cared for by them. Following are Neighborhood's Policies and Procedures as they relate to the effective termination date of primary care and specialty practitioners, upon notification by the PPG:

Primary Care Practitioners

The provider shall notify Neighborhood members currently under a participating practitioner's care prior to the effective date of termination. Neighborhood shall be responsible for notifying members of the PCP's termination and the process by which those members shall continue to receive the covered services of a PCP.

Specialty Practitioners

The effective termination date for Specialty Practitioners is the date that he/she actually terminated with the respective PPG or the network. Specialty practitioners are responsible for notifying Neighborhood members currently under their care in advance of the date of termination.

Practitioner termination information should be communicated to the Provider Services department by using the Practitioner Termination Notification Form located in Section 12 for your convenience. The Practitioner Termination Notification Form may be faxed to Provider Services 1-401-459-6066 or contact your Provider Service Specialist.

Continuity of Care

Neighborhood recognizes the importance of our members' established relationships with both participating and non-participating practitioners. Neighborhood will, on a case-by-case basis, authorize services to preserve an on-going clinical relationship with a non-participating practitioner or recently terminated practitioner to preserve continuity of care for reasons including but not limited to:

- Neighborhood members currently receiving active treatment for an acute medical condition or an acute episode of a chronic illness,
- Neighborhood members currently in their second or third trimester of pregnancy, and
- Children with special health care needs who are unable to be transitioned to a practitioner with comparable or greater expertise.

Please contact the Medical Management Department at 1-401-459-6060 to request authorization for the provision of services to Neighborhood members that you believe would qualify.

Practitioners who have terminated from the network should complete the "Continuity of Care Request Form" (found in Section 12), and fax it to the Medical Management department at 1-401-459-6023. Authorization may be granted to extend the provision of services until the active treatment is concluded or, if earlier, one (1) year after termination. The Member Hold Harmless provisions of the Neighborhood contract shall continue in effect during the active treatment period.

Practitioner Information Changes

Participating practitioners and provider offices are required to notify Neighborhood of any important changes; including but not limited to changes in office hours, location, phone/fax number, the availability of practitioners, billing information, changes in board certification and/or hospital privileges, etc. Please contact Neighborhood Customer Service at 401-459-6020 or your Provider Services Specialist with this information. The following forms are located in Section 12 of this Provider Manual, and may be used to fax practitioner information changes to Neighborhood's Provider Services Department.

- On-Call Provider Group Notification Form
- New Practitioner Notification Form
- Practitioner Termination Notification Form
- Changes to Billing/Tax Identification Number Notification Form