NORTHBAY™ HEALTHCARE

Utilization Management information for Blue Shield HMO and WHA HMO NorthBay Healthcare Members and Providers.

We would like to make Blue Shield or WHA members with a NorthBay Primary Care Physician, aware of the following information:

NorthBay has a Utilization Management (UM) Department whose primary focus is to ensure that our members receive services that are medically necessary, are delivered at an appropriate level of care, and are provided in a timely manner. The UM Department has licensed staff who review authorization requests for services, including referrals for specialist physician visits, hospital services, diagnostic tests, procedures, and/or durable medical equipment. UM decision-making is based only on the appropriateness of care and service, eligibility at the time of request, and health plan coverage. Members assigned to NorthBay may access the UM policies, procedures, and criteria used to authorize, modify, or deny healthcare services by calling the UM department.

Decisions made in Utilization Management are made based on the most appropriate care required by the patient to diagnose/treat/resolve their medical condition. Under no circumstance will a decision be made that is contrary to the good health and proper treatment of the patient. Under no circumstance will a UM decision maker receive an incentive to make an adverse decision for the purpose of personal gain or for enhancing the profitability of this Medical Group. NorthBay Healthcare recognizes and affirms that all of our decisions regarding Utilization Management are based upon the appropriateness of care and service and the existence of coverage. We also recognize and affirm that NorthBay Healthcare Group does not reward its decision-makers or other individuals conducting utilization review for denials of coverage or service. Additionally, we recognize and affirm that financial incentives for Utilization Management decision-makers do not encourage decisions that result in underutilization.

The UM staff is available from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding major holidays. Our staff is accessible via phone at (707) 646-5012 and fax at (707) 646-5114 for UM information. After hours messages may be left in our department voicemail box, or faxed for review the next business day. Our office assistant and/or analyst may assist you with general questions. Members with specific questions regarding UM decisions will be transferred to the UM registered nurse case manager. Copies of the UM criteria used are available upon request.

For those members who have inquiries about UM services or specific patient cases and have difficulty making a toll telephone call, the following toll-free number is available: (888) 294-3600. Please ask for the UM Department when calling. Additionally, UM will accept collect calls from members, when necessary, regarding UM questions or decisions. When a Utilization Management staff member initiates or returns a phone call to you, he or she will identify himself/herself by name, title, and organization. We strive to provide quality and timely service to all our members. Should you have questions regarding NorthBay's Utilization Management services, please contact us at (707) 646-5012.