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<http://jfs.ohio.gov>

TO: Fee-for-Service Health Care Providers

FROM: Jon Barley, Ph.D., Chief, Bureau of Managed Health Care

DATE: August 22, 2005

SUBJECT: Mandatory Medicaid Managed Care Enrollment in Mahoning County

This is to inform you that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), as part of its expansion of the Medicaid managed care program, is entering into a provider agreement with CareSource and Gateway Health Plan to provide Medicaid-covered services to Covered Families and Children (CFC) Medicaid consumers in Mahoning County. The entry of these plans into the Mahoning County market in September 2005 means that consumers will now have the choice of two managed care plans (MCPs) in which to enroll: CareSource and Gateway Health Plan. ODJFS is working with a third plan, Unison Health Plan of Ohio, who is also interested in serving Mahoning County. Should Unison be approved, ODJFS will notify you.

With the entrance of these two MCPs, ODJFS will transition Mahoning County to mandatory enrollment status. This means that beginning in September 2005, CFC consumers (also referred to as Healthy Start, Healthy Families) who are not enrolled in an MCP will receive official notice that they must soon choose an MCP for themselves and eligible family members. Those who do not choose a plan will be assigned to one.

Consumers who make a choice of an MCP in September 2005 may be enrolled in the MCP as early as October 1, 2005. Almost all CFC consumers will be enrolled in an MCP effective November 1, 2005. Therefore you will need to be contracted with CareSource or Gateway Health Plan in order to receive reimbursement for providing services to CFC consumers enrolled in one of these MCPs. For additional information, Medicaid providers may contact the MCPs directly:

CareSource	937-531-2119	Nicole Beadle
Gateway Health Plan	412-255-1303	Rachel Wiehagen

Letters and a county-specific consumer guide will soon be mailed to CFC consumers in Mahoning County. The letter informs consumers about mandatory MCP enrollment and explains that they will soon need to choose an MCP. The guide provides basic information about the MCPs available and some helpful hints in choosing an MCP.

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Consumers may contact the State's Selection Services Center (SSC) at 1-800-605-3040 (TTY 1-800-292-3572) to receive additional information and assistance in making a choice. If one of your patients is interested in learning more about choosing an MCP they may call the SSC after September 1, 2005.

New members will receive a member handbook, provider directory and an MCP member identification card in place of their monthly Medicaid card. To verify a patient's enrollment in an MCP you may contact the Ohio Medicaid Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) at 1-800-686-1516.

Please be aware that at this time mandatory enrollment only affects CFC consumers. Mandatory enrollment does **not** affect consumers who are eligible for Medicaid because they are Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD), nor does it affect consumers who are covered under both the Medicaid and Medicare programs or who receive Medicaid services through a home and community based waiver. In addition, MCP membership is not required for children under nineteen years of age who are: eligible for Social Security Income (SSI); receiving adoption assistance, in foster care, or removed from the parent or guardian's home due to a legal change in custody; or receiving services through the Ohio Department of Health's Bureau for Children with Medical Handicaps (BCMHC).

Medicaid provides health services through both a fee-for-service system and contractual agreements with MCPs. Contracting with an MCP does not in any way preclude providers from continuing to participate in the Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS) program and treating patients who continue to receive health benefits through Medicaid FFS. As always, providers should verify a patient's eligibility for Medicaid services upon every visit. Whether patient coverage is under the Medicaid FFS program in which consumers receive a monthly Medicaid card, or through a participating MCP in which members have an MCP member card, verification of eligibility is a helpful step taken to avoid problems associated with billing the incorrect payer.

Please be aware that MCP providers must meet MCP-specific contracting and credentialing requirements; however, MCPs are not required to contract with all FFS providers.

For additional information about the Medicaid managed care program please visit our web site at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ohp> and select "Managed Care" under the Consumers, Providers, or Reports buttons. The web site is currently being upgraded in order to make it easier for providers to navigate and locate information quickly. In addition, you may wish to check the web site periodically for updates regarding the managed care program in general, and Mahoning County in particular.

Should you have any further questions regarding Medicaid managed care enrollment in Mahoning County, please contact Chris Heldman at (614) 466-4693.

cc: BMHC