



Maine ASO
Behavioral Health Services
Utilization Review Program



Healthy Together

Member Newsletter

April 2008 • Volume 1 • Issue 1

What is APS Healthcare?

APS Healthcare was hired by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to look at the use of some of the mental health and substance use services in Maine. We started December 1, 2007. We only look at and approve services that are paid for by MaineCare. We are called an Administrative Services Organization (ASO). This means we are paid to manage the services. We do not provide any services like a mental health agency. We get paid a flat rate. We do not get paid more or less if we approve a lot of service or a little.

This is how the process works. You and a provider agree on how that provider can best help you, your child or your family member. You both agree on a treatment plan. The provider sends this clinical information to APS Healthcare. This is called a “review”. It should be the same information that is on the treatment plan you or your family member make with the provider.

APS Healthcare will look at the information from the provider. We look at it based on guidelines called Level of Care criteria. These guidelines, along with diagnosis, strengths, supports, and treatment plan, are what we use to make a decision to

approve the provider’s request.

If the service asked for by the provider based on the clinical information is the **RIGHT** care for you or your family member, at the **RIGHT** time, in the **RIGHT** place, then APS Healthcare will “authorize”, or OK the request. When we give the OK, we give the provider a number to bill MaineCare for the service. **MOST** services are approved just as requested.

Your provider can keep asking to continue services **AS LONG AS NEEDED**. Every authorization, or OK, that we give has a time limit. As an example, the provider may get the OK to provide case management services for 6 months. At the end of 6 months, the provider just needs to let us know and give us more information, just like they did last time. We are interested in knowing how you, your child, or your family member are doing, and how the treatment is helping you, your child or family member.

Our goal is to promote each member’s recovery, resiliency, and ability to live in the community of his or her choice. It is also to improve the quality of mental health and substance use services in Maine.



Some Thoughts from the Executive Director:

Eric Meyer



APS Health-care began its work in Maine on December 1, 2007 - just a few short months ago. In this brief time, a huge amount has been accomplished. Members, providers, DHHS staff and APS Healthcare staff have joined together to start Maine's first statewide system to manage and improve treatment for Maine-Care members. We at APS Healthcare are honored that DHHS selected us to lead this program. We are also deeply appreciative of the hard work and partnership shown by all members and providers.

As of this month, providers have submitted over 120,000 requests for services to APS Healthcare. Every provider in the state is enrolled in the Maine Behavioral Health ASO system, and over 99% of providers are using the online review system, APS CareConnection®. The Provider and Member Advisory Councils have had their first meetings and both have exciting plans for ongoing work.

The APS Maine team is now almost fully staffed. We have a few other positions yet to fill, but are close to our final team size of 37. I am very proud of the entire team and the excellent work they do.

If you have ANY questions about what we do, please call APS Healthcare Member Services at 1-866-521-0027 (TTY/TDD) 207-239-3252.

A key aspect of this ASO Program is the ability to use data to drive system improvements. The reason data is so important is that it will aid providers in helping members more effectively. APS Healthcare and DHHS have started to look at the data reports. The Provider and Member Advisory Councils will also look at what the data shows to give APS Healthcare ideas about how we can do things better. Eventually we plan for our data to be available to you via the Web.

Thank you for joining with us in this work. We look forward to our continuing partnership.





Who is APS Healthcare Member Services?

Member Liaison: Simonne Maline

Hi there! I want to introduce myself as your Member Liaison here at APS Healthcare. I am very excited to be here. For those who do not know me, I have been a consumer and provider for many years. I believe the experiences of being on “both sides” have given me a wonderful perspective of the mental health community here in Maine. My personal mental health experience has included a wide variety of services. My own recovery process has been incredibly hard at times and sometimes now what I call a gift. I know that if it had not been for my difficulties I might have walked around the world, not dealing with “my stuff”. Because I choose to be very active in my own recovery process, I now am truly aware of who I am.

You can:

- Ask me to visit your group or agency to learn more about APS Healthcare and how we can work together;
- Call me if you have a question or concern about APS Healthcare;
- Call me to ask about a letter you received from APS Healthcare

I want you to feel free to contact me if there are any questions or concerns. I am here to help!

Until recently, I was the Peer Services Director for Amistad in Portland, which includes the Maine Warm Line and the Emergency Room peer support program at Maine Medical Center. Maine is doing some nationally recognized and amazing work in the field of peer support and I have been privileged to be so involved! I was also the chair of the State-wide Consumer Council. I have also been part of many wonderful provider agencies. I was a case manager for Support and Recovery Services. I worked at the Ingraham Crisis Unit, and at 774-HELP. I have also done residential work for several agencies.

In my new role as Member Liaison, I do many things with APS Healthcare. I work with the APS Healthcare staff to look at paperwork and the way we do things to make sure they are clear and promote recovery focused services. I also go to meetings with providers, groups and the Department of Health and Human Services. I also work with the APS Healthcare Member Advisory Council.





Who is APS Healthcare Member Services?

Member Services Representative: Alexis Lyon

My name is Alexis Lyon. I am the Member Services Representative for APS Healthcare. I used to work with members in a Peer Support and Recovery Center. Some of you may also have met me at one of the statewide meetings we had in February to tell members about APS Healthcare.

A big part of my job is to answer your questions when you call APS Healthcare. Your questions might be about something your provider told you, or about something you heard about APS Healthcare. Or, your question might be about a letter you got from us. I hope you will call me at 207-239-3223 or 1-866-521-0027, ext. 4923 if you have any questions.



I also go to meetings, conferences, groups and agencies to tell members all about APS Healthcare. I make sure that the printed information for members, such as this newsletter, the Member Handbook, and any other forms you may see is clear and correct.

Your providers are learning how to work with APS Healthcare too. For the past few months I have been talking to providers all over the state of Maine. I answer their questions about working with us. I help solve any problems they may have, and find solutions to make the process run more smoothly. In this way, I am making sure that your providers know what they need to do to give you the right care, at the right time, in the right place, and for the right length of time.

I look forward to talking with you!




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APS Healthcare Member Advisory Council

What does the APS Healthcare Member Advisory Council do?

- Look at APS Healthcare paperwork, like newsletters and manuals, to see if they are clear and easy to read.
- Advise APS Healthcare on ways to improve the quality of what we do.
- Provide feedback about how APS Healthcare is operating and suggest training opportunities.

Who is on the Member Advisory Council?

Members may be:

- ⇒ Adults who use mental health or substance abuse services paid for by MaineCare. (This can include those who used the services in the past 2 years)
- ⇒ A youth who uses mental health services paid for by MaineCare
- ⇒ Parents or guardians of children who use MaineCare mental health services. (This can include people who had MaineCare in the last 2 years).

The Member Advisory Council may decide to have other stakeholders (like an advocacy group or human services agency) join.

How can I find out more about the Council?

Minutes from the meetings are posted on our website, www.qualitycareforme.com . You can read all about what we are talking about and working on.

Contact the APS Healthcare Member Liaison Simonne Maline, by email (smaline@apshealthcare.com) or phone (1-866-521-0027, ext. 4915).

Who is on the Council now?

The following is a list of people who have volunteered to be on the Council. We are very appreciative of their time and hard work:

Jeff Crane
Stephanie Crystal
Karen Evans
Paula Greenleaf
Ronnie Lowell
Eric McVay
Tammy Swasey-Ballou



MYTHBUSTERS:

This is where we hope to talk about the stuff YOU are hearing in your community about APS Healthcare

“I heard that APS Healthcare is going to say “Yes” to all services in the first year, and wait until year two for cuts in services”.

We want to look at whether the care your agency is providing is the right care. That starts now. If your provider gives us information where it looks like they should be providing MORE care, we will let them know that. If we recommend something LESS than what they would like to provide, many times your provider would have to talk with you about that change first. If APS Healthcare approves only part of your provider’s request, you will receive a letter. The important thing is to have ongoing talks with your provider about what is right for you, your child, or family member. Our purpose is not to cut services – it is to make sure those services will promote recovery and resiliency for every member.

“My provider told me I only had 30 days of service, and something about units, and that I can’t have any more, because that is all they got from APS”.



Let’s look at an example. Your provider tells us they would like to provide you, your child, or your family member with mental health or substance use services. After looking at the clinical information they give us, we give the OK to see you, your child, or your family member once a week for 6 months.

At the end of 6 months, you and the provider decide that service is still needed. Your provider gives APS Healthcare more clinical information – information on how you are reaching your goals with the help of the service they are providing. This should be the same information that is on the treatment plan. Your provider can ask for more units or less units, more time or less time – it is all based on clinical need. APS Healthcare will continue to OK the service as long as there is clinical need.



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APS Healthcare Open House
April 22, 2008 3-7 pm

Welcoming Remarks at 4 pm
Meet Staff and Tour Offices
Member Art Exhibit
Care Connection Training
Refreshments

600 Sable Oaks, Suite 100
South Portland, ME 04106
FMI or Directions please contact:
APS Healthcare At 1-866-521-0027

Save the date: APS Healthcare will be at the HOPE Conference at the Augusta Civic Center on May 21, 2008. We will have a informational workshop, and will also be available to answer questions at the APS Healthcare table. And don't miss our Member Liaison's acting debut in one of the skits performed by Actor Factor! See you there!