

# SPECIAL eBULLETIN

**FOR FACILITY PROVIDERS**

**January 2019**

## *ATTENTION: SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES* **HIGHMARK INTRODUCES NEW HIGH PERFORMANCE SKILLED NURSING FACILITY NETWORK ON JAN. 1, 2019**

Highmark is committed to working with health care providers to make sure that our members receive high-quality health care at an affordable price. That's why Highmark monitors participating skilled nursing facilities' performance to ensure that they are adhering to established clinical protocols that lead to better outcomes and lower costs for our members.

On Jan. 1, 2019, Highmark launched a new network of skilled nursing facilities as part of its commitment to working with health care providers to make sure that our members receive high-quality health care. These changes are required to meet marketplace demand and to provide competitive options to our customers.

Using a specific set of performance metrics, Highmark measured the components of the care provided by participating skilled nursing facilities, and the quality outcomes of these providers. As a result of that review, Highmark determined that while all participating skilled nursing facilities provide quality care, some providers had higher re-admission rates, higher emergency department utilization and higher than average cost per episode — all of which can lead to suboptimal outcomes and higher costs for members.

As such, beginning Jan. 1, 2019, only those participating skilled nursing facilities that performed at the highest levels have been included in the new High Performance SNF Network. These providers have also been placed at the highest benefit tier for commercial tiered products using the High Performance SNF Network.

## **PRODUCTS FEATURING THE HIGH PERFORMANCE SKILLED NURSING FACILITY NETWORK**

Participating providers selected for inclusion in the High Performance SNF Network will constitute the entire network for members who have the following Highmark products:

- Medicare Advantage Community Blue
- Commercial ACA my Direct Blue products

Providers who are not selected for the High Performance SNF Network will be considered out-of-network providers for members enrolled in these Highmark products. It is important to note, however, those not



selected to participate in the High Performance Network will continue to be a participating provider in all other Highmark networks.

## **PRODUCTS WITH TIERED BENEFITS**

High Performance SNF Network providers are designated to participate at the highest level of benefits for products with tiered benefits. The participating skilled nursing facilities not designated for the highest level will participate at the lower tier, resulting in additional member cost share. For both types of tiered benefits, members will have access to quality providers at varying benefit levels. Choosing a provider who participates at the highest level of benefits will result in the lowest cost sharing amounts for members.

## **WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU**

It is imperative that providers understand their network participation status to avoid denials or increased member cost-share. Availability of benefits under the member's benefit plan is required in order for a service to be reimbursed by Highmark. Be sure to confirm the specific member cost-sharing responsibility for services for each member. Availability of benefits can be verified through the Eligibility and Benefits function on NaviNet®

Highmark has noticed that early in 2019, these benefit checks may not be uniformly occurring across our skilled nursing network. In the best interests of our members, we will continue to monitor this process during 2019 to confirm that providers are taking the appropriate steps to ensure that they are in network for all accepted admissions or that the member has been appropriately notified of any cost sharing implications of receiving out-of-network care.

On an annual basis, Highmark will re-evaluate its High Performance Network composition and make additions as necessary. Highmark will notify you directly, should your network participation status change.

For additional information, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions section on the Provider Resource Center:

<https://hbcbsnn.highmarkprc.com/High-Performance-Networks/Select-SNF-Network>

Any other questions about the changes should be sent to:  
[AncillaryProviderContractAdministration@Highmark.com](mailto:AncillaryProviderContractAdministration@Highmark.com).