

## MEDICAL ACCESS ASSISTANCE REQUIRED FOR MEDICAL PROVIDER NETWORKS

Effective January 1, 2014, a Medical Access Assistant (MAA) must be made available to all injured workers participating within an approved Medical Provider Network (MPN). This new regulatory requirement is part of the many changes made under SB 863. Medical Provider Network Access Assistant means an individual in the United States whose primary duty is to assist injured workers with finding available Medical Provider Network physicians and with scheduling provider appointments.

MAA services do not preclude the injured worker from contacting their claim examiner directly during normal business hours for questions regarding MPN access, appointments, etc.

### **HOW MAA WORKS**

The MAA will have access to the MPN providers in order to ensure referrals are made within the MPN. The MAA will also have access into the claim system (iVOS) to attach notes and access injured worker demographics if available.

A dedicated toll free line for MAA access has been created to ensure compliance. Keenan has partnered with Signature Networks Plus to provide MAA services on behalf of our clients. The phones will be answered "Signature Networks Plus." Clients participating in a Keenan MPN will be in compliance with the new regulations outlining MAA services. For non-emergency, non-specialty services, the MAA must ensure that an appointment for the first treatment visit under the MPN is available within three (3) business days of a covered employee's notice to the employer or to an MPN medical access assistant that treatment is needed.

For non-emergency specialist services to treat common injuries, beyond the first treatment, the MAA must ensure that an initial appointment with a specialist in an appropriate referred specialty is available within 20 business days of a covered employee's reasonable requests for an appointment directly with a physician or through an MPN medical access assistant. If an MPN medical access assistant is unable to schedule a timely medical appointment with an appropriate specialist within five business days of an employee's request, the employer shall permit the employee to obtain necessary treatment with an appropriate specialist outside of the MPN.

The MAA must be located in the United States and must be available, at a minimum, from Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Pacific Time, to provide employee assistance with access to medical care under the MPN. The employee assistance shall be available in English and Spanish. The assistance shall include but not be limited to contacting provider offices during regular business hours and scheduling medical appointments for covered employees.

The MAA does not authorize treatment and have different duties than claims adjusters. The MAA is not to function as claims adjusters. However, the claims assistants shall work in coordination with the MAA and the claims adjuster(s) to ensure timely and appropriate medical treatment is provided to the injured worker.

Keenan will be updating the Web site for Injured Worker's to reflect the toll free number, e-mail address and fax number for Signature Networks Plus.

## **COSTS**

There is a charge of \$65 for each call to Signature Networks Plus. This charge covers the additional administrative burden implemented under the SB 863 MPN changes effective January 1, 2014. If more than five attempts to find a physician are unsuccessful, a charge of \$5 per call will be charged for each call in addition to the \$65. MMA charges will be billed under medical to the claim file and identified by a unique paycode should you desire detailed information. Signature Networks Plus will be providing detailed summary reports on a quarterly basis at minimum that will be separate from the PRIME reports.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE**

Failure of an MPN medical access assistant to respond to calls by the next day, excluding Sunday and holidays, \$250 for each occurrence and \$50 for each additional day a response is not provided, up to a total of \$1,000 per occurrence.

Failure of an MPN medical access assistant to ensure an appointment for non-emergency services for initial MPN treatment is available within three (3) business days of a covered employee's request for treatment, \$500 for each occurrence.

Failure to meet the requirements for providing timely non-emergency specialist services, \$500 for each occurrence.

As previously mentioned, Signature Networks Plus is the provider for MAA services on behalf of Keenan's clients. Therefore, Keenan and its clients are indemnified by Signature Networks Plus for penalties incurred as a result of non-compliance by Signature Networks Plus.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact your Keenan Account Manager or Claims Analyst.

Keenan & Associates is not a law firm and no opinion, suggestion, or recommendation of the firm or its employees shall constitute legal advice. Clients are advised to consult with their own attorney for a determination of their legal rights, responsibilities and liabilities, including the interpretation of any statute or regulation, or its application to the clients' business activities.