



# Checking In

## Aetna Better Health of Kansas Community E-Newsletter

July 2020

### Working during COVID ABHKS reaches out to members during pandemic

Aetna Better Health of Kansas is always committed to serving our members, especially during this time of pandemic. Below are just a few examples of what our Medical Management staff is doing to take care of our members during this difficult time.

**Trent Frantz, Behavioral Health Clinical Care Manager:** My members and their parents have been appreciative of my outreach concerning their well-being as it pertains to the COVID-19 outbreak. Thankfully, none of my member's or their family members have tested positive for COVID-19 from our conversations. I have been able to share valuable information with them

concerning prevention and steps to take if they experience symptoms and they have largely been receptive. I have offered to be an ongoing resource available to them if they have future needs or concerns relating to the outbreak.

**Dawn Powell, Case Management Coordinator:** It has been a difficult time for many members on my caseload and for the guardians and parents and agencies that provide care for them. There was much appreciation from the guardians when I began checking on their family member or the member to which they provide services.

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Aetna Better Health® of Kansas

# Working during COVID (con't)

## ABHKS reaches out to members during pandemic

A lot of my members are medically fragile, so they reside in group homes and I appreciated the staff taking the time to give me updates. One residential manager told me she personally cut the hair of E because hair salons were closed.

The most difficult situation has been for a family that has experienced a recent health crisis not related to COVID. Because of the health crisis a mother can no longer take care of her son with autism. To assist this family, I did the following:

- ◆ Worked with agencies and the local CDDO to set up virtual tours of group homes for residential services.
- ◆ Worked with the local Health Department to have the member receive COVID tests before placement.
- ◆ Worked with special staff and my Supervisor to support the member in the home due to behaviors by achieving authorizations for funding to hire the staff members.

The family was very appreciative of what all I and ABHKS have done to ensure their son will have the care he needs. Sometimes during adversity, we find comfort in the willingness of others to work together to support our most vulnerable members.

**Monika Martin, Case Management Coordinator:** Members, guardians and Targeted Case Managers I work with were appreciative of ABHKS reaching out, checking in and providing COVID-19 related resources. Our families and providers were tremendously appreciative of our quick response to closures of schools and day programs. Knowing authorizations would be entered quickly and hours could be temporarily adjusted appeared to provide relief and peace of mind for many. Abrupt closures can be hard for anyone, but especially for some families who are served on the Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled (IDD) waiver. Knowing that supports and hours can be rearranged and adjusted allowed

caregivers to focus on their loved ones, rather than trying to figure out how to suddenly make new care arrangements for our members. "Going with the flow" of changes, closures, openings, etc., has allowed many to cross off one thing on their list of worries and I'm thankful as a Service Coordinator that ABHKS is putting the health and safety of our members first, and is willing to work with our families and providers to be flexible during this time of great stress.



**Sabrina Sloan, Case Management Coordinator:** It's the little things we do - A member's family received a letter from the health department stating they need to quarantine due to exposure to a person who had tested positive for COVID 19. I contacted this member to make sure they felt OK and had things they needed. The member's mother allowed me to drop off items on their porch such as toilet paper and bread to help them get through the time at home. The member and his family are now symptom free and out of quarantine. They were very appreciative of the assistance and thoughtfulness of this simple act of kindness.

# Housing and COVID 19

## ABHKS works on issues related to homelessness

COVID-19 poses particular risk to people without access to decent, affordable housing.

Preventive measures like handwashing, staying at home and social distancing are often impossible for people using emergency shelters or living on the streets. The pandemic's economic fallout threatens to place more low-income households at risk for homelessness.

The immediate and long-term dangers are very real. Homeless individuals are far more likely than the general public to have health conditions that make them vulnerable to COVID-



19's worst outcomes. Some estimates suggest they are twice as likely to require hospitalization and up to four times more likely to require intensive care. Aetna Better Health of Kansas (ABHKS) is partnering with communities and organizations around the state to address the pandemic's impact on KanCare members who are homeless or at-risk.

Strategies to address the immediate challenges include the establishment of isolation centers for homeless individuals with COVID-19 or those awaiting test results. These locations include repurposed social service campuses and dedicated hotel space. New community resources, such as handwashing stations and

portable restrooms, are also being provided in places accessible to homeless individuals.

The pandemic is also expected to have longer-term impacts on low-income households such as those served by KanCare. ABHKS staff is providing leadership in initiatives that address these emerging challenges, such as the threat of evictions faced by families experiencing job losses. Approaches include prioritizing homeless prevention by connecting those in need to utility and rental assistance. The most effective way to limit the burden on the homeless services and

housing systems is to prevent new individuals and families from entering them. Accomplishing this requires that ABHKS staff support collaborative relationships with community partners and that they remain available to work with Aetna members who are struggling with housing instability. ABHKS is working hard everyday to meet these needs.

**Members seeking housing-related assistance should contact member services or their service coordinator. Members or community partners may also reach out to Simon Messmer, ABHKS Housing Supports & Services Administrator at [sockansas@aetna.org](mailto:sockansas@aetna.org).**

# Member Success Story

## An example of how Aetna Better Health of Kansas is working for our members

### Improving Slowly but Surely

A car accident is something no one wants to go through but almost all of us will, though some will be more severe than others. Aetna Better Health of Kansas (ABHKS) Service Coordinator Marita Riebschlager has been there working with N who suffered many injuries in such an accident four years ago, including a Traumatic Brain Injury. Refusing to accept he may never walk again, N began intense physical therapy— both at a facility and in his own home— and in doing so turned his life around.

"He had dropped out of high school and didn't have a clear direction for his future," Riebschlager stated. "[Now] he has dedicated his life to his education and his therapies."

Riebschlager came to N's aid during his therapy and— like his specialists— was in both awe and a little fear of how far N was willing to push himself. This grew to the point of seeking Riebschlager's help in finding a physical therapist that would push him even harder than his old one.

"This experience has given N more confidence to take charge of his recovery," Riebschlager commented. "His motto during his therapy is 'Slowly, but Surely.'"

Presently, when N's not pushing his legs to move once more (he can now walk 400 feet with only a quad cane) his focus is on gaining his GED. Thanks to ABHKS, his providers, and cognitive therapy (N also suffers from memory and speech difficulties) his GED— and eventually a college education— are closer to his grasp than ever.

"In the coming months, the Care Team will be working on building N's confidence to take the test so he can attend college in the fall," Riebschlager included.

N has been documenting his recovery on social media with the hopes to influence others to chase their goals. As one would expect, he receives constant support in return and does not get a break from hearing about what an inspiration he has become.

N has not stopped expressing his



gratitude for the help Aetna has provided for him. However, despite her support, Riebschlager humbly believes the victory of N's recovery belongs to him and his specialists.

"I have only been N's service coordinator; making sure all his therapies are in place and progressing... he has taken charge of his recovery and maintains a positive attitude throughout it all," Riebschlager stated. "He hopes to one day use his story to help others."

# COVID 19 Information from ABHKS

## Assisting members and organizations

### Member Information

Aetna Better Health of Kansas (ABHKS) is working with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to make sure that our members are being provided with the latest and best information around the COVID 19, coronavirus.

The ABHKS website (<https://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/kansas/members/>) offers the following information:

- A COVID-19 Member Letter
- A link to the KDHE COVID-19 Resource Center

The main page of our website also offers a link to a webpage provided by Aetna titled "What you need to know about coronavirus (COVID-19)". Members and others can access the site at the following address:

<https://www.aetna.com/individuals-families/member-rights-resources/need-to-know-coronavirus.html>

### Organization Assistance

#### ***Service for Virtual Meetings***

During this time Aetna Better Health of Kansas (ABHKS) would like to offer use of WebEx to host your meetings. With social distancing in full effect, we believe it is crucial for organizations to still operate as normally as possible. If your organization could use this support tool, please contact us so that you will still be able to host your meetings within or outside your organization.

#### ***Assistance with Services***

Please let us know if you are working on any program or project to help the community and that we may be able to support.

**For more information,  
contact Member Services at:  
1-855-221-5656 (TTY 711)**

## Important Contact Information for Aetna Better Health of Kansas

Department	Contact Information
Member Services	855-221-5656 TTY 711
24 Hour Nurse Advice Line	855-221-5656 TTY 711
Transportation Line	866-252-5634 TTY 711
Pharmacy Line	855-221-5656 TTY 711
Provider Experience	855-221-5656 TTY 711
Provider Email	ProviderExperience_KS@aetna.com



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## **Help us make our E-newsletter better**

### **Let us highlight the work of your organization**

We would love to hear about the work your organization is doing throughout Kansas to assist individuals who are beneficiaries of KanCare.

If you have information you would like to pass along, feel free to reach out to the Community Development team members listed below. We will be happy to include your information in future editions of the newsletter.

**Let us know if we can feature your organization in our newsletter!**

**Website for Aetna Better Health of Kansas:**  
**[www.aetnabetterhealth.com/kansas](http://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/kansas)**

### **Kansas Community Development Team**

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