

Veterans Choice Program: Have You Signed Up?

NARHC WORKING TO RESOLVE ISSUES

The NARHC has recently made a commitment to working with both RHCs and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to identify issues in the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) with the ultimate goal of getting more RHCs signed up and billing properly so that we may be a part of the broader healthcare solution for veterans.



When Congress passed the Choice Act of 2014, the VHA was put in a difficult spot because they had only 90 days to stand up the program. This did not allow much time for provider education, and of course there were several issues with the rollout of the program. We have heard from several individuals in the RHC community that they have had difficulty getting their claims paid. However, others have indicated that the Veterans Choice Program is working well for them.

We urge those of you who have not yet signed up for the VCP to do so and if you have difficulty with your VCP claims, to get NARHC involved. Together we hope to improve the system and educate all parties on what can and cannot be done. At the end of the day, this will hopefully allow Veterans to get the care they deserve.

With that said, here are some basics on how the VCP process should work for RHCs:

1-RHC sign up online through TriWest or Health Net. Use [this](#) map to determine which third party administrator (TPA) you need to sign up with.

2-TriWest or Health Net should request your Medicare rate letter at some point during the application process. *NOTE: RHCs are supposed to be paid their Medicare AIR for all VCP claims.*

3-The TPA (TriWest or Health Net) will schedule the first appointment for any eligible veteran. Follow-up care may be scheduled by the veteran itself if it is covered by the authorization from the TPA.

4-As part of the scheduling process, the TPA will give the RHC a detailed authorization that should clearly state which services the RHC is authorized to provide.

5-The RHC bills the visit to the TPA on a 1500 and is paid the AIR.

6-RHCs must provide patient notes to TriWest/Health Net but this not a condition of payment.

We have heard that one point of confusion is that it is unclear what exactly the authorization covers. All coverage questions should be answered by closely examining the initial authorization. If it is determined that some service is required beyond what is stated in the initial authorization the provider or Veteran can request a secondary authorization from the TPA.

If what I have described above is not the process you have experienced or if you have RHC VCP billing issues please email me at Baughn@capitolassociates.com and together we can work to improve this program.

Nathan Baugh
Director of Government Affairs
National Association of Rural Health Clinics
Baughn@capitolassociates.com