



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Florida**

An Independent Licensee of the
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

June 2010

Mental Health Parity and Member Responsibility

Background

In October 2008, the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity (MHP) and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 was signed into law. As a result, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) removed benefit and lifetime maximums for applicable large groups as they joined or renewed on or after October 3, 2009.

In February 2010, interim final rules were released that require equality in terms of out-of-pocket costs and benefit limits (e.g., deductibles must be calculated as one limit for all benefits). The rules are effective for plan years beginning on or after July 1, 2010, which includes new and existing large groups.

Short-term Issue

Due to current system limitations, large groups that renew their BlueCare[®], BlueChoice[®], and BlueOptions[®] plans from July 1 to September 30, 2010 will not display the correct mental health and substance dependency member responsibility until October 1, 2010 on the Availity^{®1} Health Information Network. We have created a short-term solution to ensure psychiatrists, psychologists, and mental health clinicians receive accurate benefits.

Short-term Solution

Please complete an electronic eligibility and benefit inquiry for BCBSF members to obtain an Availity Transaction ID, which displays in the upper left-hand corner on the results screen. When you call the Provider Contact Center at **(800) 727-2227** you will be prompted to press the Star key and enter the Availity Transaction ID. Based on your entry, the telephone system will automatically route your priority call to the appropriate area for that specific member to determine their member responsibility.

Note: This solution will be available until October 1, 2010 when Availity will display the accurate member responsibility.

Education and Training

We are planning October webinars to demonstrate how to obtain all the mental health and substance dependency benefits that will be available through the Availity web portal. We will send further communications regarding the available dates and times.

¹Availity, LLC, is a multi-payer joint venture company. For more information or to register, visit Availity's website at www.availity.com.