

## New Directions FAQ

**From: Connie Galietti [connie@flapsych.com](mailto:connie@flapsych.com)]**

**Sent: Wednesday, July 27, 2011 11:18 AM**

**Subject: New Directions**

Good morning, everyone. I wanted to give an update as to my conversation with the folks at New Directions. Keep in mind that this was just the first conversation, and that we have agreed to have frequent communication and keep the door open to call each other. I want to build a positive relationship, so that they don't shut me out when / if I have to start yelling!

According to the folks there, letters from BCBS are going to be sent to all providers (which apparently has started). ND will follow up with a letter with specific details about the process and the terms. They would not agree to send me an advanced copy, but they assured me I would get one as well. As we now know, current BCBS providers will be notified that their relationship with BCBS is being terminated, and that they are invited to start a relationship with ND. They will not automatically transfer BCBS providers to ND. Given our concerns with ghost panels and outdated lists, this may not be a terrible thing as a whole, although it will be a pain in the behind for current providers to have to jump through hoops. As has already been discussed, ND will use CAQH for the credentialing process. They would not commit to guaranteeing everyone's acceptance b/c they cannot anticipate what problems will arise; however, they said they did not expect problems for 99% of the current providers.

They hope to have credentialing letters out by August 1, and they are giving providers 15 days to respond. They want to have the credentialing process completed by August 31. The contracts will begin 12/1. The process is being completed for PPOs now, with HMOs to follow. As a result, Health Options is included in this takeover. They stated that they view other insurance companies (Aetna, United Health) to be competitors, so they are not taking on their behavioral health plans.

Under their procedures, providers will not have to receive preauthorization for patients during the first 8 visits (again - this is the patient's 8 visits, so make sure you find out if they are seeing other providers). To get authorization for continued services, you will use their Webpass program, which is a one-page form. There, you can verify coverage, eligibility and get the authorization. They told me the feedback is immediate. If so, this will be a fantastic upgrade from the horrors of Availity.

Lastly, they could not tell me how Neuropsych, eating disorders, and other medically-connected tx would be handled. They are looking into it and will let me know.

So, what next? Keep me informed as you receive these letters. Read your contracts carefully before agreeing to participate. If you think you have negotiating room, negotiate! And, most importantly - please do NOT discuss fees on this listserv.

For those of you who are not current BCBS providers and would like the opportunity to apply for the ND panel, they ask that you wait until after they hear back from BCBS providers. They are interested in taking people on, but it depends upon how many psychologists decided to sit out and how many names are dropped due to inaccurate lists.

I'll definitely stay in touch over the course of the next month. If I have just one glimmer of hope, it is that it cannot be any worse than the fiasco BCBS caused by transferring to the Availity system. I also can report that I asked colleagues in Kansas, and there was no drop in fees during the transfer a couple of years ago. Of course, that does not take into account any market trends. :-(- But I ask you not to be fearful yet - let's see what they say, what they are offering, and then deal with it as best we can.

Please call me as you start the process. I want the feedback, and need to know what other questions to ask of them as we move forward.

Here is a link to the website: <https://www.ndbh.com/providers> Click on the behavioral health plan providers link for more information.

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**From: Dr. Jeff Kanter**  
**Sent: Friday, July 29, 2011 9:41 AM**  
**Subject:] New Directions/BCBS Update**

At Connie's request, I continued to follow up with BCBS and finally got some hard answers to some of the questions we have been asking. See below:

*Good Afternoon Dr. Kanter,*

*Jennifer Wilson forwarded me the below e-mail with some questions/concerns that you have brought up. Please let this e-mail serve as follow-up to those and any others that may occur.*

- 1. What happens to psychologists being able to see out of state BCBS members where in-network status is required to get authorized and paid? (and the bills typically go through the local address in JAX)**
  - a. BCBSF sent out termination notice to all of the BH providers and facilities directly contracted with BCBS yesterday afternoon.
  - b. New Directions Behavioral Health (NDBH) is mailing out solicitation packets on Friday/Monday in order for providers whose contracting is ending with BCBSF to join NDBH.
  - c. If any members (BCBSF or members from other state that have BCBS insurance) need BH services, they will only receive in-network benefits through provider in NDBH network.
  - d. Authorizations for out-of-state members will be obtained the same way, through the member's home (out-of-state) plan.
  - e. All bills will be sent to NDBH which will be located on the BCBSF campus in Jacksonville.
- 2. What happens with BCBS as a Medicare Secondary? Will New Directions pick these up?**
  - a. Yes
- 3. What happens to medical (mixed service) cases where the member is being seen (i.e., neuropsychological evaluations or psychological evaluations) due to a specific medical condition (e.g., brain injury, stroke, or pre-spinal cord stimulator psych eval, pre-gastric bypass psych eval, etc).**
  - a. BH services will be managed by NDBH including authorization and claims
  - b. The services will be authorized by NDBH and claims will be sent on NDBH (whether they are medical or behavioral).

We will keep pushing.

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