

# The Valued Provider

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For more information about articles, visit our Web site at [www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm). You may also e-mail the Editor at [thevaluedprovider@valueoptions.com](mailto:thevaluedprovider@valueoptions.com). ValueOptions is headquartered in Norfolk, VA.

## Don't Forget About Substance Abuse

When conducting an intake interview to identify problems and appropriateness for EAP intervention, it's easy to overlook Substance Abuse/ Chemical Dependency issues. It is also typical for patients to minimize or deny them. The problem is that often, if therapy or counseling addresses psychosocial, environmental, or emotional issues, chemical dependency issues may be present. If not addressed, the patient may see a brief improvement, but then the stress of the changes they make in other areas may actually make substance abuse problems worsen.

Here are tips for your assessment:

1. **ASK Directly!** Skirting the issue fails to surface potential problems because it communicates to the patient that the issue is not acceptable to talk about with you.
2. **Normalize** by asking in a way that assumes a positive response: Ask, "What drugs, prescription or street drugs do you now use?" rather than, "Do you use drugs?" Also, asking open-ended questions surfaces more information than questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no".
3. **Consult** with colleagues who specialize in Substance Abuse or refer for further assessment to a local substance abuse program which is covered by the patient's mental health insurance. If you

have doubts about your own diagnosis, the experts at the substance abuse program can conduct a thorough interview and history to determine the level of care needed, if any.

4. As part of your preliminary discussion about Substance Abuse or use, you may want to cover the following topics:
  - Current use: What? How much? When?
  - Patient's history of drug and alcohol use – how much, when, and the reasons for any changes
  - Family history of drug and alcohol use – **Be specific:** "Parent, brothers or sisters?"
  - Impact or consequences of drug and alcohol use, including relationship to the presenting problem(s)
  - Attitudes and beliefs about drug and alcohol use
  - Substance Abuse treatment history
  - Reasons/motivation for use
5. Consider using additional assessment tools such as the SASSI or the AA Twenty Questions.

## Provider Trivia Inside

## Provider Forum Information

Visit <http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/education.htm> to view and register online for our provider forums.

## Personal Note



Sabrina Houser, Ph.D.  
*Vice President, Corporate Provider Relations*

### Dear Provider Community,

Thank you for your continued support of ValueOptions. We value our relationship with you and are grateful for the feedback you have given us through the years.

Based on feedback from our provider community, ValueOptions has established a single fax number and mailing address that providers can use to submit clinical authorization requests forms for most of ValueOptions' commercial business. For more information about this process, I encourage you to read the newsletter article (see page 4) in its entirety. You may also visit [www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm).

Also, we are pleased to announce the availability of our 2006 Participating Provider Handbook (see p. 4). We have included a highlights section in this edition which includes substantial changes made to the handbook. This section is a must read!

I also encourage you to read all of the articles in this newsletter. You will learn about our new accounts, provider recruitment efforts, valuable health care information, and important updates. I am positive that the material presented in this newsletter will be of great benefit to you, your organization and our members.

## Heart and Mind Connections

The clear relationship between emotion, behavior, coping strategies and cardiovascular health is undeniable. As experts in human behavior, together we can help members safeguard their heart health in the following ways:

### Motivate and sustain healthy lifestyle changes

This includes quitting smoking, eating well and exercising regularly. For most, change will be a gradual process. You can help members move through the stages of behavior change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance. Help them understand that relapses are common and become part of the process of working toward established change.

### Support members in living with heart disease

Encourage members to:

- rely on their support system of friends, family and, especially, life partner
- adjust life expectations to be more realistic
- celebrate the smallest successes
- pursue more activities that they love to do, less of those they don't care for
- stay informed about the disease and its treatment
- work closely with the treating physician
- be alert to the signs of depression

### Help identify and manage behavioral health conditions that impact heart health, such as depression, anxiety and chronic stress

In addition to assessing, counseling and referring for these conditions, suggest exercise as one way to combat not only mood disorders but also heart disease risk. Members can take small steps to get started. They can walk out their front door, walk in one direction for 10 minutes, and then turn around and walk home.

See [www.valueoptions.com/provider/education.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/education.htm) for information about a telephonic forum on this topic.

## Provider Trivia

**Question:** If you do not know your Provider Identification Number, what ValueOptions' phone number do you call to obtain this information?

Send the correct response to [thevaluedprovider@valueoptions.com](mailto:thevaluedprovider@valueoptions.com) by July 15, 2006 to enter a prize drawing. One entry per person. The prize is a Palm Pilot. The winner will be notified and announced in our next newsletter. Good Luck!

*Note: There is no purchase necessary to participate in this drawing. All taxes are the responsibility of the winners. Employees of ValueOptions or its affiliates are not permitted to participate in this drawing.*



## ValueOptions Reaches out to Members and Providers Impacted by Hurricanes

The hurricanes along the Gulf caused great devastation. Many members had little or no access to care and numerous providers were left without a practice. ValueOptions, at all levels, engaged in a variety of activities to ensure that our covered members had access to available providers as well as ensure our provider's well-being. ValueOptions conducted the following activities:

- Posted valuable resource information to our ValueOptions' website to help network providers, members and clients in regards to assistance with natural disasters.
- Outreached to our network providers in the surrounding states and counties not impacted by Hurricane Katrina to partner with us in assisting displaced members.
- Contacted all licensing boards in contiguous states (Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee etc.) to determine if and how these boards were allowing displaced providers to have 'interim' reciprocity to practice.
- Temporarily revised mailing procedures/timeliness to assist providers who had been displaced and made need additional time to respond to ValueOptions credentialing and/or claims correspondence.
- Worked with our clients to link our network providers with their members. Some of our client companies set up space in available hotels for their members in the region. We were able to place some providers in these temporary housing arrangements to provide priority treatment for their members.
- Developed regional activities to determine the accessibility and availability of our providers in addition to collecting any current address information as to ensure data accuracy. These activities were specific to the Gulf coast areas of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi affected by Hurricane Katrina. The activities occurred in a two-pronged approach: (1) Outreach efforts to Providers affected by Hurricane Katrina immediately after the event and (2) Follow-up efforts in 2006

Recovery for our members and providers impacted by these hurricanes are still very much underway. We continuously look for ways to help add relief to those impacted. If you have been affected and have not been contacted by ValueOptions, please call us at 800-535-0108 ext. 234641.

### ValueOptions' Top 10 Reasons why Providers are Investigated by the SIU

The SIU (Special Investigation Unit) is responsible for reviewing and monitoring claims and billings by providers to ensure payment has been properly requested and made. The SIU also monitors and investigates potential cases of improper billing and fraud. ValueOptions encourages providers, facilities and members to work together to prevent improper billing activity.

#### Here are 10 reasons why a provider might be investigated by the SIU:

1. Unreasonable amount of billings occurring in one day
2. Billing for date(s) of service on which patient was not seen
3. Multi-unit billings and payments for non-unit-based codes.
4. Suspicious billing patterns
5. Billing for services not rendered directly by provider (Supervision)
6. Upcoding
7. Telephonic therapy sessions billed when not a covered benefit
8. Misrepresenting the diagnosis code in order to justify payment
9. Waiving Co-Pays, Deductibles and Member Co-Insurance
10. Billing ValueOptions for missed or cancelled appointments

## What's New?

### New Accounts

ValueOptions is pleased to announce the implementation of the following new accounts (see [www.valueoptions.com](http://www.valueoptions.com) for more information):

**Suffolk County – Employee Medical Health Plan (EMHP) of Suffolk County NY (Long Island, NY):** Effective 4/1/06 with approximately 46,000 covered lives

**UPS - EAP:** Effective 4/1/06 for some but the balance is for 6/1/06 with approximately 822,600 covered lives across the US

**Great-West Healthcare - National Commercial plan:** Effective 4/1/06 with approximately 1.9 million covered lives. Please review the Great-West Healthcare/ValueOptions Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) online.

**Kaiser – HMO plan in Colorado:** Effective 5/1/06 with approximately 60,000 covered lives (primarily Colorado Springs)

**NOTE:** We are recruiting for EAP providers! If you are currently a MHSA provider and meet the EAP credentialing criteria (which can be found at <http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/handbooks/forms/administration/providercredentialingcriteria.pdf>), notify us at 800-397-1630 and indicate that you are interested in becoming an EAP provider.

### New Streamlined Clinical Document Submission Fax Number and Address Information

ValueOptions continues to hear from our provider community that offering administrative processes which are provider friendly is one of the most important factors when collaborating with managed care organizations. Based on feedback we have heard from many of you, ValueOptions is offering a more streamlined authorization process to make things easier for our providers.

ValueOptions has established a single fax number and mailing address that providers can use to submit clinical authorization requests. These centralized fax numbers and mailing address pertains to treatment request forms for most of ValueOptions' commercial business. (For more information, visit [www.valueoptions.com/providers](http://www.valueoptions.com/providers).)

For [inpatient or higher level of care requests for service](#), please submit your documents to:

Fax Number: 866-497-9262

For [outpatient requests for service](#), please submit your documents to:

Fax Number: 866-702-9028

OR

Mail Address

ValueOptions • P.O. Box 1347 • Latham, New York 12110

**NOTE:** There are some exceptions to this process. For a detailed list of the clients that are exempted from this process and their appropriate address and fax numbers, please log onto ProviderConnect and click on the Streamlined Clinical Document submission Fax and Address Information link under NEWS & ALERTS. ProviderConnect is located at [www.valueoptions.com/providers](http://www.valueoptions.com/providers). If you do not have a ProviderConnect log in, you will need to register first. Should you need assistance accessing this information, contact our e-Support Help Line at 888-247-9311, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. EST.



## 2005 Provider Satisfaction Survey Highlights!

Each year, ValueOptions appoints an independent auditor to perform our Provider Satisfaction Survey. The Survey measures key indicators such as overall satisfaction, telephone access/customer service, certification of care, claims processing and credentialing. The highlights of the 2005 survey are as follows:

**Overall Satisfaction:** The majority of providers are satisfied (88 %) with ValueOptions.

**Customer Service:** About 8 in 10 providers call our toll-free telephone number and over 6 in 10 think our staff is very helpful.

**Credentialing:** About 6 in 10 providers have been credentialed or recredentialed by us and over 9 in 10 report that their (re)credentialing application was processed in a timely manner.

**Claims:** Over 75 % of the providers rate the overall quality of claims service positively. The providers rate the accuracy (80%) and timeliness (75%) as positively, citing it as good, very good or excellent.

**Certification of Care:** Almost all of the providers seek certification for outpatient care, and most (64%) think the ValueOptions' procedure to certify this care is easy. Also, 80% of the providers rate ValueOptions positive in timely certification. About 9 in 10 said that staff were either somewhat helpful or very helpful in the certification of care.

**Peer Advisors:** About 87% of the providers who spoke with a Peer Advisor rate professionalism and courtesy as excellent or very good; and 8 in 10 report they were given information about applicable criteria and reasons for the decision.

**Use of Handbook:** In the last year, only 33% of the providers have read or looked through the ValueOptions' Provider Handbook.

**Use of the Newsletter:** Approximately 80% of the providers have read or looked through the ValueOptions newsletter.

**Use of Website:** About 44% of the providers use the website and 74% of those providers said it is easy to find information.

While we received wonderful ratings on many of our areas, we recognize that there are some areas which need improvement. Information gathered from the Provider Satisfaction Survey is incorporated in our goals and objectives in an effort to improve our processes and enhance the quality of service we provide to our providers.

### Provider Recruitment for ValueOptions' Fair Hearing Process

ValueOptions is recruiting psychiatrists to be panel members as part of our Fair Hearing process. Panel members will be paid for their time.



If you have experience in serving on peer review panels related to credentialing decisions, send an email stating your interest, name, primary mailing address and phone number to Nadine Brown, Vice President of Credentialing, by one of the following methods:

**Email:**

nadine.brown@valueoptions

**Fax:**

757-893-8664

**Mail:**

ValueOptions, Inc.  
National Networks  
P.O. Box 4080  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454  
ATTN: Nadine Brown

We look forward to your participation!

## 2006 Participating Provider Handbook Available Online!

This Handbook is prepared as a guide to ValueOptions' policies and procedures for individual providers, affiliates, group practices, programs and facilities. It provides important information regarding the managed care features incorporated in the ValueOptions' provider contract; and it also reflects the policies that are applicable to our "general" commercial product lines.

We divided this handbook into several sections to make it easier for you to find the general or contract-specific information you need. We also made each section printer friendly for your convenience.

New to the Provider Handbook is a Highlights section which outlines for you the "Must Read!" pages of the Provider Handbook.

Please visit [www.valueoptions.com/provider/handbooks.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/handbooks.htm) to access the 2006 Participating Provider Handbook. Remember that our Web site is a vehicle for communicating with you any changes to this Handbook, member educational materials, news and other online services. If you need assistance accessing this information, please call the National Provider Line at 800-397-1630, Monday - Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST.

*Note: Pursuant to the Amendment Section of your existing Provider Agreement, ValueOptions, Inc. is providing you with notice that the Provider Handbook has been amended. Written objections to this Amendment may be mailed to: ValueOptions, Attention: Provider Relations, 1701 Will-O-Wisp Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23454 within 30 days of your receipt of this newsletter. Once the 30-day notice period has lapsed, ValueOptions will consider your non-response as acceptance of the amendment.*

## NETWORK-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Great Lakes Service Center (GLSC)

**Treatment Record Review Results: Are you Compliant?** Annually, GLSC staff conducts treatment record reviews of high volume providers to monitor compliance with treatment record standards. A "high volume provider" is defined as any practitioner or facility that serves twenty-five unique ValueOptions' members within a year. During 2005, 538 provider treatment records were audited. The average score was 92.23% which exceeds the 80% minimum standard. The following audit questions scored below the minimum and need improvement:

- Documentation of dates of follow-up appointments or, as appropriate, a discharge plan (75%)
- For children and adolescent records, there is evidence of coordination with the youth's school to achieve school related treatment goals (59%)
- For members diagnosed with ADHD, the record reflects education about ADHD and parent training in behavioral management (53%)
- Evidence of coordination of care with the PCP or of declination of coordination by the member (67.8%)

Please assess your record keeping practices to ensure that they meet industry standards! Additional information regarding ValueOptions' treatment record standards can be found at [www.valueoptions.com/provider](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider)



### Coordination of Care Initiatives and Changes to the Onsite Treatment Record Review Process in 2006

In an effort to improve coordination of care between behavioral and medical healthcare, ValueOptions' onsite treatment record reviewers will now ask for xerox copies of all treatment record evidence of coordination of care with the PCP. This information will be used by medical health plan staff to verify reciprocity in the member's record at the office of the primary care physician. Please ensure that the release of information forms to the PCP are complete with the full name and address of the PCP and the date(s) that the form was signed and faxed or mailed. To address the issue of members who refuse to sign a consent for coordination of care form, visit [www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm) to access our information sheet called, "When you are in therapy, what your doctor needs to know..." This sheet explains for members the importance of coordinating their care with other treating providers. Providers are encouraged to give a copy of this sheet to all ValueOptions' members who refuse to sign a consent form.

For preventive health information on depression, postpartum depression and ADHD, go to [www.valueoptions.com/member/educationcenter](http://www.valueoptions.com/member/educationcenter).



## Empire Plan

**How does the documentation in your record measure up?** Documentation in treatment records should be maintained in a manner that is current, comprehensive, detailed, and organized. Most states require records be kept to document care and services provided to your patients. The following are some basic standards to keep in mind when documenting in your treatment records:

- Is the reason for the encounter documented?
- Does the treatment record contain information on the patient's progress and the results of treatment?
- Does the treatment record include the plan for the patient's care?
- Is assessment of the patient's condition apparent in the treatment record?
- Is there clear documentation to support actions taken in the care of the patient?

*The ValueOptions Provider Handbook provides more detailed information to assist you in your record keeping. The Provider Handbook may be accessed at [www.valueoptions.com/providers](http://www.valueoptions.com/providers).*

The Empire Service Center has begun its annual audit of providers' treatment records. As part of the quality management program for this service center, providers are chosen randomly. Please assess your record keeping practices to ensure that they meet industry standards! Additional information regarding ValueOptions' treatment record standards, including copies of the treatment record review tool, can be found at [www.valueoptions.com/provider/handbooks/forms.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/handbooks/forms.htm). For more information about each record element please visit [www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm).

**Empire Quality Improvement Projects** - The Empire Plan Service Center has initiated quality improvement projects for Adolescents, Substance Abuse, Access, and Claims. For more information about each project, read the entire article at [www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm).

**Empire Plan Claims Payment Update** - In January 2006, ValueOptions implemented new scanning technology for the Empire Plan. This new process includes a very sophisticated Optical Character Recognition (OCR) engine in conjunction with powerful business rules to covert claims to an electronic format for processing. This technology enables ValueOptions to shorten turn-around time and improve quality. Here are a few ways you can help ensure auto adjudication of your claims, resulting in FASTER turn-a-round time for you (also visit [www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm) to find out more):

1. Use machine print
2. Use original red claim forms
3. Use black ink
4. Use all capital letters

## Northeast Service Center (NESC)

### Mental Health Ambulatory Follow-up: After Acute Inpatient Care Reported Rates Show Little Improvement

NCQA's 2005 State of Health Care Quality Report describes the collection of quality data among health plans, including behavioral health effectiveness of care measures. Unfortunately, nation-wide results of post-discharge follow-up appointment rates following inpatient treatment for mental health illness have shown little improvement over the past five years. (Access full report: [www.ncqa.org/Communications/News/SOHC\\_2005.htm](http://www.ncqa.org/Communications/News/SOHC_2005.htm).)

To ensure that appointments are kept, NESC may reach out to either the practitioner or to the member directly. The success of this endeavor depends on us all.

#### Here's how you can help:

What can facilities do for the member upon discharge?

- Ensure discharge plan is complete including the patient's first appointment at the next level of care
- Schedule (with the member present) the first appointment (or two) with the outpatient provider

What can practitioners/clinicians providing outpatient services do?

- Request a discharge summary from the hospital or facility
- Call the patient prior to the first appointment to confirm appointment date and time

*Visit [www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/provider/news.htm) to learn more ways you can help.*



## Making It Easier to Find Quality Elder Care

For a member, being able to locate the right type of elder care services may seem like a formidable task. However, there are several good resources that you can share with a member to help make the search a bit easier.

**State resources** - Advise the member to start with state resources such as the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). There is at least one office in every state, and many states have several.

**Eldercare locator** - The Administration on Aging supports a nationwide toll-free directory called the Eldercare Locator. The toll-free number is 800-677-1116, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. EST.

**Local resources** - Advise members to talk with their doctor or the elder's primary health care physician to see if he or she can suggest providers of good elder care. Check with the local hospital, public health department, visiting nurses associations, the United Way (which offers a referral service) or a clergyperson.

**National resources** - Members can contact national organizations for assistance in locating quality elder care.

We ask that you continue to encourage members not to be proactive and not wait until a crisis is at hand. Since finding the right elder care may take some time, members are better off starting their search long before they (or someone in their family) may need it.

*Source: Information taken from an article by Tanya Lochbridge located at [www.achievesolutions.net/providers](http://www.achievesolutions.net/providers).*

### Provider Relations

1701 Will-O-Wisp Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

### Important Prescribing Information for Practitioners

*by New York Health Department*

A new Public Health Law requires that all prescriptions written in New York State be issued on an official New York State prescription form. The new law was enacted to combat prescription fraud and went into full effect on April 19, 2006.

To help your office move more easily into compliance with the new law, you are strongly encouraged to begin ordering and using official prescription forms for all your written prescriptions now. It is very important to note that after April 19, 2006, pharmacies will not be permitted to fill prescriptions written on non-official prescription pads.

All practitioners must first register with the Department's Official Prescription Program to receive official prescriptions pads free of charge. You may obtain a registration packet by calling the State's Official Prescription Program toll free at 1-866-772-4683.