



## 2006

# Member Messenger

## Quality Program Structure, Operations, and Initiatives

ValueOptions is the largest privately held managed behavioral health care company in the nation, and the second largest managed behavioral healthcare company overall. Through our high quality system of healthcare, we strive to ensure that every member enrolled in a client's health plan receives safe, effective and responsive treatments to address their healthcare needs. ValueOptions is always working to improve the quality of care and services provided for you. In 2005, the Northeast Service Center met 100% of its quality goals, based upon our corporate evaluation process.

### What are some of the goals related to seeing a Behavioral Health Provider?

- **Coordination of Care**

#### When you are in therapy, what does your doctor need to know?

When you or your family member needs to see more than one doctor, your care can become more complex. This is true whether you see more than one medical doctor or a therapist.

In a recent meeting, members raised some good questions:

- Why is it anybody's business when I go to therapy?
- Why does my doctor need to know about my personal problems?

The answer to these questions should be discussed with your doctor or therapist. For example, it is very important for doctors and therapists to communicate at these times:

#### *When you start therapy.*

Sometimes problems can be caused by medical conditions. For instance, depression is sometimes linked to certain medical problems. Other times, depression or anxiety may play a part in your medical condition.

#### *When you start or change medications.*

You doctor can help make sure that the medicines you take can be safely used together.

*Changes in health status.* If your health changes, your doctor needs to know to see if you need to have any tests or changes to your medicines.

*Laboratory findings.* Ask that a copy of any test be sent to your doctor. This will help your doctor monitor your care and prevent you from having extra tests done.

### Be your own Health Care Manager

Take an active part in managing your own care. Ask your therapist to call your doctor. He or she will ask you to sign a form\* to give permission to share the information. On the form you can list what type of information you would like shared, such as diagnosis, lab work, and medications. You are your own best advocate.

\*You can request a form from ValueOptions to give your therapist permission to contact your doctor.

If you would like a copy of this form, please call the Quality Management Department at 800-322-4824 X2827 and request the "*Practitioner Form Authorizing Personal Health Information Exchange*"

- **Taking Anti-Depressant Medications**

Surprisingly, up to 70% of patients do not use these medications correctly. Patients often stop medication for three main reasons. [1] They may feel better and think they don't need it. [2] They believe it is not working. (It may take up to 6 months to get the correct dose in your system). [3] They are having side effects.

When you first start on a medication you need to see your doctor at least 3 times in 6 months. This will help to make sure your medicine is being managed. Always talk to your doctor about problems with your medicine or before stopping any medicine.

### Come Join the ValueOptions Member Advisory Committee!!

If you are interested in working with us to improve the care and service to our members, come join our committee. For more information please call Carrie Turner at 1-800-322-4824, extension 2827.

- **After you leave the Hospital**

After being in the hospital, a plan for your care is needed to help you recover. Support during the move from hospital to home is very important. Before you leave the hospital, the hospital staff will help you to set up an appointment with your doctor or therapist. Ideally, you should schedule an appointment within a day or two after leaving the hospital.

Research shows that people who see their doctor or therapist within one week of discharge do better than those who wait longer.

ValueOptions staff can help you with arrangements as you leave the hospital. This help can range from finding a therapist or doctor or finding other resources. Our care team is trained to work with your therapist and other types of support services to help you feel better and stay well. Our goal is a smooth, continuing care program that will support your health and wellness.

- **Customer Service: When to use them? What to expect?**

Do you have an issue that is affecting your life? Have you decided that it is time to talk to a counselor/therapist? Where do you begin? Does your care need to be approved ahead of time?

ValueOptions Customer Service can assist you by providing several services for you. If you aren't sure of what your benefits (co-pay, deductible, number of visits your plan pays for, etc) are or how to get started, we can give you that information.

Customer Service can look up which counselors/therapists in your area participate with your plan so that you receive a higher benefit level. We can also check to see which counselors in your area specialize in working on particular issues (stress, depression, family counseling, etc). For any questions about your plan, how it works or how to get started, call Customer Service.

### Confidentiality

ValueOptions has written policies to protect your health information. These policies state how you may have access to your personal health information (PHI). They tell you how we use your information to pay claims and to arrange treatment. To view the ValueOptions Privacy Statement, please visit [www.valueoptions.com](http://www.valueoptions.com).

If you would like have the Privacy Statement mailed to you, please call Carrie Turner at 800-322-4824 ext. 2827.

#### View the ValueOptions Annual Member Newsletter on the Web

[www.valueoptions.com/members/northeast.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/members/northeast.htm)

If you would like to receive a hard copy, please call Carrie Turner at 1-800-322-4824, extension 2827.

### Utilization Management Decision Making

ValueOptions' decision making is based on appropriateness of care and service and existence of coverage. ValueOptions does not reward practitioners, or other individuals, for issuing denials of coverage or service. Decision makers are not given financial incentives that would encourage decisions that result in less care then needed.

### ValueOptions' Member Satisfaction Survey

Members whose health care plans are served by ValueOptions, rate their mental health services and benefits very positively. A member satisfaction telephone survey is performed every year. In 2005, interviewees were asked to score ValueOptions' mental health and behavioral health services.

The following items were scored on the survey;

- Overall Satisfaction with Mental Health Services **92%**
- Overall Quality of Services of Therapist **94%**
- Therapist Sensitivity to Cultural, Ethnic and Religious Needs **99%**
- Member Involvement in Decisions About Care **97%**
- Therapist Protects Member Confidentiality **99%**

Additional information is available through the Customer Service Department.

## Preventive Health Programs and Integrated Care

### Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

#### IS YOUR CHILD ACCIDENT PRONE?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can have more frequent injuries than children without ADHD.

The main symptoms of ADHD—inattention and impulsivity/hyperactivity—may place a child with ADHD at greater risk for certain types of accidental injury. These symptoms are not abnormal behaviors, but may be more extreme than other children the same age. Inattention may cause them to be distracted or disorganized. The combination of being distracted and impulsive may result in risk-taking behavior leading to injury.

ADHD is estimated to occur in 3 percent to 5 percent of school-age children and is more common in boys than girls. It can be divided into three symptoms:

- Inattention
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsivity

The focus of the program is to help parents who are not certain if their child has problems similar to ADHD. We encourage early screening of children around the age of six and recommend parents discuss their concerns with their pediatrician.

In 2005 more than 4,200 parents were sent an informational packet on ADHD. Almost five hundred parents

returned the ADHD screening tool. Additional education material was sent to over 100 parent whose screening may suggest ADHD.

**If you would like to learn more** about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and receive a free booklet developed by the National Institute of Mental Health with information about diagnosis, treatment, and support available, call ValueOptions at **1-800-322-4824, press option 2 and X 2114.**

### Postpartum Depression

The "baby blues" happen to many women in the day's right after childbirth. This normally goes away after two weeks. With postpartum depression, a woman can have feelings similar to the "baby blues", (sadness, despair, anxiety, and irritability), but feels them more strongly or for a longer time.

**If someone you know has signs of postpartum depression, encourage her to talk to her doctor.**

Sometimes having a baby can cause changes in a mother's body. The doctor can check-out bodily changes that might play a part in mood or other signs of depression.

**Let her know that she is not alone.**

Celebrities like Marie Osmond and Brooke Shields have told the public about their own experiences with postpartum depression.

Things she should know about postpartum depression:

- It is not her fault.
- It is treatable.
- Certain medications are OK during breast feeding.

Help is available. Last year, more than 8,000 mothers were sent information on postpartum depression.

Almost twelve hundred mothers sent in a screening tool to see if they had more than the baby blues. Calls were made to almost 200 mothers to see if further assistance was needed. Our program this year is focusing on getting the mother who may be depressed to talk to her doctor. Please call ValueOptions to talk about what help is available for you.

### Anorexia Nervosa

Did you know – An estimated 0.5 to 3.7 percent of females suffer from anorexia nervosa in their lifetime.

Anorexia is an eating disorder that can be successfully treated. People with this disorder see themselves as overweight even though they are extremely thin. Dieting to achieve an unhealthy low body weight is promoted in current fashion trends, sales campaigns for special foods and in some types of activities or jobs. People often develop unhealthy eating habits, check their weight several times a day, engage in too much exercise, throw up or use and abuse laxatives.

If left untreated, people can develop physical problems such as serious heart conditions or kidney failure and it may result in death.

*If you would like more information or if you have questions, please talk with your doctor.*

The sooner this disorder is diagnosed and treated, the better the outcomes are likely to be.

## Enrollees' Rights and Responsibilities

ValueOptions is committed to respecting your rights and responsibilities as an enrollee.

### Enrollees have a right to:

- Receive information about the organization, its services, its practitioners and providers, and enrollees' rights and responsibilities.
- be treated with respect and recognition of their dignity and right to privacy.
- participate with practitioners in making decisions about their health care.
- a candid discussion of appropriate or medically necessary treatment options for their conditions, regardless of cost or benefit coverage.
- voice complaints or appeals about the organization or the care it provides.
- make recommendations regarding the organization's enrollees' rights and responsibilities policies.

### Enrollees have a responsibility to:

- supply information (to the extent possible) that the organization and its practitioners and providers need in order to provide care.
- follow plans and instructions for care that they have agreed on with their practitioners.
- understand their health problems and participate in developing mutually agreed-upon treatment goals, to the degree possible.

## Mental Health Crisis? Help Is Available 24 Hours a Day

The Northeast Service Center maintains a Crisis Hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The staff member who takes your call can help direct your care. This may include an emergency referral or admission to a hospital. The team can make arrangements with all types and levels of care. If you have an urgent need, please call your Health Plan's number below.

### Benefits and Claims

Contact ValueOptions' Customer Service Department with benefit or claim questions about mental health or substance abuse.

### ValueOptions' Customer Service

Blue Choice of New England  
800-441-6631  
HMO Blue New England  
800-441-6631

CDPHP 800-700-4824

HealthAmerica 866-834-1717

Kaiser 888-681-7878

TDD: (All plans) 800-334-1897

Telecommunication Device for the deaf or those hard of hearing.

## ValueOptions

433 River Street  
Troy, NY 12180

### Important phone numbers

**NESC Quality Management**  
1-800-322-4824  
option #3

**Preventive Health Programs**  
1-800-322-4824, press option 2  
and X 2114

### E-mail us @

**Quality Management**  
[nesc.qualitymgmt@valueoptions.com](mailto:nesc.qualitymgmt@valueoptions.com)

**Preventive Health**  
[nesc.prevention@valueoptions.com](mailto:nesc.prevention@valueoptions.com)

### Web Resources

**For additional information visit the ValueOptions web site**  
[www.valueoptions.com](http://www.valueoptions.com)