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COA Report

California Orthopaedic Association

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TOP NEWS

Anthem Blue Cross drops out of 16 regions in CA — ACA Exchange Plans



Anthem Blue Cross

As of January 1, 2018, Anthem Blue Cross is exiting the exchange market in all but three regions. Citing market instability and changes to federal rules and guidance, Anthem Blue Cross will only offer its Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) plan in the following regions:

- Region 1: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne and Yuba counties
- Region 7: Santa Clara County
- Region 10: Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tulare

This will affect approximately 150,000 patients in California.

If you practice in any of the regions where Anthem has exited the Exchange market and treat Exchange patients covered by Anthem, your patients will be affected.

Covered California has been redirecting patients in the affected regions to other payors in their region. The patients are being automatically enrolled in the lowest cost Exchange plan in their area. This could mean that patients who previously had HMO coverage may end up with PPO coverage or vice versa or they may be redirected to a closed network such as Kaiser Permanente — whichever plan offers the lowest cost alternative.

It is important to note that:

1. Patients can choose an alternative plan, but they must make their selection by **January 31, 2018**.
2. Physicians can encourage their patients to select an alternative Exchange plan in their region of which they are in-network, so that their care is not interrupted.
3. CMA has prepared a document entitled, "[Surviving Covered California: Preparing for Changes in 2018](#)." We would strongly recommend that you review this document. It provides information on the 2018 Covered California changes including how a patient can remain with their physician if the physician is part of another Exchange network in their region.



Anthem Blue Cross makes changes to its proposed payment reductions —



Modifier -25

Anthem Blue Cross

Due to opposition from COA, the California Podiatric Medical Association, American Medical Association, and the California Medical Association, Anthem has agreed to delay implementation of a payment reduction for Evaluation and Management services billed with Modifier -25 until March 1, 2018. Previously, the reduction was scheduled to be implemented January 1, 2018. In addition, they have agreed to reduce the payment by only 25 percent instead of 50 percent, as originally proposed.

While this adjustment is an improvement on Anthem's original planned policy, our Federation continues to strongly oppose this unjustified reduction of physician payment. Ongoing discussions with Anthem will continue in an effort to secure further changes to the Anthem policy.

We also recognize that Anthem has recently implemented several other policies that are of significant concern to the Federation of Medicine and our patients, including those related to hospital outpatient imaging and retrospective review of payment for emergency services. We will also continue to work with our Federation colleagues to address these other problematic Anthem policies.

Physical therapists reach settlement with One Call



Work Comp Central

The Independent Physical Therapists of California agreed to settle a civil complaint accusing One Call Medical Inc. and its subsidiary Align Networks Inc. of running an illegal patient referral scheme, interfering with the rights of injured workers to choose a treating physician within a medical provider network, and acting as a claims administrator without being certified to do so. [READ MORE](#)

Physician Occupational Injury Research



The JAMA Network

Among 21 articles (5828 physicians) included in this systematic review and meta-analysis, the 12-month prevalence estimates for neck, shoulder, back, and upper extremity pain were estimated. The career prevalence estimates for degenerative cervical spine disease, rotator cuff pathology, degenerative lumbar spine disease and carpal tunnel syndrome were also calculated.

COA has also gathered information from orthopaedic surgeons in 27 states regarding occupational injuries they have suffered. [Results of the COA survey.](#)

Lots of healthcare on the Congressional plate in January



Medpage Today

Capitol Hill is slowly coming back to life after the holiday recess — the Senate is back this week and the House comes back next week — and Congress has a full plate of healthcare items to deal with. One big question is whether Republicans in the House and Senate will try again to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, now that they have repealed the law's individual mandate as part of the newly passed tax reform bill. [READ MORE](#)

Digital trends that orthopedic surgeons should know about in 2018



Becker's Spine Review

Over the last few years there has been several dynamic changes in the world of patient acquisition for orthopedic and spine practices. As 2018 approaches, here are 3 of the most important digital trends that practices should know about to continue to grow their patient volume. [READ MORE](#)



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