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SECTION 5-THIRD PARTY LIABILITY

5.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this section of the provider manual is to provide a good understanding of Third Party Liability (TPL) and MO HealthNet. The federal government defines a third party resource (TPR) as:

“Any individual, entity or program that is or may be liable to pay all or part of the expenditures for medical assistance furnished under a State Plan.”

The following is a list of common TPRs; however, the list should *not* be considered to be all inclusive.

- Assault—Court Ordered Restitution
- Automobile—Medical Insurance
- CHAMPUS/CHAMPVA
- Health Insurance (Group or Private)
- Homeowner’s Insurance
- Liability & Casualty Insurance
- Malpractice Insurance
- Medical Support Obligations
- Medicare
- Owner, Landlord & Tenant Insurance
- Probate
- Product Liability Insurance
- Trust Accounts for Medical Services Covered by MO HealthNet
- Veterans’ Benefits
- Worker’s Compensation.

5.1.A MO HEALTHNET IS PAYER OF LAST RESORT

MO HealthNet funds are used after all other potential resources available to pay for the medical service have been exhausted. There are exceptions to this rule discussed later in this section. The intent of requiring MO HealthNet to be payer of last resort is to ensure that tax dollars are *not* expended when another liable party is responsible for all or a portion of the medical service charge. It is to the provider’s benefit to bill the liable TPR before billing MO HealthNet because many resources pay in excess of the maximum MO HealthNet allowable.

Federal and state regulations require that insurance benefits or amounts resulting from litigation are to be utilized as the first source of payment for medical expenses incurred by MO HealthNet participants. See 42 CFR 433 subpart D and RSMo 208.215 for further

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reference. In essence, MO HealthNet does *not* and should *not* pay a claim for medical expenses until the provider submits documentation that all available third party resources have considered the claim for payment. Exceptions to this rule are discussed later in this section of the provider manual.

All TPR benefits for MO HealthNet covered services *must* be applied against the provider's charges. These benefits *must* be indicated on the claim submitted to MO HealthNet. Subsequently, the amount paid by MO HealthNet is the difference between the MO HealthNet allowable and the TPR benefit amount, capping the payment at the MO HealthNet allowable. For example, a provider submits a charge for \$100 to the MO HealthNet Program for which the MO HealthNet allowable is \$80. The provider received \$75 from the TPR. The amount MO HealthNet pays is the difference between the MO HealthNet allowable (\$80) and the TPR payment (\$75) or \$5.

5.1.B THIRD PARTY LIABILITY FOR MANAGED HEALTH CARE ENROLLEES

Managed care health plans in the MO HealthNet Managed Care program *must* ensure that the health plan and its subcontractors conform to the TPL requirements specified in the managed care contract. The following outlines the agreement for the managed health care plans.

The managed care health plan is responsible for performing third party liability (TPL) activities for individuals with private health insurance coverage enrolled in their managed care health plan.

By law, MO HealthNet is the payer of last resort. This means that the managed care health plan contracted with the State of Missouri shall be used as a source of payment for covered services only after all other sources of payment have been exhausted. The two methods used in the coordination of benefits are cost avoidance and post-payment recovery (i.e., pay and chase). The managed care health plan shall act as an agent of the state agency for the purpose of coordination of benefits.

The managed care health plan shall cost avoid all claims or services that are subject to payment from a third party health insurance carrier. If a third party health insurance carrier (other than Medicare) requires the managed care health plan member to pay any cost-sharing amount (such as copayment, coinsurance or deductible), the managed care health plan is responsible for paying the cost-sharing (even to an out-of-network provider). The managed care health plan's liability for such cost-sharing amounts shall *not* exceed the amount the managed care health plan would have paid under the managed care health plan's payment schedule.

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If a claim is cost-avoided, the establishment of liability takes place when the managed care health plan receives confirmation from the provider or the third party health insurance carrier indicating the extent of liability.

If the probable existence of a Third Party Resource (TPR) *cannot* be established or third party benefits are *not* available at the time the claim is filed, the managed care health plan *must* pay the full amount allowed under the managed care health plan's payment schedule.

The requirement to cost avoid applies to all covered services except claims for labor and delivery and postpartum care; prenatal care for pregnant women; preventative pediatric services; or if the claim is for a service provided to a managed care health plan member on whose behalf a child support enforcement order is in effect. The managed care health plan is required to provide such services and then recover payment from the third party health insurance carrier (pay and chase).

In addition to coordination of benefits, the health plan shall pursue reimbursement in the following circumstances:

- Worker's Compensation
- Tort-feasors
- Motorist Insurance
- Liability/Casualty Insurance

The managed care health plan shall immediately report to the MO HealthNet Division any cases involving a potential TPR resulting from any of the above circumstances. The managed care health plan shall cooperate fully with the MO HealthNet Division in all collection efforts. If the managed care health plan or any of its subcontractors receive reimbursement as a result of a listed TPR, that payment *must* be forwarded to the MO HealthNet Division immediately upon receipt.

IMPORTANT: Contact the MO HealthNet Division, Third Party Liability Unit, at (573) 751-2005 for questions about Third Party Liability.

5.1.C PARTICIPANTS LIABILITY WHEN THERE IS A TPR

The provider may *not* bill the participant for any unpaid balance of the total MO HealthNet covered charge when the other resource represents all or a portion of the MO HealthNet maximum allowable amount. The provider is *not* entitled to any recovery from the participant except for services/items which are *not* covered by the MO HealthNet Program or services/items established by a written agreement between the MO HealthNet participant and provider indicating MO HealthNet is *not* the intended payer for the specific service/item but rather the participant accepts the status and liability of a private pay patient.

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Missouri regulation does allow the provider to bill participants for MO HealthNet covered services if, due to the participant's action or inaction, the provider is *not* reimbursed by the MO HealthNet Program. It is the provider's responsibility to document the facts of the case. Otherwise, the MO HealthNet agency rules in favor of the participant.

5.1.D PROVIDERS MAY NOT REFUSE SERVICE DUE TO TPL

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985 contained a number of changes affecting the administration of a state's Medicaid TPL Program. A provision of this law implemented by Federal Regulations effective February 15, 1990, is described below:

Under law and federal regulation, a provider may *not* refuse to furnish services covered under a state's Medicaid plan to an individual eligible for benefits because of a third party's potential liability for the service(s). See 42 CFR 447.20(b).

This provision prohibits providers from discriminating against a MO HealthNet participant based on the possible existence of a third party payer. A participant may *not* be denied services based solely on this criterion. Federal regulation does provide the state with authority to sanction providers who discriminate on this basis.

A common misconception is that incorrect information regarding third party liability affects participant eligibility. Providers have refused services to participants until the third party information available to the state is either deleted or changed. Third party information reflects the participant's records at the time the MO HealthNet eligibility is verified and is used to notify providers there is probability of a third party resource. Current MO HealthNet third party information is used when processing provider claims. Therefore, incorrect third party information does *not* invalidate the participant's eligibility for services. The federal regulation cited in the paragraph above prohibits providers from refusing services because of incorrect third party information in the participant's records.

5.2 HEALTH INSURANCE IDENTIFICATION

Many MO HealthNet participants are dually eligible for health insurance coverage through a variety of sources. The provider should always question the participant or caretaker about other possible insurance coverage. While verifying participant eligibility, the provider is provided information about possible insurance coverage. The insurance information on file at the MO HealthNet Division (MHD) does *not* guarantee that the insurance(s) listed is the only resource(s) available nor does it guarantee that the coverage(s) remains available.

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5.2.A TPL INFORMATION

MO HealthNet participants may contact Participant Services, (800) 392-2161, if they have any questions concerning their MO HealthNet coverage. Providers may reference a point of service (POS) terminal, the Internet or they may call the interactive voice response (IVR) system at (573) 635-8908 for TPL information. Refer to Sections 1 and 3 for further information.

In addition to the insurance company name, city, state and zip code, the Internet, IVR or POS terminal also gives a code indicating the type of insurance coverage available (see Section 5.3). For example, if “03” appears in this space, then the participant has hospital, professional and pharmacy coverage. If the participant does *not* have any additional health insurance coverage either known or unknown to the MO HealthNet agency, a provider *not* affected by the specified coverage, such as a dental provider, does *not* need to complete any fields relating to TPL on the claim form for services provided to that participant.

5.2.B SOLICITATION OF TPR INFORMATION

There may be coverage available to the participant that is *not* known to MHD. It is the provider’s responsibility and in his/her best interest to solicit TPR information from the participant or caretaker at the time service is provided whether or not MHD is aware of the availability of a TPR. The fact that the TPR information is unknown to MHD at the time service is provided does *not* release the liability of the TPR or the underlying responsibility of the provider to utilize those TPR benefits.

A few of the more common health insurance resources are:

- If the participant is married or employed, coverage may be available through the participant's or spouse’s employment.
- If the participant is a foster child, the natural parent may carry health insurance for that child.
- The noncustodial parent may have insurance on the child or may be ordered to provide health insurance as part of his/her child support obligation.
- CHAMPUS/CHAMPVA or veteran’s benefits may provide coverage for families of active duty military personnel, retired military personnel and their families, and for disabled veterans, their families and survivors. A veteran may have additional medical coverage if the veteran elected to be covered under the “Improved Pension Program,” effective in 1979.
- If the participant is 65 or over, it is very likely that they are covered by Medicare. To meet Medicare Part B requirements, individuals need only be 65 (plus a residency

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requirement for aliens or refugees) and the Part B premium be paid. Individuals who have been receiving kidney dialysis for at least 3 months or who have received a kidney transplant may also be eligible for Medicare benefits. (For Medicare related billings, see the Medicare Crossover Section in this manual.)

- If the participant is disabled, coverage may exist under Medicare, Worker’s Compensation, or other disability insurance carriers.
- If the participant is an over age disabled dependent (in or out of school), coverage may exist as an over age dependent on most group plans.
- If the participant is in school, coverage may exist through group plans.
- A relative may be paying for health insurance premiums on behalf of the participant.

5.3 INSURANCE COVERAGE CODES

Listed below are the codes that identify the type of insurance coverage the participant has:

- AC Accident
- AM Ambulance
- CA Cancer
- CC Nursing Home Custodial Care
- DE Dental
- DM Durable Medical Equipment
- HH Home Health
- HI Inpatient Hospital
- HO Outpatient Hospital—includes outpatient and other diagnostic services
- HP Hospice
- IN Hospital Indemnity—refers to those policies where benefits *cannot* be assigned and it is *not* an income replacement policy
- MA Medicare Supplement Part A
- MB Medicare Supplement Part B
- MD Physician—coverage includes services provided and billed by a health care professional
- MH Medicare Replacement HMO

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- PS Psychiatric—physician coverage includes services provided and billed by a health care professional
- RX Pharmacy
- SC Nursing Home Skilled Care
- SU Surgical
- VI Vision

5.4 COMMERCIAL MANAGED HEALTH CARE PLANS

Employers frequently offer commercial managed health care plans to their employees in an effort to keep insurance costs more reasonable. Most of these policies require the patient to use the plan’s designated health care providers. Other providers are considered “out-of-plan” and those services are *not* reimbursed by the commercial managed health care plan unless a referral was made by the commercial managed health care plan provider or, in the case of emergencies, the plan authorized the services (usually within 48 hours after the service was provided). Some commercial managed-care policies pay an out-of-plan provider at a reduced rate.

At this time, MO HealthNet reimburses providers who are *not* affiliated with the commercial managed health care plan. The provider *must* attach a denial from the commercial managed-care plan to the MO HealthNet claim form for MO HealthNet to consider the claim for payment.

Frequently, commercial managed health care plans require a copayment from the patient in addition to the amounts paid by the insurance plan. MO HealthNet does *not* reimburse copayments. This copayment may *not* be billed to the MO HealthNet participant or the participant's guardian caretaker. In order for a copayment to be collected the parent, guardian or responsible party *must* also be the subscriber or policyholder on the insurance policy and *not* a MO HealthNet participant.

5.5 MEDICAL SUPPORT

It is common for courts to require (usually in the case of divorce or separation) that the noncustodial parent provide medical support through insurance coverage for their child(ren). Medical support is included on all administrative orders for child support established by the Family Support Division.

At the time the provider obtains MO HealthNet and third party resource information from the child’s caretaker, the provider should ask whether this type of resource exists. Medical support is a primary resource. There are new rules regarding specific situations for which the provider can require the MO HealthNet agency to collect from the medical support resource. Refer to Section 5.7 for details.

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It *must* be stressed that if the provider opts *not* to collect from the third party resource in these situations, recovery is limited to the MO HealthNet payment amount. By accepting MO HealthNet reimbursement, the provider gives up the right to collect any additional amounts due from the insurance resource. Federal regulation requires any excess amounts collected by the MO HealthNet agency be distributed to the participant/policyholder.

5.6 PROVIDER CLAIM DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

MO HealthNet is *not* responsible for payment of claims denied by the third party resource if all required forms were *not* submitted to the TPR, if the TPR's claim filing instructions were *not* followed, if the TPR needs additional information to process the claim or if any other payment precondition was *not* met. Postpayment review of claims may be conducted to verify the validity of the insurance denial. The MO HealthNet payment amount is recovered if the denial is related to reasons noted above and MO HealthNet paid the claim. MO HealthNet's timely filing requirements are *not* extended due to difficulty in obtaining the necessary documentation from the third party resource for filing with MO HealthNet. Refer to Section 4 regarding timely filing limitations.

If the provider or participant is having difficulty obtaining the necessary documentation from the third party resource, the provider should contact Program Relations, (573) 751-2896, or the TPL Unit directly, (573) 751-2005, for further instructions. *Because difficulty in obtaining necessary TPR documentation does not extend MO HealthNet's timely filing limitations, please contact the TPL Unit or Provider Relations early to obtain assistance.*

5.6.A EXCEPTION TO TIMELY FILING LIMIT

The 12-month initial filing rule can be extended if a third party payer, after making a payment to a provider, being satisfied that the payment is proper and correct, later reverses the payment determination, sometimes after 12 months have elapsed, and requests the provider to return the payment. Because TPL was clearly available to cover the full amount of liability, and this was known to the provider, the provider may not have initially filed a claim with the State agency. The problem occurs when the provider, after having repaid the third party, wishes to file the claim with MO HealthNet, and is unable to do so because more than 12 months have elapsed since the date of service. Under this set of circumstances, the provider may file a claim with the MO HealthNet agency later than 12 months from the date of service. The provider *must* submit this type of claim to the Third Party Liability Unit at P.O. Box 6500, Jefferson City, MO 65102-6500 for special handling. The state may accept and pay this type of claim without regard to the 12-month rule; however, the 24-month rule as found in 45 CFR 95.7 still applies.

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5.6.B TPR CLAIM PAYMENT DENIAL

If the participant eligibility file indicates there is applicable insurance coverage relating to the provider's claim type and a third party payment amount is *not* indicated on the claim, or documentation is *not* attached to indicate a bonafide denial of payment by the insurance company, the claim is denied for MO HealthNet payment.

A bonafide denial is defined as an explanation of benefits from an insurance plan that clearly states that the submitted services are *not* payable for reasons other than failure to meet claim filing requirements. For instance, a denial from a TPR stating the service is *not* covered by the plan, exceeds usual and customary charges, or was applied to a deductible are all examples of bonafide denials. The MO HealthNet agency *must* be able to identify that the denial originated from the TPR and the reason for the denial is clearly stated. If the insurance company uses denial codes, be sure to include the explanation of that code. A handwritten note from the provider or from an unidentifiable source is *not* a bonafide denial.

The claim is denied if the "Other" accident box in Field #10 of the CMS-1500 claim form is marked and the eligibility file indicates there is an insurance coverage code of 40. MO HealthNet denies payment if the claim does *not* indicate insurance payment or there is no bonafide TPR denial attached to the claim. Do *not* mark this box unless the services are applicable to an accident.

To avoid unnecessary delay in payment of claims, it is extremely important to follow the claim completion instructions relating to third party liability found in the provider manual. Incorrect completion of the claim form may result in denial or a delay in payment of the claim.

5.7 THIRD PARTY LIABILITY BYPASS

There are certain claims that are *not* subjected to Third Party Liability edits in the MO HealthNet payment system. These claims are paid subject to all other claim submission requirements being met. MO HealthNet seeks recovery from the third party resource after MO HealthNet reimbursement has been made to the provider. If the third party resource reimburses MO HealthNet more than the maximum MO HealthNet allowable, by federal regulation this overpayment *must* be forwarded to the participant/policyholder.

The provider may choose *not* to pursue the third party resource and submit a claim to MO HealthNet. The provider's payment is limited to the maximum MO HealthNet allowable. The following services bypass Third Party Liability edits in the MO HealthNet claims payment system:

- The claim is for personal care or homemaker/chore services.



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- The claim is for adult day health care.
- The claim is for mentally retarded/developmentally disabled (MRDD) waiver services.
- The claim is for a child who is covered by a noncustodial parent’s medical support order.
- The claim is related to preventative pediatric care for those participants under age 21 and has one of the following PRIMARY diagnosis codes:

V01-V07.9	V72.0-V72.3	V78.2-V78.3	V82.3-V82.4
V20-V20.2	V73-V75.9	V79.2-V79.3	EPS
V70.0	V77.0-V77.7	V79.8	

- The claim relates to prenatal care for pregnant women and has one of the following:

A. PRIMARY diagnosis codes:

V22-V23.9	**640-648.9	**673-673.8
V28-V28.9	**651-658.9	**675-676.9
		**671-671.9

** Diagnosis codes require fourth and fifth digits. Claim is exempt from TPL denial only if the fifth digit is 3.

OR

B. Procedure Codes:

59400	-----Global Delivery—Vaginal
59425,	Global Prenatal
59426	
59510	-----Global Cesarean

5.8 MO HEALTHNET INSURANCE RESOURCE REPORT (TPL-4)

Many times a provider may learn of a change in insurance information prior to MO HealthNet as the provider has an immediate contact with their patients. If the provider learns of new insurance information or of a change in the TPL information, they may submit the information to the MO HealthNet agency to be verified and updated to the participant's eligibility file.

The provider may report this new information to the MO HealthNet agency using the MO HealthNet Insurance Resource Report. Complete the form as fully as possible to facilitate the verification of the

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information. Do *not* attach claims to process for payment. They *cannot* be processed for payment due to the verification process.

Please allow six to eight weeks for the information to be verified and updated to the participant's eligibility file. Providers wanting confirmation of the state's response should indicate so on the form and ensure the name and address information is completed in the spaces provided.

5.9 LIABILITY AND CASUALTY INSURANCE

Injuries resulting from an accident/incident (i.e., automobile, work-related, negligence on the part of another person) often place the provider in the difficult position of determining liability. Some situations may involve a participant who:

- is a pedestrian hit by a motor vehicle;
- is a driver or passenger in a motor vehicle involved in an accident;
- is employed and is injured in a work-related accident;
- is injured in a store, restaurant, private residence, etc., in which the owner may be liable.

The state monitors possible accident-related claims to determine if another party may be liable; therefore, information given on the claim form is very important in assisting the state in researching accident cases. 13 CSR 4.030 and 13 CSR 4.040 requires the provider to report the contingent liability to the MO HealthNet Division.

Often the final determination of liability is *not* made until long after the accident. In these instances, claims for services may be billed directly to MO HealthNet prior to final determination of liability; however, it is important that MO HealthNet be notified of the following:

- details of the accident (i.e., date, location, approximate time, cause);
- any information available about the liability of other parties;
- possible other insurance resources;
- if a lien was filed prior to billing MO HealthNet.

This information may be submitted to MO HealthNet directly on the claim form, by calling the TPL Unit, (573) 751-2005, or by completing the Accident Report. Providers may duplicate this form as needed.

5.9.A TPL RECOVERY ACTION

Accident-related claims are processed for payment by MO HealthNet. The Third Party Liability Unit seeks recovery from the potentially liable third party on a postpayment basis. Once MO HealthNet is billed, the MO HealthNet payment precludes any further recovery

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action by the provider. The MO HealthNet provider may *not* then bill the participant or his/her attorney.

5.9.B LIENS

Providers may *not* file a lien for MO HealthNet covered services after they have billed MO HealthNet. If a lien was filed prior to billing MO HealthNet, and the provider subsequently receives payment from MO HealthNet, the provider *must* file a notice of lien withdrawal for the covered charges with a copy of the withdrawal notice forwarded to:

MO HealthNet Division
Third Party Liability Unit
P.O. Box 6500
Jefferson City, MO 65102-6500.

5.9.C TIMELY FILING LIMITS

MO HealthNet timely filing rules are *not* extended past specified limits, if a provider chooses to pursue the potentially liable third party for payment. If a court rules there is no liability or the provider is *not* reimbursed in full or in part because of a limited settlement amount, the provider may *not* bill the participant for the amounts in question even if MO Healthnet's timely filing limits have been exceeded.

5.9.D ACCIDENTS WITHOUT TPL

MO HealthNet should be billed directly for services resulting from accidents that do *not* involve any third party liability or where it is probable that MO HealthNet is the only coverage available.

Examples are:

- An accidental injury (e.g., laceration, cut, broken bone) occurs as a result of the participant's own action.
- A MO HealthNet participant is driving (or riding in) an uninsured motor vehicle that is involved in a *one* vehicle accident and the participant or driver has no uninsured motorists insurance coverage.

If the injury is obviously considered to be “no-fault” then it should be clearly stated. *Providers must be sure to fill in all applicable blocks on the claim form concerning accident information.*

5.10 RELEASE OF BILLING OR MEDICAL RECORDS INFORMATION

The following procedures should be followed when a MO HealthNet participant requests a copy of the provider's billing or medical records for a claim paid by or to be filed with MO HealthNet.

- If an attorney is involved, the provider should obtain the full name of the attorney.
- In addition, the provider should obtain the name of any liable party, the liable insurance company name, address and policy number.
- Prior to releasing bills or medical records to the participant, the provider *must* either contact the MO HealthNet Division, Third Party Liability Unit, P.O. Box 6500, Jefferson City, MO 65102-6500, (573) 751-2005, or complete a MO HealthNet Accident Report or MO HealthNet Insurance Resource Report as applicable. If the participant requires copies of bills or medical records for a reason other than third party liability, it is *not* necessary to contact the Third Party Liability Unit or complete the forms referenced above.
- Prior to releasing bills or medical records to the participant, the provider *must* stamp or write across the bill, "Paid by MO HealthNet" or "Filed with MO HealthNet" in compliance with 13 CSR 70-3.040.

5.11 OVERPAYMENT DUE TO RECEIPT OF A THIRD PARTY RESOURCE

If the provider receives payment from a third party resource after receiving MO HealthNet reimbursement for the covered service, the provider *must* promptly submit an Individual Adjustment Request form to MO HealthNet for the partial or full recovery of the MO HealthNet payment. The amount to be refunded *must* be the full amount of the other resource payment, *not* to exceed the amount of the MO HealthNet payment. Refer to Section 6 for information regarding adjustments.

5.12 THE HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM PAYMENT (HIPP) PROGRAM

The Health Insurance Premium Payment (HIPP) Program is a MO HealthNet Program that pays for the cost of health insurance premiums for certain MO HealthNet participants. The program purchases health insurance for MO HealthNet-eligible participants when it is determined cost effective. Cost effective means that it costs less to buy the health insurance to cover medical care than to pay for the same services with MO HealthNet funds. The HIPP Program *cannot* find health insurance policies for MO HealthNet participants, rather it purchases policies already available to participants through employers, former employers, labor unions, credit unions, church affiliations,

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other organizations, or individual policies. Certain participants may have to participate in this program as a condition of their continued MO HealthNet eligibility. Other participants may voluntarily enroll in the program. Questions about the program can be directed to:

MO HealthNet Division
TPL Unit - HIPP Section
P.O. Box 6500
Jefferson City, MO 65102-6500
or by calling (573) 751-2005.

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COINSURANCE: Coinsurance is a percentage of charges for a specific service, which is the responsibility of the beneficiary when a service is delivered. For example, a beneficiary may be responsible for 20 percent of the charge of any primary care visits. MO HealthNet pays only up to the MO HealthNet allowable minus any amounts paid by the third party resource regardless of any coinsurance amount.

COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE PLAN: The comprehensive plan is also sometimes called a wraparound plan. Despite the name, comprehensive plans do not supply coverage as extensive as that of traditional insurance. Instead these plans are labeled “comprehensive” because they have no separate categories of insurance coverage. A comprehensive plan operates basically like a full major medical plan, with per-person and per-family deductibles, as well as coinsurance requirements.

COPAYMENT: Copayments are fixed dollar amounts identified by the insurance policy that are the responsibility of the patient; e.g., \$3 that a beneficiary must pay when they use a particular service or services. MO HealthNet cannot reimburse copayment amounts. An insurance plan’s copayment requirements should not be confused with the MO HealthNet cost sharing (copayment, coinsurance, shared dispensing fee) requirements established for specific MO HealthNet services.

DEDUCTIBLE: Deductibles are amounts that an individual must pay out-of-pocket before third party benefits are made available to pay health care costs. Deductibles may be service specific and apply only to the use of certain health care services, or may be a total amount that must be paid for all service use, prior to benefits being available. MO HealthNet pays only up to the MO HealthNet allowable regardless of the deductible amount.

FLEXIBLE BENEFIT OR CAFETERIA PLANS: Flexible benefit plans operate rather like a defined contribution pension plan in that the employer pays a fixed and predetermined amount.

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Employees generally share some portion of the plan's premium costs and thus are at risk if costs go up. Flexible benefit plans allow employees to pick what benefits they want. Several types of flexible programs exist, and three of the more popular forms include modular packages, core-plus plans, and full cafeteria plans.

Modular plans offer a set number of predetermined policy options at an equal dollar value but includes different benefits. Core-plus plans have a set "core" of employer-paid benefits, which usually include basic hospitalization, physician, and major medical insurance. Other benefit options, such as dental and vision, can be added at the employees' expense. Full cafeteria plans feature employer-paid "benefit dollars" which employees can use to purchase the type of coverage desired.

MANAGED CARE PLANS: Managed care plans generally provide full protection in that subscribers incur no additional expenses other than their premiums (and a copay charge if specified). These plans, however, limit the choice of hospitals and doctors.

Managed care plans come in two basic forms. The first type, sometimes referred to as a staff or group model health maintenance organization, encompasses the traditional HMO model used by organizations like Kaiser Permanente or SANUS. The physicians are salaried employees of the HMO, and a patient's choice of doctors is often determined by who is on call when the patient visits.

The second type of managed care plan is known as an individual (or independent) practice association (IPA) or a preferred provider organization (PPO), each of which is a network of doctors who work individually out of their own offices. This arrangement gives the patient some degree of choice within the group. If a patient goes outside the network, however, the plan reimburses at a lower percentage. Generally an IPA may be prepaid, while a PPO is similar to a traditional plan, in that claims may be filed and reimbursed at a predetermined rate if the services of a participating doctor are utilized. Some IPAs function as HMOs.

SELF-INSURANCE PLANS: An alternative to paying premiums to an insurance company or managed-care plan is for an employer to self-insure. One way to self-insure is to establish a section 501(c)(9) trust, commonly referred to as a VEBA (Voluntary Employee Benefit Association). The VEBA must represent employees' interest, and it may or may not have employee representation on the board. It is, in effect, a separate entity or trust devoted to providing life, illness, or accident benefits to members.

A modified form of self-insurance, called minimum premium, allows the insurance company to charge only a minimum premium that includes a specified percentage of projected annual premiums, plus administrative and legal costs (retention) and a designated percentage of the annual premium. The employer usually holds the claim reserves and earns the interest paid on these funds.

Section 5 - Third Party Liability

Claims administration may be done by the old insurance carrier, which virtually guarantees replication of the former insurance program's administration. Or the self-insurance program can be serviced through the employer's own benefits office, an option commonly employed by very large companies of 10,000 or more employees. The final option is to hire an outside third-party administrator (TPA) to process claims.

TRADITIONAL INSURANCE PLAN: Provides first-dollar coverage with usually three categories of benefits: (1) hospital, (2) medical/surgical, and (3) supplemental major medical, which provides for protection for medical care not covered under the first two categories. Variations and riders to these plans may offer coverage for maternity care, prescription drugs, home and office visits, and other medical expenses.

END OF SECTION

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