

HEART *to* HEART Provider Update



SUMMER 2026

Dear USFHP of Southern New England Provider Community,

As we look ahead to what we hope will be a beautiful, sun-filled summer, we want to pause and thank you for the dedication, compassion, and professionalism you bring to work every day.

In this issue, we will highlight the important contributions of military caregivers during May, the Month of the Military Caregiver; share insights from our review of Upper Respiratory Infection treatment practices within USFHP; and provide educational updates on the Healthy People 2030 Initiative. You will also find a helpful reminder regarding ABA services and TRICARE Autism Care Demonstration (ACD) reporting requirements.

Across all care settings, your work helps ensure our members receive quality care. We appreciate your continued support of our members and their families.

With warm regards,

US Family Health Plan of Southern New England

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Military Cultural Competency

Month of the Military Caregiver

May is recognized as the Month of the Military Caregiver, a time to acknowledge the often unseen individuals who play a critical role in the recovery and long-term wellbeing of service members and veterans. For medical professionals, these caregivers are essential partners in care because they frequently manage complex medication regimens, monitoring symptoms, coordination of appointments, and providing emotional support under sustained stress. Their contributions directly influence clinical outcomes, yet they may remain under-recognized within traditional care models. Organizations like Hidden Heroes (visit hiddenheroes.org to learn more) have helped bring national attention to the challenges faced by these caregivers, including burnout, financial strain, and gaps in access to coordinated healthcare resources.

Integrating caregiver support into clinical practice is not just compassionate but is clinically strategic. Connecting families with trusted resources, such as the Code of Support Foundation (visit codeofsupport.org to learn more), can improve continuity of care and reduce preventable complications. These organizations offer education, peer support, and case coordination services that complement medical treatment plans. As frontline providers, clinicians have an opportunity to routinely assess caregiver capacity, provide anticipatory guidance, and facilitate referrals. Recognizing military caregivers as integral members of the care team ultimately strengthens patient outcomes and supports the resilience of the broader military and veteran health ecosystem.

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Results of Review to Treatment of Upper Respiratory Infections

US Family Health Plan (USFHP) has completed a review of the treatment of upper respiratory infections (URI) in our network as a study for the Defense Health Agency. The HEDIS measure reports the number of members with upper respiratory infections who inappropriately receive antibiotics. We reviewed medical records from the members who received antibiotics for presumed viral illnesses. We found that there was generally insufficient documentation of member education regarding appropriate treatments for these infections. Most of the members who received antibiotics did not have any comorbidities or other medical conditions that would require them. There was an increased use of antibiotics in older members.

The Choosing Wisely campaign by the Internal Medicine, Family Practice and Pediatrics specialty organizations has practice guidelines for the treatment of URI. The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics also have programs for patient education about the unnecessary use of antibiotics: Be Antibiotics Aware and HealthyChildren.org. We encourage our providers to make use of these resources.

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Healthy People of 2030

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched Healthy People 2030 in August 2020. The initiative sets data-driven national objectives to improve health and well-being and includes objectives that can be updated during the decade to respond to emerging public health priorities.

Healthy People 2030 places increased emphasis on Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age. The five SDOH domains are Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Health Care Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context.

There is a specific focus in this iteration around the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). This includes an emphasized goal setting parameter around educating on and improving benchmark measures on SDOH such as safe housing, education, access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities, exposure to violence, polluted water and air, and literacy skills.

Providers play an important role in Health Care Access and Quality by identifying barriers to care, improving communication, supporting health literacy, and connecting members with appropriate clinical and community resources.

Learn more about these data-driven national objectives and how your role in the health space can contribute by visiting: odphp.health.gov/healthypeople



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ABA and TRICARE Autism Care Demonstration (ACD) Requirements

As part of USFHP's DHA contract and TRICARE Autism Care Demonstration (ACD) oversight responsibilities, USFHP must verify that ABA providers meet applicable ACD provider, training, documentation, and renewal requirements.

To help prevent authorization or claims-processing delays, ABA providers should submit required provider training attestations and ACD documentation according to USFHP requirements, including at initial authorization and renewal intervals. For instance, provider training attestation and all required documentation must be submitted within 10 business days of the initial date of service and at each renewal.

Current TRICARE ACD continuation requirements include updated treatment plans and outcome measures at least every six months, annual outcome-measure updates, and a new referral and DSM-5 checklist every two years when required to continue ABA services.

Annual training is required for all Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) providers. Access to that training and additional resources can be found below:

- The annual provider training can be accessed at <https://www.usfamilyhealth.org/for-providers/provider-training-aba/>.
- If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to call 1.800.818.8589.

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Access to Care Standards

Type of Care	Access to Care Standards for Participating Provider
Emergency care	Immediate Access
Urgent Care	Within 24 Hours (1 Day)
Routine Care	Within 1 Week (7 Days)
Specialty Care	Within 4 Weeks (28 Days)
Office Wait Time	Less than 30 minutes*

*Wait time should not exceed 30 minutes, except in the case where emergency care disrupts normal appointment schedule.