

## DMAS Agency Hurricane Helene Response Report

This report highlights the actions taken by the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) in response to Hurricane Helene. DMAS, in collaboration with its Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and community partners, is providing critical resources and services to affected members in Virginia. The plan includes the deployment of outreach teams, delivery of essential supplies, and coordination with local organizations to ensure the safety and well-being of members impacted by the hurricane.

### Managed Care Plan Member Response



**United Health Care**



**Anthem**

**October 7, 2024:**

#### **Overall Summary:**

Anthem has provided outreach to all of the Nursing Home Facilities, and all but 12 members in the affected areas. They have linked members to food and assisted with replacement of lost DME supplies. Auto-approve is in place for DME extension of benefits. In addition, extending authorizations (to include pharmacy) expiring this month for an additional 30 days for Long Term Support and Behavioral Health services. The Healthcare Plans continue to provide assistance with packing supplies, water, and needed items to local charities and organizations. Some of these include:

- Mel Leaman Clinic
- Smyth Co Chamber of Commerce:
- Chilhowie Public Library:

- Brookside Baptist Church
- Town of Chilhowie
- Chilhowie Public Library
- Chilhowie Lions Club
- People Inc

On Friday, VEC announced additional unemployment benefits which are now available to those impacted by the storm. DMAS is working with federal partners to inquire about any waiver availability for this income to help those who could potentially lose Medicaid coverage or be found ineligible at application due to the additional payment. DMAS reviewed the members coming due for renewal and exploring outreach attempts to this specific population in the event they still need to turn in information. Outreach information was sent to health plans as well as Transportation on 10/4 requesting the plans assist callers experiencing a hardship completing the renewal or application process. A special unit was stood up at Cover VA on 10/4 with select Customer Service Representatives available to provide direct support to individuals experiencing a hardship that covers: Needing a replacement Medicaid Card, Temporary address changes, an also protections in place for individuals to file an appeal due to loss coverage or denial of eligibility for a hardship exemption.

**October 5, 2024:**

**Overall Summary:** DMAS has reviewed the members coming due for renewal and exploring outreach attempts to this specific population in the event they still need to turn in information. Outreach information to be sent to health plans and Cover VA to assist callers experiencing a hardship completing the renewal or application process. This information will be transmitted today, 10/4. Cover Virginia call center is developing a script to provide specific assistance to individuals impacted. (Once the language is approved scripts will be developed.)

A broadcast with guidance is being drafted for local agencies with reminders for assisting individuals who may not be able to obtain certain documentation required for eligibility and circumstances for which policy allows accepting an individual's attestation

Protections are in place for individuals who need to file an appeal due to a loss of coverage or a denial of eligibility allowing for a hardship exemption should the individual report a hardship and need to appeal an action outside of the normal 35-day allowable period. A hardship exemption is also in place for individuals who are unable to attend a scheduled appeal hearing.

**October 4, 2024:**

**Overall Summary:** DMAS/MCOs have open edits for early prescription refills, authorizations, and transportation. We are also extending authorizations. Durable Medical Equipment Companies are providing gloves and sanitizer, as well as donating equipment. The Plans have contacted Complex Care members to ensure they have Durable Medical Equipment and

Oxygen. The Plans are on the ground providing supplies for cleanup, water, and toiletries. They are working closely with community-based organizations and providing funding. The Plans will also help schools when they re-open.

The Nursing homes and personal care seem to be stable.

DMAS is in contact with Tennessee and North Carolina Medicaid to help with boarder care issues and authorizations. Cover Virginia is handling temporary member ID cards, address changes, and Emergency Room coverage to help the locals.

#### **Aetna:**

- Notably, we did make some helpful changes on denials/authorizations in BH and Pharmacy. Also added a success story thought would be nice to share. I'll be on PTO starting tomorrow but will join huddle. Corey will compile our Friday EOD update. Thank you and talk soon!

#### ***Community***

- Aetna received confirmation that we can visit United Way with our mobile van, CORA, on 10/4. We'll be bringing the following items: 300 men's kits, 500 period supply kits, 20-40 new mom boxes, 20-30 cases of water, toothbrushes.

#### ***BH and ARTS***

- Aetna relaxed submission timeframes for providers in that area and is avoiding administrative denials that would unnecessarily impact/delay member care.

#### ***Pharmacy***

- Aetna extending by one-month any active authorizations scheduled to expire this month for members with a mailing address for the applicable areas. We can extend further if needed. Aetna waiving "refill too soon" denials on some controlled substances for the impacted areas.

#### ***Care Management***

- Aetna is continuing to outreach our members receiving dialysis and vulnerable members in the Grayson, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe counties and the City of Galax. We are still on track to have this completed by Friday.

#### ***Success Story***

- Aetna's Case Manager (CM), Megan Eades, outreached to a members Parent and inquired about any needs and their current situation related to Hurricane Helene. The Members mother expressed concerns that they had been without power for going on 4

days and had no water. They had also been out of work due to power outages making these resources harder to obtain, and unfortunately, would be out of work for the foreseeable future due to the nature of their work, power outages, and road conditions. Mother reported that their supply of food, water, and toiletries were almost obsolete, and they had been unable to bathe. Our CM called Virginia 211, Red Cross, and the United Way were unaware of any resources going to this specific community as they were helping other communities at that time. Our CM found a church food pantry, but they were only open limited hours and did not have toiletries. Aetna's CM team was finally able to find help through a local elementary school which was willing to donate food items, water and toiletries such as body wipes. Aetna coordinated to pick up the supplies/food for the family and specific foods that the family and kids eat. Our CM personally took the supplies to the member and her family. The family expressed immense gratitude and appreciation for help during their unexpected time of need. Aetna will continue to assist with resources and any other needs as they arise.

### **Anthem**

- We're Rolling out the following accommodations on auth/system edits for the impacted counties and zip codes in the SW
  - Relax out of network redirection processes for members accessing providers that are not in our network
  - Auto-approve DME extension of benefits requests to ensure members receive replacement DME timely.
  - Extend authorizations expiring this month for an additional 30 days for Long Term Support and Behavioral Health services.
  - Suspend refill to soon edits and extend pharmacy authorizations expiring this month for an additional 30 days.

### ***Partnerships***

- Update from our partnership with the Mel Leaman Free Clinic and the mobile unit: We received the bags, blankets, wipes, and tissues. Thank you so much. Dollars has been spent to purchase garbage bags, water, hygiene items, gloves, and easy access food items. Volunteers are filling bags for the people in the Konnarock area tomorrow morning. Road conditions have improved so we can hopefully get there tomorrow. Lisa, our Nurse Manager will be able to attend to minor wounds, injuries (pictures attached).

### **Molina:**

### ***Claims***

- Override edits have been added to prevent denial of claims for services where UM lifted prior authorization requirements.
- Providers with claims for inpatient services in Southwest and Roanoke/Alleghany will benefit from claims processing without an authorization for admissions with dates of service between 9/26/24 and 10/6/24.

### ***Provider Outreach***

- Provider communication has been prepared that will be distributed to providers in Southwest and Roanoke/Alleghany via our website and fax blast.
- The messaging includes encouragement to provide life sustaining services, authorization requirements if applicable, toll free number for assistance, claims filing address and member eligibility web link and Molina phone numbers.

### ***Transportation***

- Access2Care took proactive steps to make sure that all HP members made their trips successfully and the providers assigned were able to get them to their appointments safely and on time.
- Facility and member outreach was conducted starting 9/27/2024, no facilities reported to close due to weather.
- No reported facility closures due to weather/disaster for life sustaining trips from 9/27 through present day.
- No reported hospital discharge cancellations due to weather/disaster from 9/27 through present day.
- Access2Care network team reached out to all providers transporting members in the areas of VA most affected by the storm.

### ***Molina donations/Community***

- Relief sites in Giles County needed replenish of water and cleaning supplies. Community outreach team provided needed supplies to site as requested today.

### **Sentara:**

The total volume of outreach calls for CCS and BH are as follows:

- Total Outreach Attempts Made: 2,473
- Successful: 748
- Unsuccessful: 1725

Comments: No members reported having unmet needs

## **United:**

### ***Outreach***

- Successfully reaching 500+members. These efforts will continue, our team is sharing local community resources with a daily updated list of where members can find food and other services.
  - Team communicating resources accessible based on member location.
  - SDOH leader Shane Ashby was able to support welfare checks: Met several residents including UHC members - Provided water and offered support service information
  - DME vendor partnering with UHCs ground team:
    - Home Care Delivered contacted our team and is delivering to United Way in Damascus - Vinyl gloves, Hand sanitizer, Baby wipes
  - Dialysis: we have not identified any gaps with dialysis access for our members.
- Operation on the ground: Pictures and perspective from our Director of SDOH Shane Ashby
  - Damascus and Galax: FEMA is starting to allow clean up efforts: UHC delivered: Shovels, Mops, Buckets, Batteries

### ***Network***

- Our network team is aware and monitoring any provider access opportunities based on information shared on this morning's call.
  - Any identified providers at risk for termination will have additional consideration based on service area and/or the potential of creating an access barrier for members.

### ***Utilizations***

- Both appeals and prior authorization will be evaluated, and flexibilities applied when the need identified to reduce barriers to access or continuing services in the SW region.

On the ground: Supplies headed to Damascus and the teamwork in Galax.

## PRIOR STATUS UPDATES

### Anthem

#### *United Way Support*

- Anthem is considering launching a generator safety campaign to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, similar to efforts used in previous hurricane responses.
- Distributing meals to impacted members identified by our case managers through our meal delivery vendor, GA Foods
- Distributing diapers to Anthem enrolled parents
- Provide transportation to/from grocery stores or foodbanks
- Next Thursday, we're having an onsite volunteer event to build disaster relief hygiene kits through our partnership with Convoy of Hope
- Our contact stated that they are doing a regional assessment and will follow up with us on how we can aid where it's most needed. They have the disaster relief funds that we provided them that will help the region.
- United Way – Our contact stated that they are doing a regional assessment and will follow up with us on how we can aid where it's most needed. They have the disaster relief funds that we provided them that will help the region.
- We just shipped hand sanitizers, antibacterial wipes, bags, blankets, ponchos, and tissues from our marketing portal to 4 donation sites. We're being asked to hold off on sending anything to the Damascus site, but we are working with United Way of SWVA on supporting what they're doing at that location.
- We have asked A2C (non-emergency transportation broker) to provide details of cancellations on critical trips. Closure on facilities or transportation provider operation capacity at this time. So far, they are telling us no issues have been reported, but we asked for numbers.
- Our network team reached out to Ballad Health leadership to understand how we can support them. Ballad is in the process of putting together a consolidated message where we can support them across their impacted facilities, i.e., relaxed auths, case management intervention, and billing challenges.
- Connected with the Mel Leaman Free Clinic – they are looking to take their mobile clinic out to distribute hygiene kits. They reported insulin and oxygen are desperately needed and they are working with the navigator from the local hospital to get it out today.

### Aetna

### *Community*

- Connected with the United Way and they were transferring the lead over to FEMA.
- United Way is still taking donations, but the City of Damascus is handling all health and medical needs.
- Attempted to contact the City of Damascus; however, the voicemail is full to see what their current needs are and if we can assist.
- Our mobile van (AWOW) is on standby to visit on Friday, 10/4, to give out period supplies, men's kit, and water.

### *Care Management*

- Care Managers reviewed contingency plans with members to ensure sufficient backup should services be impacted.
- Our Intensive Care Manager (ICM) has completed outreach today to all PDN/Vented members in the Southwest and Roanoke/Alleghany regions.
- Starting targeted outreach to our members receiving dialysis in the Grayson, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe counties and the City of Galax by tomorrow at the latest.
- Began outreach to members in those regions considered "vulnerable." Examples of vulnerable members are members who live with dementia, members who live alone and are unable to leave home without assistance, members on o2 concentrators, members who are bedbound, members who are morbidly obese, and members who are homeless.

### **Molina**

Molina continues to work within our standard process and continuity plan to address the impacts of the hurricane.

### *Pharmacy*

- CVS/Caremark has configured allowing pharmacies to override PA requirements for those impacted counties in the Southwest Virginia and Roanoke region. CVS confirmed the Point-of-Sale update is in production.
- The Pharmacy UM team is also approving any prior authorization requests for members in the Southwest Virginia and Roanoke region.
- MPCC has been notified of the prior authorization lift for the impacted counties.

### *Case Management*



- Three additional wellness checks requested last night. 1 wellness check completed with member confirmed safe and with family in another location. Still working on other 2 members.

#### *Molina donations/Community*

- Southwest Virginia representative drove over 6 hours yesterday, dropping off additional water and supplies to Chilhowie, Independence, Wytheville, Sugar Grove (first to be evacuated by boats), and Marion. Will be out again today assessing areas of greatest need.
- There have been many requests from volunteers for insect repellent. This has been added to the supply drop offs.

#### **Sentara**

- Member Outreach had one member from Galax, VA (Southwest region) call in needing assistance. He lost his home and is currently staying in a shelter. Our rep referred him to several community resources and connected him with FEMA to start his application.
- Also, Chantel and my community outreach teams are working together to send some requested items to the Chilhowie Community Center in the Southwest region for distribution. We are sending diaper bags, onesies, pacifiers, water bottles, coloring books, sets of crayons.

#### **United Health Care (UHC)**

- Director of Health and Social Determinants of Health, Shane Ashby, and Outreach team member Marcus Adkins are on the ground assisting.
- Due to FEMA restrictions, individuals are not allowed into Damascus and Galax County. UHC is operating from the Central Hub at Highlands Fellowship Church, with United Way managing the transportation of donations into affected areas.
- Home Care Delivered is assembling packages for distribution in Damascus and coordinating with Shane Ashby to share resources.
- Outreach was conducted to high-risk members to provide alternative accommodations and assess impact on nursing facilities and IDD group homes.
- UHC is working closely with community organizations to ensure access to water, supplies, and resources for members experiencing power outages
- UHC lifted “refill too soon” pharmacy edits statewide.
- They are partnering with the Red Cross to provide support, with Emergency Response Vehicles on standby.

- UHC is organizing an onsite volunteer event to build disaster relief hygiene kits through Convoy of Hope.

#### *Partnership with Feeding SW*

- Feeding SW has received donations of water and food from UHC for distribution in affected areas.
- Home Care Delivered is assembling care packages for the Damascus area and working closely with UHC's outreach teams to ensure timely distribution.
- Coordinating efforts with Lowell Price in the Damascus area – they are assembling packages and based on their supplies they will be in contact with Shane Ashby to share resources.

#### *Supply Distribution*

UHC coordinated with Enterprise to deploy a truck filled supplies including:

- Water
- Food
- Blankets
- Tarps
- Toiletries
- Propane Tanks

#### *Partnership with Home Care Delivered:*

- Coordinating efforts with Lowell Price in the Damascus area – they are assembling packages and based on their supplies they will be in contact with Shane Ashby to share resources.
- United Way is managing the transportation of donations into areas restricted by FEMA.
- They are working closely with UHC and local organizations to coordinate relief efforts and ensure necessary supplies reach those in need.
- Enterprise will have a truck available for us to take the following supplies tomorrow morning: Water, Food, Blankets, Tarps, Toiletries (toothbrushes /toothpaste), and Propane tanks.

## **Medicaid Transportation Response**

### **Access2Care (Anthem and Molina)**

- No reported closures or operational disruptions in Southwest Virginia.
- Life-sustaining trips scheduled for Grayson, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe, and the cities of Damascus and Galax were completed as scheduled.
- All facilities and providers are operating normally without any closures or issues.

### **ModivCare (Sentara, UHC, Aetna)**

- Implemented the inclement weather preparedness process and began disaster recovery (DR) calls.
- Sent communication to DMAS and MCOs confirming the implementation of the weather preparedness plan.
- Updated stakeholders that KDK Transportation was the only provider to suspend operations at noon. Life-sustaining trips were prioritized, and affected members were contacted for rescheduling or recovery of transportation services.
- Monitored transportation services over the weekend, with no issues reported.
- Wall Residences Galax Deerhaven Day Center reported its closure for the day support site; no recovery efforts required.
- ModivCare reported business as usual with no changes or concerns in transportation operations.

### **Operational Impact**

- Access2Care: No operational impacts or facility closures in Southwest Virginia; business is operating as usual.
- ModivCare: No operational disruptions as of 9/30; business is continuing without any changes or concerns.

### **Generator Safety (Louisiana Department of Health)**

Please use your portable or stand-by generator safely by following this immediate advice from the Office of the State Fire Marshal:

- Place generators at least 20 feet away from your home.
- Look for any air entry points into the home near your unit and ensure that those are properly closed and sealed off, such as windows or doors, air intakes, nearby dryer vents or crawl spaces.
- Have a CO alarm
- Give these generators breaks that allow for any concentrated exhaust to clear away from the area.

- Open your windows and doors during this break to air out any concentration that may have collected in your home.

In addition:

- Check the manufacturing specs to verify the installation meets those specs.
- If there's a concern that the installation standards were not met, get an appropriate party, like the installer, out to inspect it.
- Ensure your generator is being appropriately maintained, including the oil change frequency requirements.

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. CO symptoms are often described as “flu-like.” If you breathe in a lot of CO it can make you pass out or kill you. People who are sleeping or drunk can die from CO poisoning before they have symptoms.

### **Agency Response**

- There are a total of 77,732 Medicaid recipients resides in the localities impacted in the state of emergency.
  - 62,261 are enrolled in a managed care plan.
    - 13,384 have complex care needs.
    - 48,877 are enrolled in acute care.
  - 10,471 are in Medicaid fee-for-service.
- **Federal Government (CMS)**
  - Meeting with CMS on Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss program flexibility options via the 1135 Waiver.
- **Eligibility:**
  - Additional Data: Today's task will include reviewing the members coming due for renewal and exploring outreach attempts to this specific population in the event they still need to turn in information.
  - Messaging for eligibility assistance, need for a replacement Medicaid card, temporary address changes and other assistance is *currently going through the review process* and will be posted to websites, the Cover Virginia chatbot, and social media outlets. Individuals will be directed to call Cover Virginia.
  - Cover Virginia call center is developing a script to provide specific assistance to individuals impacted. (Once the language is approved scripts will be developed.)
  - A broadcast with guidance is being drafted for local agencies with reminders for assisting individuals who may not be able to obtain certain documentation required for eligibility and circumstances for which policy allows accepting an

individual's attestation. (Once the language is approved that can be added to the broadcast.)

- Protections are in place for individuals who need to file an appeal due to a loss of coverage or a denial of eligibility allowing for a hardship exemption should the individual report a hardship and need to appeal an action outside of the normal 35-day allowable period. A hardship exemption is also in place for individuals who are unable to attend a scheduled appeal hearing.
- **Communications:**
  - DMAS will provide daily updates through Partner Point to ensure that all partners, including MCOs and local agencies, are aligned on the ongoing recovery efforts.
  - These updates will include information on available resources, emergency services, and recovery timelines.
  - DMAS will maintain close communication with all partners, including UHC, Anthem, United Way, and local organizations, to ensure a coordinated and effective relief effort.
  - Posting regular updates on social media.
  - Dedicated website for all Governor and State response updates with resources for Virginians.