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## Important Reminder for Medicare Advantage HMO Primary Care Physicians and Specialists

Medicare Advantage HMO primary care physicians are responsible for coordinating access to all medical services for our Medicare Advantage HMO members, including referrals to specialists, or services may not be covered. We discovered that primary care physicians who are not assigned to some of our Medicare Advantage HMO members have been providing services inadvertently. Additionally, specialists have been seeing these members without an authorization and/or referral. It's important for providers to understand the responsibilities of primary care physicians and specialists as they relate to our Medicare Advantage HMO product, BlueMedicare<sup>SM</sup> HMO.

### Important Reminders

- Only a Medicare Advantage HMO member's assigned or selected primary care physician can issue a referral. Providers must make sure this is done before services are provided to the member. You can verify if a referral is on file electronically through Availity<sup>®1</sup> at [availity.com](http://availity.com).
- Medicare Advantage HMO primary care physicians are responsible for issuing referrals to specialists. Primary care physicians who are part of a multi-specialty group must issue a referral in order for a Medicare Advantage HMO member to visit a specialist within the same group.
- Important: Medicare Advantage HMO members must have a referral and/or authorization on file. If an authorization or referral is required and one is not on file, then the services may not be covered.
- Medicare Advantage HMO plans do not provide coverage for out-of-network services except for emergency services. Out-of-network urgent care is only covered if the member travels out-of-state. Members must be referred to in-network Medicare Advantage providers.

### Exceptions

The following specialties are exempt from the referral requirement for Medicare Advantage HMO plans:

- Dermatology (first five visits only)
- Obstetrics/gynecology, podiatry, and chiropractic services
- Services rendered in an emergency room or in-network urgent care or convenient care center (authorization is required for inpatient services)

While we know that most providers understand the roles of Medicare Advantage HMO assigned and/or selected primary care physicians and specialists, we are sharing these reminders as a courtesy.

Florida Blue will begin to enforce the responsibilities of Medicare Advantage HMO primary care physicians immediately. In the future, if a primary care physician sees a Medicare Advantage HMO member who is not assigned to them, the claim will be denied. In addition, if a Medicare Advantage HMO member sees a specialist without a referral from their assigned primary care physician, the claim will be denied.

### More Information

For more information about our products, provider roles and responsibilities, and referral and authorization requirements, please review the *Manual for Physicians and Providers* on our website at [floridablue.com](http://floridablue.com); select the Providers tab (top of the page), and then Provider Manual.

<sup>1</sup>Availity, LLC is a multi-payer joint venture company. For more information or to register, visit Availity's website at [Availity.com](http://Availity.com).  
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