

**CITY OF CARLSBAD
HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN**

Amendment #3

Effective August 1, 2023, the City of Carlsbad Health Benefit Plan (the “Plan”) is amended as follows:

1. The following provisions contained in **ARTICLE III -SUMMARY OF BENEFITS**, (page 12) are **deleted**:
 - If the charge billed by a Non-Network Provider for any covered service is higher than the Usual and Customary Fees determined by the Plan, Participants are responsible for the excess unless the Provider accepts Assignment of Benefits as consideration in full for services rendered. Since Network Providers have agreed to accept a negotiated discounted fee as full payment for their services, Participants are not responsible for any billed amount that exceeds that fee. Usual and Customary Fees are not applied when a Participant receives Emergency care either Out of Area or at a Non-Network Hospital for an Accidental Bodily Injury or Emergency but will be considered at the Provider's billed charges or negotiated rate. Additionally, Participants receiving care not indicated as Emergency care from Non-Network Providers may appeal to the Plan for review of additional payment if the Participant believes there was no option to seek same or like services from a Network Provider. These charges will be considered at the Provider's billed charges or negotiated rate.
 - To receive benefit consideration, Participants must submit claims for services provided by Non-Network Providers to the Third-Party Administrator. Network Providers have agreed to bill the Plan directly, so that Participants do not have to submit claims themselves.

They are **replaced** with:

- Except as outlined in “No Surprises Act -- Emergency Services and Surprise Bills” below, if the charge billed by a Non-Network Provider for any covered service is higher than the Maximum Allowable Charge determined by the Plan, Participants are responsible for the excess unless the Provider accepts assignment of benefits as consideration in full for services rendered. Since Network Providers have agreed to accept a negotiated discounted fee as full payment for their services, Participants are not responsible for any billed amount that exceeds that fee. The Plan Administrator reserves the right to revoke any previously given assignment of benefits or to proactively prohibit assignment of benefits to anyone, including any Provider, at its discretion.
- To receive benefit consideration, Participants may need to submit claims for services provided by Non-Network Providers to the Third-Party Administrator. Network Providers have agreed to bill the Plan directly, so that Participants do not have to submit claims themselves.
- If a Participant receives information with respect to an item or service from the Plan, its representative, or a database maintained by the Plan or its representative indicating that a particular Provider is an In-Network Provider and the Participant receives such item or service in reliance on that information, the Participant's Coinsurance, Copayment, Deductible, and Out-of-Pocket Maximum will be calculated as if the Provider had been In-Network despite that information proving inaccurate.

2. The following provisions are **added to the ARTICLE, SUMMARY OF BENEFITS:**

Continuity of Care

In the event a Participant is a continuing care patient receiving a course of treatment from a Provider which is In-Network or otherwise has a contractual relationship with the Plan governing such care and that contractual relationship is terminated, not renewed, or otherwise ends for any reason other than the Provider's failure to meet applicable quality standards or for fraud, the Participant shall have the following rights to continuation of care.

The Plan shall notify the Participant in a timely manner, but in no event later than 90 calendar days after termination that the Provider's contractual relationship with the Plan has terminated, and that the Participant has rights to elect continued transitional care from the Provider. If the Participant elects in writing to receive continued transitional care, Plan benefits will apply under the same terms and conditions as would be applicable had the termination not occurred, beginning on the date the Plan's notice of termination is provided and ending 90 days later or when the Participant ceases to be a continuing care patient, whichever is sooner.

For purposes of this provision, "continuing care patient" means an individual who:

- 1) is undergoing a course of treatment for a serious and complex condition from a specific Provider,
- 2) is undergoing a course of institutional or Inpatient care from a specific Provider,
- 3) is scheduled to undergo non-elective surgery from a specific Provider, including receipt of postoperative care with respect to the surgery,
- 4) is pregnant and undergoing a course of treatment for the Pregnancy from a specific Provider, or
- 5) is or was determined to be terminally ill and is receiving treatment for such illness from a specific Provider.

Note that during continuation, Plan benefits will be processed as if the termination had not occurred, however, the Provider may be free to pursue the Participant for any amounts above the Plan's benefit amount.

No Surprises Act – Emergency Services and Surprise Bills

For Non-Network claims subject to the No Surprises Act ("NSA"), Participant cost-sharing will be the same amount as would be applied if the claim was provided by a Network Provider and will be calculated as if the Plan's Allowable Expense was the Recognized Amount, regardless of the Plan's actual Maximum Allowable Charge. The NSA prohibits Providers from pursuing Participants for the difference between the Maximum Allowable Charge and the Provider's billed charge for applicable services, with the exception of valid Plan-appointed cost-sharing as outlined above. Any such cost-sharing amounts will accrue toward In-Network Deductibles and out of pocket maximums.

Benefits for claims subject to the NSA will be denied or paid within 30 days of receipt of an initial claim, and if approved will be paid directly to the Provider.

Claims subject to the NSA are those which are submitted for:

- Emergency Services;
- Non-emergency services rendered by a Non-Network Provider at a Participating Health Care Facility, provided the Participant has not validly waived the applicability of the NSA; and
- Covered Non-Network air ambulance services.

3. The following provisions contained in **ARTICLE XXII -CLAIMS PROCEDURES;PAYMENT OF CLAIMS** (page 79) are **deleted**

External Review Process

The Federal external review process does not apply to a denial, reduction, termination, or a failure to provide payment for a benefit based on a determination that a Claimant or beneficiary fails to meet the requirements for eligibility under the terms of a group health plan.

The Federal external review process applies only to:

1. An Adverse Benefit Determination (including a Final Internal Adverse Benefit Determination) by a plan or issuer that involves medical judgment (including, but not limited to, those based on the plan's or issuer's requirements for Medical Necessity, appropriateness, health care setting, level of care, or effectiveness of a covered benefit; or its determination that a treatment is Experimental or Investigational), as determined by the external reviewer.
2. A rescission of coverage (whether or not the rescission has any effect on any particular benefit at that time).

They are replaced with:

External Review Process

The Federal external review process does not apply to a denial, reduction, termination, or a failure to provide payment for a benefit based on a determination that a Claimant or beneficiary fails to meet the requirements for eligibility under the terms of a group health plan.

The Federal external review process, in accordance with the current Affordable Care Act regulations and other applicable law, applies only to:

1. Any eligible Adverse Benefit Determination (including a Final Internal Adverse Benefit Determination) by a plan or issuer that involves medical judgment (including, but not limited to, those based on the plan's or issuer's requirements for Medical Necessity, appropriateness, health care setting, level of care, or effectiveness of a covered benefit; its determination that a treatment is Experimental or Investigational; its determination whether a Claimant or beneficiary is entitled to a reasonable alternative standard for a reward under a wellness program; its determination whether a plan or issuer is complying with the nonquantitative treatment limitation provisions of Code section 9812 and § 54.9812-1, which generally require, among other things, parity in the application of medical management techniques), as determined by the external reviewer.
2. An Adverse Benefit Determination that involves consideration of whether the Plan is complying with the surprise billing and cost-sharing protections set forth in the No Surprises Act.
3. A rescission of coverage (whether or not the rescission has any effect on any particular benefit at that time).

4. The following provisions are added to ARTICLE XXIX - DEFINITIONS:

“Certified IDR Entity”

“Certified IDR Entity” shall mean an entity responsible for conducting determinations under the No Surprises Act and that has been properly certified by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of the Treasury.

“Independent Freestanding Emergency Department”

“Independent Freestanding Emergency Department” means a health care facility that is geographically separate and distinct, and licensed separately, from a Hospital under applicable state law, and which provides any Emergency Services.

“Participating Health Care Facility”

“Participating Health Care Facility” shall mean a Hospital or Hospital Outpatient department, critical access Hospital, Ambulatory Surgical Center, or other Provider as required by law, which has a direct or indirect contractual relationship with the Plan with respect to the furnishing of a healthcare item or service. A single direct contract or case agreement between a health care facility and a plan constitutes a contractual relationship for purposes of this definition with respect to the parties to the agreement and particular individual(s) involved.

“Qualifying Payment Amount”

“Qualifying Payment Amount” means the median of the contracted rates recognized by the Plan, or recognized by all plans serviced by the Plan’s Third Party Administrator (if calculated by the Third Party Administrator), for the same or a similar item or service provided by a Provider in the same or similar specialty in the same geographic region. If there are insufficient (meaning at least three) contracted rates available to determine a Qualifying Payment Amount, said amount will be determined by referencing a state all-payer claims database or, if unavailable, any eligible third-party database in accordance with applicable law.

“Recognized Amount”

“Recognized Amount” shall mean, except for Non-Network air ambulance services, an amount determined under an applicable all-payer model agreement, or if unavailable, an amount determined by applicable state law. If no such amounts are available or applicable and for Non-Network air ambulance services generally, the Recognized Amount shall mean the lesser of a Provider’s billed charge or the Qualifying Payment Amount.

5. In **ARICLE XXIX - DEFINITIONS**, the definition for the term **“Emergency Services”** (page 111) is **deleted**.

It is **replaced** by the following:

“Emergency Services”

“Emergency Services” shall mean, with respect to an Emergency Medical Condition, the following:

1. An appropriate medical screening examination (as required under section 1867 of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 1395dd) that is within the capability of the emergency department of a Hospital or of an Independent Freestanding Emergency Department, as applicable, including ancillary services routinely available to the emergency department to evaluate such Emergency Medical Condition; and
2. Within the capabilities of the staff and facilities available at the Hospital or the Independent Freestanding Emergency Department, as applicable, such further medical examination and treatment as are required under section 1867 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395dd), or as would be required under such section if such section applied to an Independent Freestanding Emergency Department, to stabilize the patient (regardless of the department of the Hospital in which such further examination or treatment is furnished).

When furnished with respect to an Emergency Medical Condition, Emergency Services shall also include an item or service provided by a Non-Network Provider or Non-Participating Health Care Facility (regardless of the department of the Hospital in which items or services are furnished) after the Participant is stabilized and as part of Outpatient observation or an Inpatient or Outpatient stay with respect to the visit in which the Emergency Services are furnished, until such time as the Provider determines that the Participant is able to travel using non-medical transportation or non-emergency medical transportation, and the Participant is in a condition to, and in fact does, give informed consent to the Provider to be treated as a Non-Network Provider.

- 7.) In **ARICLE XXIX - DEFINITIONS**, (pages 114-115) the following provision is **added** and made part of the definition of **Maximum Allowable Charge**:

For claims subject to the No Surprises Act (see “No Surprises Act – Emergency Services and Surprises Bills” within the section “Summary of Benefits,”) if no negotiated rate exists, the Maximum Allowable Charge will be:

- An amount determined by an applicable all-payer model agreement; or
- If no such amount exists, an amount determined by applicable state law; or
- If neither such amount exists, an amount deemed payable by a Certified IDR Entity or a court of competent jurisdiction, if applicable.

- 8.) For clarification purposes wherever the following address for the Third-Party Administrator appears throughout the document it is considered to be **deleted**:

90 Degree Benefits
PO Box 54139
Lubbock, Texas 79453-41139

It is **replaced** by the following:

90 Degree Benefits
P.O. Box 21548
Eagan, MN 55121

The Plan Document / Summary Plan Description is amended to reflect these changes on the dates specified within. All other terms and conditions of the Plan which are not affected by this Amendment are unchanged, and anything to the contrary is considered null and void.

Amendment #3

Accepted By: **City of Carlsbad**

By: Wendy Austin

Date: 7-18-2024

Title: City Administrator