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Stephanie DuBois
Director Of Public Relations
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield
1155 Elm Street
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Manchester, NH 03101

Christine Cappiello
Director, Government Relations
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield
108 Leigus Road
Wallingford, CT 06492

October 10th, 2024

Dear Stephanie DuBois and Christine Cappiello,

We hope that our letter finds you and finds you doing well.

We have been following with interest the news report and additional information by Matt Caron of Fox61 in Connecticut regarding Anthem's decision to have proposed health care professional reimbursement rate cuts, such as to speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists, that were scheduled to take effect on October 1st, 2024.

As per our press release on October 3rd, 2024:

“Those cuts, starting on Oct. 1, would have negatively impacted therapy professionals for essential special needs services like speech and feeding. Those cuts would have limited access to care and forced families to pay more money for services. Thanks to excellent reporting by Fox 61, Anthem has made the right decision to roll back the provider reimbursement rate cut.”

The proposed rate cuts would have negatively impacted thousands of children in Connecticut who

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have special needs.

Matt Caron had raised concerns about this situation and had contacted you to seek clarification of the situation because he had heard from health care professionals that Anthem had gone back to a fee-per-service reimbursement process but that the reimbursement rates had decreased, in some situations effecting a decrease of 30%.

Per communications from Stephanie DuBois to him replying to his clarification question of the situation, it was stated that the reimbursement rates would stay *“at the current rate before 10/1”* and that *“After further evaluation of speech therapy coding, we will continue to reimburse speech therapists at a fee-for-service rate instead of the proposed Oct. 1 rate change we previously communicated to providers. We will be updating speech therapists in Connecticut as soon as possible and have proactively put a process in place so claims will not be impacted”*.

This would indicate that the proposed reimbursement rate changes were not going into effect as of October 1st, 2024, but would stay as they were before October 1st, 2024. This would therefore have indicated a stable continuity of reimbursement rates and thus no negative impact upon the necessary, ongoing care of thousands of people in Connecticut.

However, of concern to us is a follow up statement from Stephanie DuBois to Matt Caron, *“As I stated previously, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield will continue to reimburse speech therapists at a fee-for-service rate after Oct. 1. Fee-for-service is a type of payment method meaning we pay a fee per each service billed. My reply to your text message was referring to the previous payment method (fee-for-service) in response to your question”* and *“We made necessary adjustments to the fee-for-service rates, in alignment with rate changes that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) made to their 2024 fee schedule, an industry standard. In fact, Anthem’s fee-for-service rates exceed that industry standard benchmark. While specific codes may have increased or decreased based on the CMS guidance, the aggregate impact to speech therapists is the same”*.

Additionally, it has been brought to our attention that although some CPT codes for services will have a reimbursement rate increase, other CPT codes will have a reimbursement rate decrease. Please see below for information provided to us:

CPT codes that have increased (or will do so) after October 1st, 2024: 92508, 92520, 92521, 92522, 92523, 92524, 92605, 92606, 92608, 92609, 92610, 92612, 92616, and 92618.

CPT codes that have decreased (or will do so) after October 1st, 2024: 92507, 92526, 92597, 92607, and 92611,

We have concerns about what changes Anthem has put into place mean in the real world for health care professions providing care to children in Connecticut who have special needs, as well as to their parents who are seeking care for their children. We hope that Anthem shares these concerns.

Additionally, it has been brought to our attention that there is a rate cap of 80 that now is in place for occupational therapy and physical therapy services, which has caused some health care professionals to cut back on the time being able to spend providing such needed services to thousands of people in Connecticut, including children.

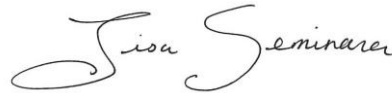
Please provide to us in a timely manner answers to the following questions:

- 1.) Are Anthem's reimbursement rates referenced above going back intact without changes "*at the current rate before*" before October 1st, 2024?
- 2.) Are Anthem's reimbursement rates referenced above not going back intact "*at the current rate before*" before October 1st, 2024?
- 3.) You had stated, "*the aggregate impact to speech therapists is the same*". How was this statement determined?
- 4.) For each of the CPT codes listed above, what percentage of the time is each CPT code billed? That is, when grouping all the above referenced CPT codes, what percentage of the whole group does each CPT code account for? It may be that commonly used CPT codes are the ones affected by reimbursement rate decreases and the less commonly used CPT codes are affected by reimbursement rate increases.
- 5.) Are there now decreased rate caps for services compared to before October 1st, 2024?
- 6.) If there are new rate caps, then what are the specific new rates caps?

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sincerely



Jeff Gordon, M.D.
State Senator, 35th District

Lisa Seminara
State Senator, 8th District

cc: Matt Caron