

# Not Great News for Out-of-Network Providers



WASHINGTON STATE COALITION OF  
MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND CONSUMERS

Advocates for Ethical Mental Health Care

www.wacoalition.org

Fall 2016

## In the Mirror: OON denials may be closer than they appear

by *Laura Groshong, LICSW, Coalition Lobbyist*

**O**ut-of-network (OON) claims for mental health have been a common way for clinicians to seek reimbursement. True, most patients have a higher co-pay, and it can take longer for you or the patient to get reimbursed, but the rates have generally been higher. There has usually been less doling out of 7 or 20 sessions at a time. This way of getting claims covered is changing—fast. I've started receiving several emails a week from clinicians who now must submit to treatment reviews—and denials of

care—even if they are out-of-network providers. This article will put this new development in context and give you some ways to minimize the time and loss of coverage that many clinicians are facing.

As I have been hearing for the past six years, the health care delivery system will be changing in the next couple as a result of the new practices that were in the Affordable Care Act of 2010. The goal of the ACA is to eliminate private practitioners and replace fee for service with capitated systems like

Accountable Care Organizations, health homes, integrated care plans, and similar new agencies. The complicated PQRS system for clinicians who are Medicare providers was the beginning of shifting to a “quality-based” system (read shorter-term treatment), fewer and shorter hospitalizations, and any practice that cuts costs. Thankfully, psychologists and clinical social workers will no longer have to use PQRS measures in 2017 or 2018 but other Merit-Based Incentive Payment System

*(Continued on page 6)*



### Coming Event

#### SUICIDE ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT WORKSHOP

by

**Robin Shapiro, LICSW**

**October 1, 2016 (Sat)  
9:00 to 4:30**

**See Page 7  
for more information**

### From the President

by *Sue Wiedenfeld, PhD*

Hello, Coalition members,

As fall is upon us and we get ready to start another season, we hope to help you get a clear update on Coalition activities, ways you can be involved, and what is going on behind the scenes.

Let's start with some very important considerations about staying current as a member in the Coalition. Please see the article our membership chairperson, Marianne Lewis, wrote on page 3.

If you are someone who has not completed your Suicide Prevention CE's, the Coalition will be sponsoring another presentation by Robin Shapiro, LICSW, on October 1. See details on page 7. Do let colleagues in need of these CE's know about the popular Coalition course with Robin.

This fall we are focusing on a few issues. Laura Groshong, LICSW, our lobbyist, put together a very quick survey of clinician's likelihood of completing the new CDP requirements so they can be credentialed. The concept behind the development of a rule is the need for more clinicians to be

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## From the President, continued

available to treat chemical dependency. The survey results are likely to be influential regarding follow-up legislative efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the rule as it stands.

Laura has put together several surveys in the past and we have been very impressed with the response overall to our survey results regarding insurance company restriction of care and several other issues. Survey results have helped the Attorney General's office and the Office of the Insurance Commissioner have enough data and detail to allow them to respond to our concerns. Thanks for the foresight to gather information this way, Laura. We are tracking restrictions to accessing care, and information can be sent to the Insurance Commissioner's office or the Attorney General's office—see the article on page 5 which shows the links. **This continues to be very important, so please continue to report any problems you may have with your patients accessing care and /or your ability to provide the care you believe is needed.**

Please read Laura's article about out-of-network providers and let us know if you have difficulty as an out-of-network provider. We know many have resigned from panels in the last year, and this will be relevant information for you.

You will have a chance to look at the Coalition Current Activities on page 4

and will find a link to a bit more detail about the Coalition accomplishments of 2015-2016. Thank you all who have helped make these accomplishments possible. I especially want to acknowledge our hard-working board: Marianne Lewis, Vanya Sandberg, and Abby Smith, and, of course, the endless hours and incredible energy Laura Groshong devotes to Coalition concerns as our lobbyist.

### Some have asked, how can I help?

First, stay up to date with your dues; see Marianne's membership article on page 3. Join our board or offer to do time-limited tasks. Please see the discussion of our need to expand our board (person power) and consider what might be a fit for your skills and interests (page 6). We would love to have you help the Coalition continue to protect and advocate for quality mental health.

As always, do let us know if you have other concerns that affect your ability to deliver quality mental health services that we may be unaware of.

Email me, [swiedenfeld@me.com](mailto:swiedenfeld@me.com), or call our helpline at (206) 444-4304.

Also watch for email updates about the above issues. Thanks for your Coalition support and membership.

Sue Wiedenfeld, PhD  
Coalition Chair ✧

### Who Ya Gonna Call !?!?!?!?

Coalition Helpline:  
206-444-4304

Who's My Legislator:  
1-800-448-4881  
(State and Federal)

Legislative Hotline:  
1-100-562-6000

### CONTACT US

Email:  
[wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com](mailto:wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com)

Website:  
[www.wacoalition.org](http://www.wacoalition.org)



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Health Professionals and Consumers

## Classifieds

Office space to rent? Job opportunities, trainings and workshops? Coalition members, list your ad in our newsletter for only \$35! Please submit your ad to: Newsletter Editor, [wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com](mailto:wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com).

## About Your Membership

by Marianne Lewis, MA, LMHC

It has been a wild time to be a mental health professional—with challenges ranging from new ICDM-10 diagnostic codes to threats to the mental health parity rights of consumers, to ongoing issues with insurance companies' payments to providers for mental health services, to questions within our own profession regarding best practices for treating clients with chemical dependency issues. And, on all of these, the Coalition has been there supporting both mental health practitioners and consumers.

It is the Coalition's job to stay abreast of issues, to inform our members, and to advocate on behalf of strong and sustainable mental health services in Washington State. To do this, we maintain respectful and professional relationships with legislators and their staffs, the Insurance Commissioner's Office, the Attorney General's Office, insurance companies, and other professional organizations within the mental health community. We respond to issues we become aware of by activating community-of-practice meetings, providing timely research results to decision-makers with rapid response tools such as Survey Monkey and with email blasts. We try to stay one step ahead of emerging issues and work to be participants in the solutions rather than just victims of circumstance. We model advocacy for our profession as well as for our clients.

When it became a mandate in Washington State to provide Suicide Assessment and Prevention Training to mental health practitioners, the Coalition stepped up to the plate to offer regular trainings by one of the most knowledgeable and effective trainers on the subject, Robin Shapiro. Our workshops have been highly regarded as the most comprehensive and worthwhile of any offered in the state. We have done workshops on HIPAA requirements and ethics, and we will continue to add more professional training and development whenever we determine the need.

As is clear by Laura Groshong's comprehensive list of Coalition accomplishments and attempted accomplishments (<http://www.wacoalition.org/accomplish.html>), we have achieved a lot, but there is always more to do. As a watchdog for mental health services, we pay constant attention,

and inform you about what you need to do to keep your practice healthy.

**So, now we need your help.** We have not raised Coalition dues in more than 10 years; to keep the organization healthy, we need members to step up and support us financially. Our membership rates are still low and are tailored to fit every budget. The stronger our numbers of members, the stronger the case we can make on your behalf.

**Won't you take a moment now, and either renew your membership or join the Coalition for 2017?** We operate on a calendar year, January to January, and some of you forgot to renew in 2016. So you can play catch-up now.

Just complete the membership renewal form enclosed in this newsletter or renew online to ensure you continue to receive the newsletter and timely information about issues as they occur, as well as receive discounts on our workshops, including the Suicide Prevention workshop coming up on October 1.

**Have some time available to help out in our efforts?** We have plenty of volunteer positions, including board and committee positions for people who can spare a few hours a month to lend a hand or provide leadership in our efforts.

**Thank you!** ✧

*If you are not getting Emails about our events, please Email us with your CURRENT Email address: [wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com](mailto:wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com). This is the best way to get Coalition news.*

### Join the Coalition

#### Dues

Activist (super supporter!)	\$150
Advocate (recommended professional membership)	\$100 and above
Ally (basic membership)	\$75
Student	\$25
Consumer	\$25

Renew Online: <http://www.wacoalition.org/handleDirectoryInfo.php?action=renew>

or

Mail to  
P O Box 30087  
Seattle, WA 98113-2087

## Coalition Current Activities

The Coalition has continued to work on long-term projects that affect the whole mental health clinical community and patients. They are:

- *Revenge reimbursement cuts of 30%* — This involves working with the Attorney General's Office, the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, the Washington Association of Mental Health Treatment Protection, and legislators. Please see the list of Coalition accomplishments at the Coalition website for more information (<http://www.wacoalition.org/accomplish.html>).
- *Offering support to class action lawsuit* — Several Coalition Board members are working with Albert Kirby, JD, on a lawsuit filed against Group Health for parity violations on covering psychotherapy. This lawsuit also addresses Group Health's decades-long attempt to define mental health treatment as only treating acute conditions. It was recently remanded to state court from federal court where Group Health had moved it, hoping this would quash the lawsuit.
- *CDP "alternative path"* — Despite three years of efforts by Abby Smith and Laura Groshong, DOH accepted the recommendation of the CDP Advisory Committee to require 1000 hours of experience, 500 hours of supervision, and 10 to 15 hours of coursework in substance use treatment for licensed mental health clinicians to become CDPs. The Coalition sponsored a survey (survey closed September 20) to see how many clinicians plan to meet these standards.
- *MH-PAC* — The Coalition continues to serve as a home base for MH-PAC, our political action committee. Make a donation today to elect candidates to the state legislature who support access to ethical mental health treatment at <http://537698059313616707.weebly.com/>.
- *Continuing Education* — Watch for more information on this year's Coalition-sponsored continuing education opportunities, including training on suicide prevention with Robin Shapiro, LICSW, and, in 2017, how to end or interrupt a practice by the Coalition's own Laura Groshong, LICSW, and how to begin and build a practice by Marianne Lewis, MA, LMHC.



The Coalition relies on our members to let us know what issues are most important to them. Please send Sue Wiedenfeld, PhD, Coalition Chair, [swiedenfeld@me.com](mailto:swiedenfeld@me.com), or Laura Groshong, LICSW, Coalition Lobbyist, [lwgroshong@comcast.net](mailto:lwgroshong@comcast.net), your questions and comments. Remember that your vote matters!!

Thanks for your interest in and support of the Coalition! ✧

## Received an Insurer's Denial of Mental Health Treatment?

Use the below links to report online. Send notification to the Attorney General's Office (AGO) (if ERISA plan), Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) (if private plan), Health Care Authority (HCA) (if state plan), and Medicaid (if Apple or other Medicaid plan), if needed mental health treatment is denied by Regence or any other insurer.

Keep sending denials and appeals of needed mental health care to insurers and oversight agencies!

THANK YOU to all who have participated to date. The AGO and OIC are receiving useful data from your efforts! The Coalition continues to support this momentum to protect mental health reimbursement. ✧



### LINKS to Oversight Agencies

- AGO** <http://www.atg.wa.gov/file-complaint>
- HCA** Contact either your legislator (find your district at: <http://leg.wa.gov/>) or Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) <http://www.hca.wa.gov/public-employee-benefits/contact-pebb-program>
- OIC** <http://www.insurance.wa.gov/complaints-and-fraud/file-a-complaint/>

### Oversight Agency Contacts

- AGO** Todd Bowers, Chief Litigator, Consumer Protection Division, Attorney General's Office
- HCA** Leadership:  
Dorothy Teeter, Director, Health Care Authority – [dorothy.teeter@hca.wa.gov](mailto:dorothy.teeter@hca.wa.gov)  
Dr. Dan Lessler, Chief Medical Officer – [dan.lessler@hca.wa.gov](mailto:dan.lessler@hca.wa.gov)  
MaryAnne Lindeblad, Medicaid Director – [maryanne.lindeblad@hca.wa.gov](mailto:maryanne.lindeblad@hca.wa.gov)
- OIC** <http://www.insurance.wa.gov/your-insurance/health-insurance/providers-need-to-know/>

*Upcoming news about beginning and ending practice presentations coming in the spring*

### Coming this next spring!

Are you just starting a practice? Thinking about ending a practice? Both of these times in our practices can be complex and challenging.

The Coalition will be sponsoring two programs next spring: One, by Marianne Lewis "Beginning and Building a Clinical Practice" and a second one, by Laura Groshong, "Interruptions and Endings: How to Close a Clinical Practice."

Watch for details after the first of the year. ✧



(MIPS) will eventually replace them, as it will for physicians in 2017.

Why do I bring this much larger picture up when the topic is out-of-network payment? This is the context for insurers feeling free to stop making OON payments as reliably as they have in the past. In general, any treatment that is more than once a week or more than a year will trigger a treatment review for an OON clinician. About 50% of the time, treatment will be denied, even if the reasons for the frequency or length of treatment are well-documented.



Laura Groshong

It is disconcerting to get a phone call for a treatment review with an insurer that you are not paneled with. It is even more disconcerting to find the funding of an ongoing treatment in jeopardy. Here are a few ways to address this problem if you find yourself in this situation.

- Tell the reviewer that you do not have a release from the patient and, therefore, cannot give them patient information. Then direct the reviewer to the patient as they are the ones who have a relationship with the enrollee. This sometimes leads to payment without further action.
- Tell patients when this occurs and, if possible, make this part of the treatment and a chance to act on their own behalf to question the need for a treatment review. Reviewers sometimes back down if the patient objects to giving out treatment information.
- If the reviewer insists on treatment information, give a summary, not the whole medical record (psychotherapy notes should never be provided to insurers). Have the patient read the summary before it is sent; this is a best practice supported by most codes of ethics.
- Remember that giving out patient information can affect more than the coverage of their treatment. Life insurance can also be affected if any information about the treatment is made available.

In short, OON clinicians can expect some changes in the way that these claims are covered. Staying off panels will no longer result in a higher rate of reimbursement or freedom from treatment reviews that often occur when clinicians are in-network providers.

What to do? Continue to send appeals to the insurer and have patients do the same. Send complaints to OIC (Paul Dabois at [PaulD@oic.wa.gov](mailto:PaulD@oic.wa.gov) is the point person there) and to the Attorney General's Office [Audrey Udashen, JD, at (206) 254-0561 is lead here].

We are in a time of change and should be prepared for these changes. They have nothing to do with the quality of care we provide or our clinical judgment. The Coalition will continue to advocate for true parity and our right to make treatment decisions. In the meantime, remember that being an out-of-network provider will not help us avoid the hassles of being an in-network provider as it has in the past. ✧

## Have you wondered how you can be of help to the Coalition?

**Read this newsletter, review what the Coalition's efforts on behalf of all clinicians have been, and ask yourself, "How can I help?" I have the answer. We need to expand our board. There is now space for some new energy and enthusiasm. Join the Coalition Board. It's a great group of hard-working, dedicated practitioners. Or, volunteer for time-limited tasks, or even be the volunteer coordinator. Read on....**

Here's what we need now.

**A new treasurer.** We have had a wonderful treasurer for many years who has decided to move on to other volunteer activities closer to home in Gig Harbor. She has set up a great system for tracking our financial activity, which has been invaluable. Are you good with numbers? She will show you her system. Could be a match.

**New secretary.** We are a friendly and lively group, and being secretary is a terrific way to listen to board activity and keep us on task by helping us be clear enough so you can keep a good record of our meetings. Very straightforward.

**Newsletter coordinator.** You may like this if you like to write—but you don't have to like to write. The main job is coordinating other's writing (prompting them to do it) and getting the articles to our media person, who puts it all together, graphics and all. The topics are decided as a group, and your ideas and writing would be welcome, but it can be as much or as little as fits your style.

**Volunteer coordinator.** We would love to have someone help organize for the times we could use a few extra hands; an example might be a couple hours in the morning on a day we offer the Suicide Prevention program. Or some other "day of" help on a program we offer.

**This is not a huge time commitment!** Meetings are once a month for two hours, usually the second Wednesday of the month from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Email me, Sue Wiedenfeld, if you have questions or if you would like to volunteer to be called for time-limited tasks: [swiedenfeld@me.com](mailto:swiedenfeld@me.com).

The Coalition is happy to work hard for the sake of all clinicians, but we can use some help now. Let it be YOU. Thanks for considering giving us some of your time. ✧

**NONMEMBERS  
\$150**

**COALITION  
MEMBERS  
\$140**

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education through the joint sponsorship of the American Psychoanalytic Association and the Seattle Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. The American Psychoanalytic Association is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The American Psychoanalytic Association designates this Live Activity for a maximum of [6 credits] (AMA PRA Category 1 Credits) TM. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This presentation also meets the requirements of WAC 246-924-240 (Definition of Category of Creditable CPE).

**IMPORTANT DISCLOSURE INFORMATION FOR ALL LEARNERS:** None of the planners and presenters of this CME program have any relevant financial relationships to disclose.

[www.wacoalition.org](http://www.wacoalition.org)  
[wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com](mailto:wacoalitionmhpc@gmail.com)

The Washington State **Coalition** of  
**Mental Health Professionals and Consumers**  
Co-sponsored by the Seattle Psychoanalytic Society and Institute  
*presents*

## **SUICIDE ASSESSMENT and TREATMENT**

Meets WA requirement for 6 hours of training in Suicide Prevention

by

**Robin Shapiro, LICSW**

**Saturday ~ October 1, 2016**

**9:00 to 4:30; registration 8:30**

To Register: [wacoalition.org](http://wacoalition.org)

In the last forty years, Robin Shapiro has volunteered at three crisis lines, obtained a B.A. in psychology, an M.S.W., directed a day treatment center for seriously mentally ill adults, had a thriving private therapy practice, written three books about trauma therapy, and trained or consulted to hundreds of clinicians. She has studied, practiced, and/or taught suicide assessment, prevention, and intervention for that entire time. Robin is known for her understandable, but entertaining, explanations, synthesis of different therapy techniques, and practical applications of useful interventions.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Participants will gain skills in recognizing, understanding, assessing, managing, and treating patients who have suicidal ideation or intent.
2. Participants will become conversant with the legal and ethical issues surrounding the treatment of suicide.
3. Participants will gain skills in the treatment of underlying issues in personality-disordered and dissociative patients.

**Swedish Medical Center | Glaser Auditorium**  
747 Broadway | Seattle, WA 98122

**\$140 Coalition members | \$150 nonmembers**  
*includes*

- Risk assessment and etiology
- Screening and referral
- Management of suicidal clients
- Treatment of underlying issues
- Treating families and friends of suicides
- Therapists losing clients to suicide
- Legal and reporting issues
- 6 CEUs for Social Workers, Counselors, MFTs, MDs, ARNPs, and Psychologists

Parking is available for \$5 on weekends at the Minor & James garage as well as at the Marion & Minor garage. For details, see the very last paragraph, "After-Hours Parking," at this link: <http://www.swedish.org/locations/first-hill-campus/first-hill-campus-parking>

# Join the Coalition

## The Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers

P. O. Box 30087 • Seattle, Washington 98113-2087  
206-444-4304 • <http://www.wacoalition.org>

Your dues support the Coalition's efforts to preserve ethical mental health treatment. Your dues also provide funding that supports legislative efforts, continuing education programs, our website, a Helpline, the newsletter, brochures, and our on-line member directory.

**Thank you for your continued support! It makes possible what we do. Please renew promptly. With this year's renewal, you will be included in our on-line directory.**

Send this form to:  
THE COALITION, ATTN: MEMBERSHIP  
P. O. Box 30087 • Seattle, WA 98113-2087

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Type of License \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS (if different from last renewal) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE Work (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### LOCATION OF PRACTICE

City \_\_\_\_\_  
Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

### PROBLEMS TREATED

- \_\_\_\_ Abuse
- \_\_\_\_ Addiction
- \_\_\_\_ Anxiety/Depression
- \_\_\_\_ Bipolar
- \_\_\_\_ Grief and Loss
- \_\_\_\_ LBGTQ
- \_\_\_\_ Learning Issue
- \_\_\_\_ Medical Issues/Pain Managements
- \_\_\_\_ PTSD
- \_\_\_\_ Relationships
- \_\_\_\_ Stress
- \_\_\_\_ Work/Career

### SPECIALTIES

- \_\_\_\_ Elders
- \_\_\_\_ Adults
- \_\_\_\_ Adolescents
- \_\_\_\_ Children
- \_\_\_\_ Infants
- \_\_\_\_ Family
- \_\_\_\_ Couples

### PREFERRED TREATMENTS

- \_\_\_\_ Psychoanalytic
- \_\_\_\_ Cognitive-Behavioral
- \_\_\_\_ Interpersonal
- \_\_\_\_ Eclectic
- \_\_\_\_ EMDR
- \_\_\_\_ Somatic Transformation

\_\_\_\_ Please check if you do not want to be included in the directory

\_\_\_\_ Please check if you are willing to volunteer for the Coalition

\_\_\_\_ occasional time-limited tasks

\_\_\_\_ I will help with political efforts

\_\_\_\_ ask me about other needs you have

\_\_\_\_ I will help with newsletter or membership (circle)

Legislative District: WA: \_\_\_\_\_ National: \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know? Call 1-800-448-4881

**I/WE can support the Coalition at the following level:**

### Professional Membership:

\_\_\_\_ \$75 (Ally)    \_\_\_\_ \$100 (Advocate)    \_\_\_\_ \$150 (Activist)

**Student Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ \$25**

**Consumer Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ \$25**

Renew Online at <http://www.wacoalition.org/handleDirectoryInfo.php?action=renew>

**THANK YOU for supporting THE COALITION**