



Provider Report: Fall 2020

We at Iowa Total Care (ITC) are happy to “see” you again. The fall season is here and we have highlighted some seasonal articles for you. Don’t forget to contact your [Provider Relations Specialist](#) with any requests you might have that can be included in the next quarterly publication.

We hope you will enjoy this information, and as always, we thank you for your partnership in transforming the health of the community, one person at a time.

Visit our website

COVID-19

As the virus continues to impact our daily lives and that of our members, remember the following:

1. Be alert for patients who meet the criteria for persons under investigation and know how to coordinate laboratory testing.
2. Review your infection prevention and control policies and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) advice for healthcare facilities for COVID-19.
3. Know how to report a potential COVID-19 case or exposure to facility infection control leads and public health officials. Contact your local or state health department healthcare providers to notify local or state health department in the event a person is under investigation for COVID-19.
4. Refer to the CDC and the [World Health Organization](#) for the most up-to-date recommendations about COVID-19, including signs and symptoms, diagnostic testing, and treatment information.

Visit IowaTotalCare.com for additional COVID-19 information for providers.

Fight the flu. Get vaccinated.

The flu season is upon us. Health experts are warning that the addition of another respiratory illness on top of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic can increase the risk of catching both diseases at once. However, unlike COVID-19, the flu is familiar and a safe and effective vaccine is available every year.

The flu shot is available to members at no cost. Don’t forget to encourage your patients to schedule their flu shot! Remind them that since they are an Iowa Total Care member, getting their shot can earn them \$10.00 in rewards.**

As a provider, you have the best interest of your patients at heart, and you have their trust.

Your recommendation is the most effective way to ensure they get their flu shot.

** for ages 18 and up.

Provider Effective Communication with Patients

You now have access to an online guide entitled, **Help Your Patients Understand Their Health and Health Care**. This guide is intended to show you and your staff how to help patients understand their health and healthcare, so they can manage their health needs and feel comfortable discussing those needs with you.

Here's why it's important to clearly communicate with your patients:

- Up to 80% of patients forget what their doctor tells them as soon as they leave the doctor's office.
- Nearly 50% of what patients do remember is recalled incorrectly.
- Patients may not ask questions because they are ashamed to admit they don't understand.

Refer to this [guide](#) for additional resources to ensure that your patients get the maximum benefit of their time in your office.

Iowa Department of Human Services gives ITC a "shout-out"

The following member stories were part of the Iowa Department of Human Services newsletter last month:

Iowa Total Care Goes Above and Beyond to Help Members Weather the Storm

The August 10, 2020 derecho that moved across the state and caused widespread damage affected many Iowans. Soon after the storm passed, Iowa Total Care (ITC) was on the ground in the some of the hardest hit areas helping their members. Here are some of those stories.

Smart Start Program Helps Pregnant Member

A pregnant member needed help following the derecho and she turned to the ITC Smart Start program for assistance.

Within hours of her request, Smart Start representatives delivered nonperishable food, bottled water, and baby supplies to the member. She was extremely grateful because the help affected her own well-being and the survival of her unborn baby.

ITC Helps Mother and Newborn Apply for Food Replacement Assistance

An ITC Member Connections Representative (MCR) reached out to a mother as part of ITC's postpartum program and learned of the mother's spoiled food due to no power and no refrigeration.

The MCR helped the mother and her newborn apply for food replacement through the Department of Human Services (DHS) without leaving home. The mother expressed appreciation for ITC's assistance, as well as the recovery assistance provided by everyone. She is also grateful for her baby's health, happiness and calm disposition during a stormy first week of life.

Disaster Response Team Replaces Diabetic Member's Medicine

When electric power lines went down during the derecho, two ITC case managers rose to the need.

The case managers knew the power outage meant food spoilage for most in the derecho's path, but that lack of refrigeration - vital to the effectiveness of medicines for diabetes - was risking the health of an elderly member cut off by the storm.

The case managers delivered food to the member at risk. They learned she had disposed of her medications because they were spoiled. They then conducted a Telehealth visit with her physician and ITC leadership to get new prescriptions approved, filled, and covered. The vital diabetic medicines were delivered to the member the same day. The case manager delivered the rest of the prescriptions the next day, along with ice, a hot meal, and a meal for later.

The case manager observed this member was in "rough shape mentally," so she stayed and talked. She learned that due to COVID-19, the member's homemaker services staff had not been to her house in several months. When the case manager checked back the next day, the member was in better spirits for several reasons: The power was back on, homemaker services staff had returned, and she had her diabetes medicine.

Members Receive Flashlights

With several members losing power, ITC's Community-Based Case Manager (CBCM) team worked quickly. The team found

two members who were without power and had minimal flashlights or candles in their homes. One ITC member had small children in the home and the other was elderly/disabled. The CBCM team purchased flashlights for both homes and dropped them off at the doorstep for them to use. Both members were very appreciative.

Whenever a member is in need, they should reach out to their Managed Care Organization (MCO) for help. The MCOs are available to assist members at any time.

October Marks the 75th Observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Many Americans live with disabilities—whether congenital or acquired during the course of life. Adults with disabilities are almost twice as likely as those without disabilities to report unmet healthcare needs due to problems with the accessibility of a doctor’s office or clinic.

“Modernizing Health Care to Improve Physical Accessibility,” is a resource presented by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). It’s intended to increase physical accessibility of medical services by providing tools to assess your practice or facility’s accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The guide includes tips and training materials to support efforts to reduce barriers and improve quality of care. [Download the guide](#) to learn more.

Fall Spotlight

If you are a contracted Iowa Total Care network provider, you have a [Provider Relations Specialist](#) that is assigned to the county in which your organization resides. These staff members are trained, and eager to help with education, training and specific areas of concern. Their goal is to facilitate a strong working relationship with our providers in the partnership of giving the best care to our members and communities.

Each quarterly Provider Report will spotlight two Provider Relations Specialists. This quarter, say hello to Karmin and Heath.

Karmin Erwine:

- I have 4 adult children, 2 dogs and a cat.
- I recently moved from a small town to Ankeny.
- I enjoy cooking & doing anything outdoors.
- I really enjoy working at ITC. I have great managers, a wonderful director, and my co-workers truly are team players.
- I’m hoping in 2021 to be able to visit with my providers face-to-face once again.



Heath Hill:

- I am a graduate of Southern Illinois University (Saluki’s) where I also played football. I then moved to West Des Moines and attended Des Moines University (DMU), where I obtained my Master’s degree in Healthcare Administration. Upon graduating from DMU, I accepted a position as a clinic administrator for the next 10 years for Iowa Health Physicians, which later became UnityPoint Clinics. I was recently married in August due to the wedding originally being postponed in May due to Covid-19. My wife and I have two cats and enjoy going to musicals at the Des Moines Civic Center.



- Fun Fact - I played semi-pro football as a middle linebacker for the Des Moines Blaze for 8 years. I now coach high school football for the Hoover Huskies, a local Des Moines high school.
 - I started with Iowa Total Care in December of 2019 as a Provider Relations Specialist and hit the ground running. I love the team atmosphere here at ITC. I love problem solving and building relationships, so Provider Relations has been a great fit. I am looking forward to 2021 in hopes that we are able to get back into the office for face-to-face interaction, and continue making a difference.
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What is CAHPS?

CAHPS (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) is a standard survey developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to determine patient satisfaction of the healthcare they have received. It includes the accessibility to medical services, physicians, specialists and communication skills of the physician.

Iowa Total Care participates in CAHPS satisfaction surveys annually for both the adult and child membership served. The survey results provide data that allows ITC the opportunity to identify strengths, and opportunities for improvement with regard to the health care members received from network physicians and specialists, including behavioral health. ITC values the responses and perspectives of our members as we strive to improve their experiences.

What does the CAHPS survey ask patients about their physician?

The CAHPS survey focuses on five questions about providers:

- How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that is easy to understand?
- How often did your personal doctor listen carefully to you?
- How often did your personal doctor show respect for what you had to say?
- How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?
- What number would you use to rate your personal doctor?

What can a physician do to improve communication to our members?

A.L.E.R.T. is a model intended to help physicians improve CAHPS questions and scores:

- Always
 - Listen to members/patients carefully
 - Explain in an understandable way
 - Respect what the member/patient says
 - Time management perceptions
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Provider Invitation to Join the Stakeholder Advisory Board

Iowa Total Care needs your help to improve the way our health plan works. Through our Stakeholder Advisory Board (SAB), providers and members can share thoughts and ideas. It's easy to participate in the meetings since they take place in locations across the state and virtually.

The board meets four times per year. All meetings are held from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Food and refreshments are provided.

The next SAB meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2020. If you are interested in being at the table with colleagues and members, let us know by contacting Provider Services at 1-833-404-1061.

Thank you for all that you do.

Join our mailing list!

Stay connected by [signing up](#) for email updates from Iowa Total Care.

Provider Services Hours: Monday through Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Provider Services Phone Number: 1-833-404-1061

Find the ITC Provider Relations Specialist in your area [here](#).