



To: AmeriHealth Caritas Next and First Choice Next Providers

Date: April 19, 2024

Subject: Breast Cancer Screening of Women with Schizophrenia – An Opportunity for Improvement

Women with schizophrenia and psychotic disorders are less likely to receive preventive cancer screenings.ⁱ As a result, the incidence and mortality rates of breast cancer in women with pre-existing severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia is higher relative to the general populationⁱ. Contributing factors including payor type, PCP utilization and late entry into treatment.^{ii, iii}

AmeriHealth Caritas Next/First Choice Next is seeing similar screening disparities where less than 17 percent of eligible women with schizophrenia received mammograms. As an AmeriHealth Caritas Next/First Choice Next Behavioral Health Provider, I am requesting your support to combat this disparity.

Please encourage and remind women within your practice to see their primary care provider to get their needed screenings. If your member doesn't have a PCP, they can select one from our online Provider directory, at www.amerhealthcaritasnext.com

AmeriHealth Caritas Next/First Choice Next will continue to educate and outreach members on the importance of preventive screenings. Together, we can make a difference.

Best regards,

Angela Perry, MD
Chief Medical Officer- Exchange

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Thank you for your participation in our network and your continued commitment to the care of our members. If you have questions about this communication, please contact your Provider Account Executive or the Provider Services Department for your state.

ⁱ Kisely S, Alotiby MKN, Protani MM, Soole R, Arnautovska U, Siskind D. Breast cancer treatment disparities in patients with severe mental illness: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychooncology*. 2023 May;32(5):651-662. doi: 10.1002/pon.6120. Epub 2023 Mar 14. PMID: 36892099.

ⁱⁱ Hwong A, Wang K, Bent S, Mangurian C. Breast Cancer Screening in Women With Schizophrenia: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2020 Mar 1;71(3):263-268. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201900318. Epub 2019 Nov 14. PMID: 31722645; PMCID: PMC7323869.

ⁱⁱⁱ O'Neill, B., Yusef, A., Lofters, A. et al Breast Cancer Screening Among Females With and Without Schizophrenia. *JAMA Net Open* 2023;6(11);e2345530. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.45530

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