



# Carelon Behavioral Health ASO Transition Provider Frequently Asked Questions *As of August 2024*

## **How long will Optum be available after the transition to Carelon?**

*Optum, as the Outgoing ASO will be available to MDH post transition for various contractual responsibilities.*

## **ABA**

### **Optum just released a required treatment plan template for ABA. Will Carelon make additional changes to the required template?**

*Carelon is reviewing all workflows and updates to those workflows currently. Any additional changes to existing workflows and associated templates would be messaged in advance to providers.*

### **Will requirements for ABA be the same between Carelon in PA and MD (i.e., specific requirements on outcome measures)?**

*MDH sets the regulations ([COMAR 10.09.28](#)) for ABA providers in Maryland. Carelon will be the Administrative Service Organization for the state of Maryland and administers this program in compliance with Maryland's regulations which might look different from ABA providers' experiences with Carelon's ABA program in other states.*

## **Administrative**

### **When will Carelon take over as the new ASO?**

*Carelon will go live as your new ASO on January 1, 2025.*

### **Given that the contract is going live on a holiday and the challenges of the last transition, will there be extra coverage to ensure that day, and the transition, goes smoothly?**



*Carelon is committed to ensuring a smooth transition and has been preparing, in collaboration with the state, our systems and staff for many months. Our current transition plan allows for ample training and testing with the state and providers, and we are excited for a successful launch on January 1, 2025, and will leverage appropriate staff coverage to support this success.*

**Is there a transition plan for Carelon to take over as the new ASO?**

*Yes, since March 2024 Carelon, MDH and Optum have been working on the implementation and transition planning for this contract. We will continue to work collaboratively and share implementation updates with key dates that impact providers as we transition all functions on January 1, 2025.*

**Is there anything we as the provider office should be doing now to prepare?**

*Providers should ensure that all of their information is up-to-date and accurate with Medicaid via ePrep for Medicaid providers, and with BHA for non-MA service providers. Provider alerts come from the current BHASO and will transfer to Carelon as of 1/1/2025. If you are not already receiving provider alerts, please send an email to: [marylandproviderrelations@optum.com](mailto:marylandproviderrelations@optum.com) The subject line should read "Provider Alerts" with the provider's email addresses in the body of the email. At this time, communications about the transition and any provider forums or training will be shared through this alert system. There is no limit on the number of people within a program that can receive provider alerts and Programs and facilities who use only one point of contact should ensure that these alerts are sharing information throughout your organization.*

**Will the phone # remain 800-888-1965?**

*Yes, this number is owned by MDH and will remain unchanged. The management of this line will transfer to Carelon and messaging will refer to Carelon as the BHASO after the transition occurs.*

## Authorizations

**What system will providers use for authorizations?**

*Carelon Behavioral Health uses our proprietary systems, known as ProviderConnect, for authorizations. Providers will also utilize Availity as our partner for claims submission, dashboarding and a variety of other functions. ProviderConnect and Availity are a one-stop shop for all things a provider needs to manage their Behavioral Health participants and are joined through single-sign on functionality to ensure that providers require only one provider ID and log on to access all our systems.*

*Starting in October/November, Carelon will be providing a series of training sessions on different dates and times, on both our ProviderConnect portal as well as Availity. This training will be provided regularly*



*as we prepare for the launch of our contract on January 1, 2025, and will continue through the entire contract. All training will be recorded and posted for providers to reference.*

**How will authorization requests be impacted by this transition?**

*Open and active authorizations will be pre-loaded into the system so providers can continue serving members without interruption. Carelon will also be loading historic Optum authorizations in order to ensure smooth claims payments for any services rendered. Providers seeking new authorizations will enter those into the ProviderConnect portal starting on January 1, 2025.*

*Providers will still be required to obtain initial and concurrent authorizations for services that require it. Regulations and processes around authorizations are set by MDH and will continue under Carelon as they do today under Optum. As of 1/1/2025, instead of using Optum's portal, providers will use Carelon's ProviderConnect portal to submit authorizations. Carelon will be providing many training sessions for providers prior to the go-live date.*

**Will there be a grace period for authorizations submissions?**

*At this time, we do not anticipate a need for a grace period. Carelon will load open and active authorizations in advance and the ProviderConnect system is expected to be fully functional on 1/1/2025 for entry of new authorizations. Providers are expected to attend at least one of the ProviderConnect training courses and be prepared to enter new and concurrent authorizations into the system as of January 1, 2025. These training opportunities will be shared well in advance and in various formats and session times.*

**Will Carelon be making changes to authorization questions or flows?**

*Portal functionalities are different for different ASO systems. Carelon is reviewing existing workflows and functional specifications for authorizations with MDH. We are comparing these to our portal functionalities to identify any new changes or enhancements to provide the best product to the Maryland provider community. More information about specific workflows and data will be available in upcoming provider training.*

**How will ProviderConnect handle conflicting authorizations or when a client opts to discharge from services without notifying their provider?**

*Carelton is working on current system workflows and reporting to ensure that providers are notified if an authorization is discharged or conflicts with another authorization in the system. While we have not yet finalized these workflows, we do understand how important they are to client care and billing.*

**Will the Authorization forms be the same as they were with Beacon?**

*Carelton is excited to bring our previous expertise and customized platform back to the State of Maryland. While much of Carelon's systems will be very similar to how providers experienced us in the*



market as Beacon Health Options, we are in the process of making enhancements and updates in order to best align with the Maryland Public Behavioral Health system needs and to best serve the provider community.

**Will Carelon have a process for obtaining authorizations for participants with an uninsured benefit?**

*Yes, Carelon will be responsible for and is designing our systems to process the uninsured benefits for participants. We are designing an efficient and streamlined system for providers when accessing this benefit for participants.*

**Can providers save an incomplete authorization form?**

*Yes, providers will be able to save authorizations in a draft form and return to them later to finalize and submit.*

**Will authorization letters be able to be downloaded?**

*Yes. Providers will be able to download their authorization letters directly from ProviderConnect.*

**What turnaround times can providers expect from Carelon when approving authorization requests?**

*Carelon and MDH are currently in the process of reviewing and finalizing all clinical workflows. However, Carelon is committed to quick and accurate service to the provider community, inclusive of authorization requests. We will be processing urgent admissions within one (1) hour, non-urgent but specified admission authorization requests within three (3) business days and all other services, including all non-urgent admission authorization requests, within fourteen (14) calendar days or less.*

**If we have attended a provider training but need additional support for submitting our claims and authorizations, what should we do?**

*Providers are encouraged to attend one of the many provider training that will be available and are welcome to ask questions throughout those sessions both live and in advance of the training. However, if you have attended one of these training sessions and believe that you still need additional technical assistance, please send your request to the [MDHtransitionsupport@carelon.com](mailto:MDHtransitionsupport@carelon.com) mailbox with your request and contact information.*

## Billing and Claims

**Are you going to have your systems configured and ready to accept and process claims correctly on Jan 1, 2025?**

*Yes. Our configuration is well underway, and all claims configuration, authorization processes and testing will be completed and ready for our launch on January 1, 2025.*



### **How will claims prior to the January 1, 2025 transition be handled?**

*Providers should continue to submit their claims to Optum Maryland until such time that they are notified to begin submission to Carelon Behavioral Health. All claims after January 1, 2025, should be submitted to Carelon for payment and adjustment. Providers will need to register in the Carelon provider portal. Carelon will share the link once it is available.*

### **Will there be a need to make new arrangements for claim payment?**

*There should be no significant impact on how providers submit claims payments to Carelon. We can receive claims through your chosen clearinghouse or through our portal or partnership with Availity; we can also receive direct claims or batch submissions. The main change for providers will be that you will need to submit to Carelon Behavioral Health instead of Optum Maryland.*

### **Will there be changes to the reimbursable codes and rates for providers?**

*Carelon is the administrative service organization for the Maryland Department of Health. As such, the reimbursement rates and coverage codes are determined by the Department, communicated to providers via transmittals and updates to the schedules that are currently posted on Optum's website, but will transfer to Carelon's website. Carelon implements Maryland's PBHS policy for all coverage consistent with Maryland regulations. There could be modifiers added to codes to support or improve business processes.*

### **Will there be provider testing to ensure smooth claims payments?**

*Carelon will be working with providers to ensure we complete robust and meaningful testing prior to going live. There was a recent provider survey that asked for volunteers, and we will be discussing testing opportunities in the upcoming Provider Forums. Providers should ensure that they are signed up for Provider Alerts through the current ASO, Optum Maryland to stay aware of notifications of these opportunities.*

### **Will we be able to bill our claims directly to Carelon the way we did when it was Beacon?**

*Yes, providers will be able to submit directly to Carelon using our portal's direct claims, batch claims or through a clearinghouse.*

### **Will providers be able to submit more than 6-line items on one claim form?**

*Yes. Carelon's provider connects platform accepts up to 49 lines for HCFA and 99 lines for UB.*



**Will there be claim correction in the portal?**

*Carelon's systems allow for adjustments (Frequency 7) and voids (Frequency 8) which can be submitted electronically or via paper. For electronic claims, the CLM05-3 value will be 7 (adjustment) or 8 (void) and the original claim number will have to be submitted in the REF\*F8 segment of the electronic claim.*

**Can I continue to bill electronically as I did when using Office Ally and Payspan? What is the new payor ID?**

*Yes, providers can continue to bill electronically using direct billing or their clearinghouse of choice, including Office Ally and Payspan. The Carelon Behavioral Health Payer ID will be communicated when full transition details are outlined for providers.*

**Will PaySpan still be used for receiving provider payments?**

*Yes, Carelon will utilize PaySpan to send payments to providers.*

**What is the claim processing timeline through Carelon?**

*Carelon's current contract is to meet or exceed performance guarantees of paying or denying 100% of all clean electronic claims within fourteen (14) calendar days and all claims within thirty (30) calendar days.*

**What changes will there be in payment frequency or when billing must be turned in?**

*Having been Maryland's previous ASO under Beacon Health Options, Carelon is very familiar with the existing check run process and cadence. Any changes to that existing process would be announced well in advance.*

**Will EDI Claim Link be reinstated?**

*No, under the new system the EDI claim link will not be necessary. More information coming and links will be provided as we get closer to go-live.*

**Is Availity going to be used for claim submission or do you have your own portal?**

*There will be two avenues for claims submissions: Carelon's Provider Connect Provider portal and, through our partner, Availity, through which providers can have a single sign on.*



**Should billers register separately?**

*Yes, each claims submitter will need to register with Availity to submit claims for Carelon.*

**If Provider Connect is the billing source, how does Availity fit in since it is a billing source as well?**

*Availity is the preferred Clearinghouse for Carelon. Providers can submit single claims (direct data entry) as well as batch 837 files via Availity portal.*

**Will agencies be able to do manual billing if we are not using a clearing house?**

*Yes, Carelon accepts both direct claims submission as well as batch submissions. You are not required to use a clearinghouse. However, Carelon does partner with Availity at no cost to providers and will provide training on how to enroll and utilize Availity.*

## Clinical

**Will there be any changes in the medical necessity criteria of publicly funded behavioral health services?**

*Carelon is currently working through the program descriptions and Medical Necessity Criteria with MDH in our clinical workstream meetings and training regarding MNC will be coming in the September/October timeframe.*

**How do you ensure the clinical expertise/sophistication of your staff?**

*Candidates must meet clinical experience and licensure requirements. Our professionals receive ongoing training, supervision, and consultation with medical directors and are regularly monitored for quality assurance. Carelon is excited to get to share more information about our clinical team leadership as we continue to build out the staff.*

**Can you share a sample of your treatment plan template?**

*Documentation required for authorization varies by the services being requested. Training will be offered to providers on our provider portal, including all treatment plan templates and relevant documentation requirements.*

**Will Carelon continue to honor the TPP program for PRP?**

*Yes. Carelon is working closely with MDH and Optum to transition this Top Provider Program (TPP) for the launch of our contract on January 1, 2025. Carelon has a wealth of experience with*



administering provider programs such as the Optum TPP program and looks forward to working with providers and the state on improvements to this program after going live.

**Will the exclusions for individuals with IDD that meet the medical necessity criteria be reconsidered, so they can access PRP services?**

*Medical necessity criteria are developed by MDH. Carelon will implement the current business rules under the Public Behavioral Health System.*

## Data Reporting and Analytics

**Will there be a reporting option for providers?**

*Yes. Carelon will grant provider-level access through our Intelligence Connect system for self-service reporting.*

**Can the data submitted into the provider portal be used with state and local health depts to better track outcomes measurement?**

*Yes. Carelon will provide LBHA and LAA specific access and reporting supplied with data from the provider portal, among other data sets. Some of this information will be at the detailed level, others aggregated for outcomes analysis.*

## Eligibility

**Could you please help us understand if new patient enrollments for Medicaid have already begun with Carelon? Also, has the transition for existing patients started?**

*Medicaid eligibility comes from a file from MDH and is uploaded daily to the ASO. While initial imports have begun for testing purposes, full file transfers will occur in the latter part of this calendar year and continuously as of 1/1/2025. Eligibility is maintained by Medicaid and providers should continue to EVS patients for information and use Optum's system for their current workflows. For non-Medicaid individuals served, Carelon will receive files from the current vendor.*

## Network/Provider Relations

**Will provider meetings remain on the same date and in the same format?**

*It is likely the dates and format will be the same with Provider Council 2nd Friday of the month. Any change to that schedule would be announced in advance.*

**When will provider alerts switch over from Optum?**





*Carelon will begin sending out provider alerts starting on January 1, 2025. We are obtaining all historic provider alerts and will ensure that providers have access to these important communications on our website.*

**Can you confirm if we are automatically signed up for provider alerts even if we have joined one of your Webex?**

*Signing up for our Webex will not enroll you in the current or future provider alert system. In CY 2024, Providers should sign up for provider alerts with Optum Maryland. Carelon will share more details about our provider alert system and information that providers will need to prepare for the transition within the next few months.*

*If you are not receiving Provider Alerts, please sign up by sending an email to:*

*[marylandproviderrelations@optum.com](mailto:marylandproviderrelations@optum.com) The subject line should read "Provider Alerts" with the provider's email addresses in the body of the email.*

**Will there be changes to the contracting or credentialing process or will providers continue to use ePREP.**

*ePrep is the contracting/credentialing partner of Maryland Medicaid and they will continue to ensure providers are enrolled appropriately as Medicaid providers. Carelon will be importing the provider network from Medicaid. Providers will need to register with Carelon and will receive more information on the registration process with Carelon's portals in approximately October/November of this year.*

**If a provider is contracted as In-Network with a commercial line for Carelon will this affect our Medicaid status?**

*No. Carelon's systems ensure that our In-Network providers are not co-mingled with external provider systems such as Maryland Medicaid.*

## Optum/Incedo

**Will you still be using Incedo for authorizations?**

*No, Carelon uses ProviderConnect as our authorization portal and providers will receive training on this new portal in October/November of 2024.*

**Will Incedo continue to be the clearing house for billing?**

*Carelon utilizes our own proprietary system called ProviderConnect for authorizations. We also partner with Availity for billing and claims functionalities.*



## Readiness and Testing

**Will Carelon use different provider groups as test sites to help understand the requirements and conditions that apply to the different groups before the actual launch date?**

*Yes. Carelon will be testing with a variety of providers across a variety of provider types and specialty services to ensure robust testing of the systems prior to go-live.*

**How do I become a test user of the system?**

*Providers recently received a survey through the provider alert system inquiring about willingness to be testing partners. If you did not receive or participate in that survey, please attend one of the upcoming Provider Regional Forums where we will discuss the testing plans. To best ensure that you receive communications around the transition and provider opportunities, please sign up to receive provider alerts with Optum Maryland.*

**What does the testing consist of?**

*Carelon will partner with providers in end-to-end testing of the system, including creating authorizations and claims submission.*

## Staffing

**What is your timeline for hiring staff to manage this benefit to aid in a smoother transition to this new ASO?**

*Carelon has already hired most of our leadership positions, including our CEO Oleg Tarkovsky, Chief Medical Officer, Drew Pate, Director of Clinical Staff, Carla Lester, Director of Provider Relations, Donna Shipp. We are excited to begin getting out into the community and introducing you to the team that will lead Maryland. The remainder of our staff will be hired, trained and ready to go between now and the go live date.*

**Will you be adequately staffed to provide care management services to this needy population?**

*Yes. Carelon has a robust clinical staffing model to ensure we are able to meet the needs of all providers and participants in the Public Behavioral Health System. There are currently over 100 passionate teammates working on this implementation and we will have a staff of over 200 dedicated to improving the lives of every Marylander.*

## Technical

**Will each agency employee need a login with 2 step MFA added? Or can a team share a log in?**



*Each user will need their own account. Carelon systems use two-factor authentication.*

**When will any new provider portal or other tools be available for testing?**

*Testing is currently targeted for Q4 of 2024. There was an option on the provider survey that allowed provider volunteers to sign up to participate in testing. The testing calendar will be shared once finalized.*

**Will you be using payspan?**

*Yes.*

**Has the claim system been upgraded since 2019?**

*Carelon still uses our Connects Administration System to adjudicate claims. While the system is the same, it has gone through enhancements over the years.*

**Can we upload batches in ProviderConnect?**

*Providers can upload batch claims through the Availity Portal.*

**Do you need a new account if you still have the old one?**

*Providers will need to establish new accounts.*

**Will we have to pay to access or subscribe to Availity to upload claim 837 files?**

*Yes.*

## Training

**What can we do to prepare for the switch?**

*The number one thing providers can do is ensure updated information with MDH and sign up to receive provider alerts through Optum. Optum will email Provider Alerts to announce important information, such as changes within the PBHS, Maryland Department of Health (MDH) announcements, and important regulatory guidance.*



You should register for Provider Alerts by sending an email to: [marylandproviderrelations@optum.com](mailto:marylandproviderrelations@optum.com). This subject line should read "Provider Alerts" and your email address should be in the body of the email.

Additionally, providers should register for Carelon Provider Regional Forums and training sessions that will help all providers get updates on the implementation.

**Will training be available to allow providers an opportunity to get a better understanding of using ProviderConnect?**

*Provider training will start October/November, which includes ProviderConnect.*

**When will we get information to get access to your web portal?**

*More information about ProviderConnect will be released in Q4 of 2024*

**How do you plan to train regarding your portal?**

*Carelon will be providing multiple training courses over the course of this transition and providers should begin looking for links to these training courses starting around October. The training will cover various topics to prepare providers for the transition but will focus on clinical topics, claims and authorization submission and systems. Provider training will begin in Q4 of 2024.*

**Where in that 2024 timeline might audit tools be released?**

*Carelon will share the audit tools with providers prior to going live.*

**Can you provide the email address again to sign up for provider alerts?**

*Please sign up by sending an email to: [marylandproviderrelations@optum.com](mailto:marylandproviderrelations@optum.com) The subject line should read "Provider Alerts" with the provider's email addresses in the body of the email.*

**Will there be training for the different types of authorization or only one standard authorization?**

*Authorizations will be covered during provider webinars.*

**Will these slides be provided to those registered? This may have been answered and I may have missed it.**



*Yes, presentations will be shared with all those registered following the event.*

***Will the same training offered to providers regarding authorization be also available for LBHA's who are interested in becoming familiarized with the process?***

*Yes, all provider types and specialties will be able to attend training*

***Is ProviderConnect similar to the previous platform?***

*Yes, while it is the same application, you will notice the system has had enhancements throughout the years.*

***When should providers begin to set up user access for staff?***

*Instructions for providers to register will be shared via the provider notification system in October/November.*

***Will there be any more scheduled training?***

*Yes, more training will begin in Q4 of 2024 and regularly after going live.*