



Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Bayou Health Informational Bulletin 12-31

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Issue: Bayou Health Members and Plan Choice vs Provider Steering

All health care providers delivering services to Louisiana Medicaid and LaCHIP recipients enrolled in Bayou Health Plans are welcome to inform their patients of the Bayou Health Plans they have chosen to participate with, but Bayou Health has strict prohibitions against patient steering, which all providers must observe. Some assistance from providers was allowed during Bayou Health implementation as part of their participation in the CommunityCARE program. This program no longer exists, and the requirements below must be strictly observed by all Bayou Health providers.

- Providers may inform their patients of all Health Plans in which they participate, and can inform patients of the benefits, services and specialty care services offered through the Health Plans in which they participate.
- **Providers are not allowed to disclose only some of the Health Plans in which they participate.** Disclosure of Health Plan participation must be all or nothing.
- Providers can display signage, provided by the Health Plan, at their location indicating which Health Plans are accepted there, but must include all Health Plans in which they participate in this signage.
- If a provider participates in only one Bayou Health Plan, the provider can display signage for only one Health Plan and can tell a patient that is the only Health Plan accepted by that provider.
- Providers **MAY NOT RECOMMEND** one Health Plan over another Health Plan and **MAY NOT OFFER** patients incentives for selecting one Health Plan over another.
- Providers **MAY NOT ASSIST** a patient in the selection of a specific Health Plan. Additionally, patients may not use the provider's fax machine, office phone, computer, etc., to make such a selection, except as required for the completion of a Medicaid application as a function of being an enrolled Medicaid Application Center.
- Patients who need assistance with their Health Plan services should call the Member Services Hotline for the Plan in which they are enrolled, and those who wish to learn more about the different Health Plans should contact the Bayou Health Enrollment Broker at 1-855-BAYOU-4U to receive assistance in making a Health Plan decision.

- Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** is a provider allowed to change a member's Health Plan for him/her, or request a Health Plan reassignment on a member's behalf. **Members who wish to change Health Plans for cause must make this request to Medicaid themselves through the Bayou Health Enrollment Broker.** These prohibitions against patient steering apply to participation in the Bayou Health and the legacy Medicaid programs.

For pharmacies enrolled as Louisiana Medicaid providers, or contracted with any Bayou Health Plan's pharmacy benefit manager, the same steering prohibitions stated above apply to your communications with Bayou Health members as well.

If a provider or Health Plan is found to have engaged in patient steering, they may be subject to sanctions such as, but not limited to monetary penalties, loss of linked patients and/or excluded from enrollment in Medicaid/Bayou Health Plan network opportunities.