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December 28, 2018

# **New Assistant Surgeon and Co-Surgeon Protocol**

To Launch Jan. 1 with Oxford New York Providers

We are implementing an assistant surgeon and co-surgeon services protocol with our New York participating (network) providers. Under the protocol, network providers are required to tell their Oxford patients if they are recommending, involving or referring a nonparticipating (out-of-network) assistant surgeon or co-surgeon in the member's care. The protocol is consistent with New York law that includes protection for consumers from surprise medical bills.

## What is changing?

A **consent form** has been created to confirm the member's choice of a provider when assistant or co-surgeon services are needed. Beginning Jan. 1, 2019, doctors and members will discuss the option of a non-participating assistant or co-surgeon and the financial consequences of using an out-of-network provider. Members will read and sign the consent form confirming their choice to use a network or out-of-network provider and their understanding of the financial impact of the decision.

Note: The protocol requires our network providers to follow the member's instructions on the form before referring the member for services. If a network provider is not available, the network doctor can request an in-network exception.

Claims will be processed as follows:

- In-network assistant and co-surgeon claims for members will be processed using the member's in-network benefits. In-network cost shares will apply.
- Out-of-network assistant and co-surgeon claims for members will be processed out-of- network. This means:
  - the claim will be paid out-of-network if the member has a plan with out-of-network benefits (out-of-network cost shares will apply); or
  - the claim will be denied, if the member does not have a plan with out-ofnetwork benefits (the member will be responsible for 100 percent of the out-of-network assistant surgeon or co-surgeon bill).

The claim will include an explanation of the consent form requirement. If the member is not given the consent form before receiving services or the member selected a network provider on the form, it could be a surprise bill and the member should call Customer Care.

Network doctors have been made aware of the new protocol and received the consent form with instructions for use.

### Action required.

Please inform your Oxford New York clients of this protocol.

## Why is this change occurring?

At UnitedHealthcare, our mission is helping people live healthier lives™. We strive to make health care simpler and easier for our members to understand. Going out-of-network usually means greater out-of-pocket costs for the member. The Assistant Surgeon and Co-Surgeon protocol is intended to help make members aware of their choice of providers and the financial implications of involving out-of-network providers in their care.

#### Communications.

- Employers: information will be posted to the Messages section of the oxfordhealth.com employer website.
- Providers: The new protocol was posted to the Oxford Policy Update Bulletin Oct. 1, 2018, and an article was included in the October Network eBulletin.

For more information, please contact your Oxford sales representative.

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