



## **Provider Manual Addendum Access & Availability Changes**

Effective July 1, 2026, the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) standard for after hours will be changing.

Please review the following updates to the [Provider Manual](#):

### **On page 100:**

- Remove, “For primary medical providers (PMPs) only: Provide 24-hour availability to your CareSource patients by telephone. Whether through an answering machine or taped message used after hours, patients should be given the means to contact their PCP or a back-up provider to be triaged for care. It is not acceptable to use a phone message that does not provide access to you or your back-up provider and only recommends emergency room use for after hours.”
- Replace removed content with, “**Update to After-Hours Standard effective July 1, 2026:** Primary Care Providers (PCPs) and Behavioral Health (BH) providers must provide 24-hour availability to their CareSource patients by telephone. Whether through an answering machine or a taped message used after hours, patients should be given the means to contact their PCP, BH\* provider, or a back-up provider to be triaged for care. It is not acceptable to use a phone message that does not provide access to you or your back-up provider and only recommends emergency department use for after hours.

\*BH providers may refer their patients to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline if a provider is not available for the call.”

### **On page 109:**

- Add BH providers to this standard wherever PCPs are also mentioned.
- Add “BH providers may refer their patients to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline if a provider is not available for the call.”

### **On page 110:**

- Remove, “For Primary Care Providers (PCPs) only: Providing 24-hour availability to your CareSource patients by telephone. Whether through an answering machine or a taped message used after hours, patients should be given the means to contact their PCP or a back-up provider to be triaged for care. It is not acceptable to use a phone message that

does not provide access to you or your back-up provider and only recommends emergency room use for after hours.

- Replace removed content with, “**Update to After-Hours Standard effective July 1, 2026:** Primary Care Providers (PCPs) and Behavioral Health (BH) providers must provide 24-hour availability to their CareSource patients by telephone. Whether through an answering machine or a taped message used after hours, patients should be given the means to contact their PCP/BH\* provider or a back-up provider to be triaged for care. It is not acceptable to use a phone message that does not provide access to you or your back-up provider and only recommends emergency department use for after hours.

\*BH providers may refer their patients to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline if a provider is not available for the call.”

Please contact Provider Services at 1-833-230-2099 (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, with any questions.

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