

What the PCP needs to know about the Optum behavioral health referral process

Contact Number: **800-985-2596**

For life-threatening emergencies, contact 911

Standard Hours of Availability

Monday – Friday 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Central Time

Standard appointment searches and other routine services are not conducted after normal business hours.

Crisis Availability

24 hours, 7 days per week

For members in crisis, licensed mental health clinicians are available.



Note: All Incoming calls can either be answered by a Clinical Care Advocate if the member identifies as crisis or imminent danger to self or others or go through a screening process with the Intake department who transfer callers to a Care Advocate as appropriate. If appointment assistance is needed, ask for your call to be transferred to a Care Advocate.

Care Advocates (licensed mental health clinicians) are available to you and UnitedHealthcare Medicare members to address behavioral health questions and crisis situations. They can assist in the following ways:

- **De-escalation of immediate non-life-threatening crisis**
 - You may be directed to send the member to the emergency room based upon the severity of the crisis
- **Assessment of clinical needs**
- **Benefit explanation and guidance**
- **Referrals and appointment assistance for standard outpatient providers**
- **Referral to Care Coordination Care Advocates for additional outreach and support as needed**



Care Advocates may also support members in identifying a behavioral health clinician with appointment availability if they have been unsuccessful through self-service options.

Optum provides information and support as part of your patient's health plan. It is not a substitute for the health care you provide to them.

Process to obtain assistance

1

Whenever possible, call with the member on the phone

800-985-2596

- Required information: member's name, date of birth and ID number
- Intake staff will complete basic screening
- Identify yourself as a member representative for transfer to the Care Advocacy team

2

Upon transfer, the Care Advocate can help

- Review clinical needs with the member and/or representative (i.e., PCP or PCP office staff)
- Determine needs and urgency of requested services
- When possible, the Care Advocate can address the request at the time of the call (note it may be necessary to have contact directly with the member to complete the request)

3

If the member is not available at the time of the call, the Care Advocate may

- Ask questions of the caller to assess current risk, treatment history, support network, etc.
- Help determine the best treatment options possible for the member's needs
- Be available to reach out to the member if needed

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Care Advocates may also be able to assist in other ways

- Assess needs and discuss appropriate types of providers that may be available
- Refer to the appointment search team

Appointment Search Team

- Can call in-network providers to determine appointment availability
- Relay first available appointment options to the member

Please note the appointment search team is unable to create appointments or confirm appointments on behalf of a member. The member must call the provider to schedule and confirm the appointment.