



# Synergy

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## Health Center in the 'Valley' Aims for the Stars



Linda Muller, CEO and President, GHV FHC



Avi Silber, MD, Medical Director, GHV FHC

Its soothing suburban setting is a fitting backdrop for the comforting care delivered by Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center (GHV FHC). At this Orange County health center, medical care is merely one factor driving the nature of their patient engagement. They recognize the human dignity and multidimensional aspect of each individual that walks through their doors. "Our vision is to be the primary care practice of choice in the Hudson Valley and provide the best possible outcomes for our patients and community," said Linda Muller, CEO and President.



Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center provides care for approximately 21,000 patients annually. Focusing on care for the entire family, they treat infants, children, adults and seniors. Well-positioned to offer this end-to-end care, their flagship office on 147 Lake Street in Newburgh is a sprawling 60,000 square-foot multispecialty facility. This one-stop hub is complete with pediatrics, women's health, internal medicine, behavioral health, dental and urgent care departments, as well as an onsite pharmacy and laboratory. "Everything is under one roof," says Avi Silber, MD, Medical Director.

In addition to consolidating a range of primary and specialty services in one building, GHV FHC has facilitated access to health care by building satellite sites for residents' convenience. They have four other locations. The two newest –

***"Our vision is to be the primary care practice of choice in the Hudson Valley and provide the best possible outcomes for our patients and community."***

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## Health Center in the 'Valley' Aims for the Stars



Harper Health in Newburgh and Highland Falls right outside the gates of the United States Military Academy (West Point) - opened within the last year. The Harper Health facility provides care to homeless individuals or those endanger of becoming homeless. This vulnerable population typically receives episodic or emergency care. Harper Health provides the continuity of care - specifically primary and preventive services - to which homeless people have traditionally not had access. The Highland Falls site represents a critical resource to community members who have always encountered barriers to clinical services. Before the site opened, residents traveled up to 30 minutes to see a health care provider. Dr. Silber says this office is a smaller version of the 147 Lake Street location. Each exam room has state-of-the-art technology, and patient records are woven into the GHVFHC EMR system. While there is no lab or pharmacy on site, they do practice family medicine and are able to take care of everyone – from the very young to the elderly.

The health center has an exceptional reputation among industry accrediting and regulatory entities. GHVFHC is an NCQA-recognized Patient-Centered Medical Home. It is also accredited by the Joint Commission and recognized by CMS for meeting Meaningful Use – Stage 2 criteria, for proficient use of electronic medical records in tracking and improving patient care.

Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center has come a long way since they first opened their doors in 1967. At that time, they provided basic medical care to primarily Honduran and Mexican migrant workers and their families. Over the years, the scope of their services has broadened significantly. From informal patient feedback, as well as community needs assessments, they identify opportunities for service and program expansions. Many of the concerns expressed



by patients are not necessarily health matters, but they are social issues that greatly impact health status and care delivery (e.g., nutrition/meals, housing and living accommodations, transportation needs, work, etc.).

Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center offers a variety of educational and outreach initiatives that support overall wellness in the community. A few such programs include the following:

**Reach Out and Read (ROAR)** program – Providers give children ages 6 months to 5 years a book (in English or Spanish) after each visit. There is also a children's reading room at the main site.

## Affinity Enters NY State Health Plan Marketplace

Affinity Health Plan entered the New York State of Health: The Official Health Plan Marketplace, when it opened on October 1, 2013. Through this cybershop, we are offering our Essential Plan, which is competitively priced and offers an extensive provider network of approximately 30,000 doctors and other health care providers and 69 of the leading hospitals in the New York metropolitan area. This represents one of the largest provider networks on the exchange.

As an independent health plan with deep roots in the community, Affinity is positioned ideally to serve the populations who will shop for coverage on the Health Plan Marketplace. “Everyone deserves access to the best care available and that’s what we bring to the new health plan marketplace,” said Bert Scott, Affinity’s President & CEO. “This is an important moment for us to help keep our families and our communities healthy. With coverage, people will move from a dependence on emergency room care

to informed, proactive, preventive care-seeking behaviors, marked by a steady relationship with their doctors. This transition can lead to better decisions at the individual level, and lower costs throughout the system.”

Affinity members and providers on the Health Plan Marketplace can expect the same level of care management and customer service that has consistently placed Affinity among the top plans according to the New York State annual Consumer Guide. With nearly 30 years’ experience providing coverage to low and moderate income New Yorkers, Mr. Scott says, Affinity understands the changing healthcare needs of a diverse population. “Ensuring consumers can access quality healthcare, when and where they need it, is at the heart of our mission – and that’s why we have worked to secure one of the largest provider networks available on the Health Plan Marketplace.”

## Affinity Welcomes Top Hospitals to Network

Affinity is pleased to welcome Mount Sinai Hospital to its provider network, and is excited about our expanded relationship with Hospital for Special Surgery. This is the first time ever that Mount Sinai has been a contracted provider with Affinity and, in addition to our Medicaid, Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus products, we now also have an agreement in place with Hospital for Special Surgery for our Qualified Health Plan line of business (Affinity Essential).

“We’re excited about these new provider relationships,” said Glenn MacFarlane, Senior Vice President, Strategy, Business and Product Development. “We look forward to growing and working with these hospitals to provide our Members with the quality care they deserve.”

## Important Authorization Changes

Affinity Health Plan is changing its authorization guidelines for Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Durable Medical Equipment (DME) and ambulatory surgery to help streamline and simplify your processes to better allow you to manage your members in their home environments and minimize hospital re-admissions.

Effective November 1, 2013, providers will no longer be required to seek authorization for Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy or Speech Therapy for Family Health Plus and Medicaid Members. Once members reach their benefit maximum you will receive notification on the Explanation

## Medicare Service Area Expansion

**Effective October 1, 2013,** Affinity expanded our service area for Medicare, bringing *Affinity Medicare Ultimate* and *Affinity Medicare Solutions* to residents of Nassau, Orange, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester counties.

If any of your patients have questions about obtaining Medicare coverage in these areas, they may contact our Customer Service Department at 877.234.4499.

## Bill Scesney: New VP, Network Development



Mr. Bill Scesney was recently appointed as Affinity Vice President, Network Development. Bill brings an extensive range of network and quality management experience. In his current role, he oversees contracting, provider relations and overall service delivery matters. Feel free to introduce yourself to Bill during the next provider forum, or contact him at [bscsney@affinityplan.org](mailto:bscsney@affinityplan.org).

## Affinity PCP Strategy: Enhancing our Partnership, Improving Patient Care

Affinity is pleased to present our new PCP Strategy: a comprehensive initiative designed to create innovative partnerships that make it easy for you to care for your patients, our Members. Among other things, this strategy will improve patient health care outcomes and customer quality, while minimizing any issues you might experience in working with us.

This strategy is designed along six project tracks:

**Network Modernization:** review of current reimbursement policies and strategies to develop new approaches and also possibly introduce a continuum of risk pool arrangements.

**Data and Information Quality Improvement:** deliver actionable data and information to PCPs/providers in an easy-to-access and easy-to-read, electronic format – and real-time when possible.

**Create Physician Advisory Group:** create a panel of select physicians that meets quarterly to gather input on a variety of timely and relevant topics; goal is to improve our ability to understand PCP needs and patient outcomes.

**Collaborate on Growth:** explore new opportunities for growth and collaboration – i.e., partner with our network PCPs to attract and retain new Members and patients in current and future programs.

**Provide Support Services:** provide support services (e.g., case management, housing, training and development, etc.) that are value-add.

**Be Brilliant at the Basics:** update and optimize our internal operations to improve our PCP transactions and overall experience – for example, claims payment.

One of the key initiatives of this program is our recently launched PCP Quality Incentive Program (see article to the right). Also, be sure to read about our recently launched Physician Services Advisory Group (article on page 5). Additional provider-oriented business endeavors emanating from this strategy will be deployed over the next two years.

Watch *Synergy* for strategy updates. Also, you may find more information by visiting our website at [affinityplan.org/Affinity/Providers/Providers.aspx](http://affinityplan.org/Affinity/Providers/Providers.aspx), or contacting your Provider Relations Representative.

## PCP Quality Incentive Program

The Quality Management Department and the Provider Relations Department have been hard at work visiting sites to talk about the new PCP Incentive Program. The program rewards providers for reaching target benchmarks for selected quality measures.

### Quick Facts:

1. Practices must have 250 Affinity Medicaid Members as of December 31, 2013 to be eligible for the incentive program.
2. The rewards are calculated using administrative data only. Services given between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2013 are eligible.
3. Administrative data can be submitted until March 31, 2014.

### FAQ

1. Is it necessary to register for the incentive program?  
No. Any practice with more than 250 Affinity Medicaid Members is automatically included in the incentive program.
2. If I don't have 250 Affinity Members now, but the membership increases to that amount between now and December, am I eligible for the incentive program?  
Yes. Qualification is based on year-end membership numbers. On the other hand, if at the end of the year you no longer have 250 Affinity Members, you are no longer eligible for the program.
3. How do I know if my Affinity patients are not compliant with the quality measures?  
Affinity gives providers a "non-compliant" list, which includes the names of Affinity members and the measure in which they are not compliant. The report also indicates the missing services and the acceptable date range for those services.
4. How do practices get credit for those screenings done before the patient became an Affinity Member or after changing providers?  
Provider's progress notes that document the screening are acceptable as documentation of the service. Example: a note that says your patient has had a colonoscopy in 2007 is acceptable documentation. Of course, the more detailed the note, the better. A copy of the test results is the best documentation.
5. How do Members qualify for certain measures?  
Inclusion in measures is based on age, gender, and enrollment information. Some measures are based on a particular health event.  
To request a PCP Quality Incentive Manual, or if you have additional questions regarding the program, please call the Quality Management Department at 888.543.9068.

## New Affinity Physician Services Advisory Group



Affinity Health Plan is pleased to announce the launch of our new Physician Services Advisory Group. With a goal of bringing together participating Affinity providers and senior Affinity executives to discuss timely, top-of-mind topics, the Group will look to enhance our partnership and thereby positively impact the care that, together, we deliver to your patients, our Members.

The Group will meet for approximately half a day each quarter, beginning in the last quarter of this year. Meetings will take place at Affinity headquarters in the Bronx.

With virtually every aspect of health care changing, it is especially important that your voices are heard by Affinity. We see providers as our primary partner, and it is vital that we are able to navigate these changes together. Potential agenda topics include:

- Physician needs across a variety of platforms, with particular focus on the key drivers of provider satisfaction,
- Reimbursement methodologies that consider a variety of arrangements to help enhance the financial health of your practice,
- Practice growth strategies and collaboration opportunities to drive retention and new membership,
- Data and analytics to support your practice and empower your care management activities, and
- Communication practices and tools across the entire continuum that promote collaboration and transparency.

We expect the Group to be comprised of individuals (either providers or practice managers) from a variety of provider partners in our network. To ensure geographic diversity, there will be at least one practice from each county.

We are truly excited about the launch of this new panel, as we believe that you are the most important connection to our Members and that, together, we can more successfully create a better health care system for each and every one!

For more information about the Physician Services Advisory Group, speak with your Provider Relations Representative or Bill Scesney, Vice President of Network Development ([BScesney@affinityplan.org](mailto:BScesney@affinityplan.org)).

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## Affinity Partners with HMS, Inc. for Third Party Health Insurance

Affinity is pleased to announce that we have partnered with Health Management Systems, Inc. (HMS) to provide services related to the collection of medical payments when the liability for the cost of those medical services are the responsibility of another insurance carrier.

As you know, New York State Medicaid is the payer of last resort. It is also a requirement of our contract between New York State and Affinity to have a process to address Third Party Health Liabilities, commonly known as Coordination of Benefits (COB). Therefore, HMS will assist us with these requirements for our business lines, including Medicaid related programs. For the majority of cases, when HMS discovers that one of our Medicaid or Family Health Plus Members has other coverage, HMS will pursue the recovery

directly from the other carrier. This process is designed to be seamless for the providers because HMS works with the other insurance carrier to reconcile payments and assure the proper insurance carrier has made the primary payment. However, when the primary carrier is Medicare, you will receive a Disallowance Letter from HMS to address the overpayment. The HMS letter tells you what procedures you must follow to address the identified overpayment.

Of course, should you have any questions regarding this process, you may always contact HMS directly at 855.699.6293.



## Required Compliance Training for Providers

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines require that we provide annual training on select topics related to public health programs. All individuals/entities that qualify as a First-Tier, Downstream, or a Related Entity (FDR) must receive annual training on Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (“FWA”). Those individuals/entities that are also

part of Affinity’s provider network must receive annual training on Special Needs Plan Model of Care (SNP MOC) as well.

Our training modules on these topics are easily accessible on the Affinity website ([www.affinityplan.org](http://www.affinityplan.org)) within the “Provider” tab under “Compliance.”

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## Health Center in the ‘Valley’ Aims for the Stars

**Mobile health unit** – Providers conveniently administer dental, blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol screenings throughout the community.

**Health education** – More than 60 free classes serving nearly 3,000 community members were held this year; a few topics included smoking cessation, complementary medicine (e.g., aromatherapy) and Zumba classes.

**National Night Out** – In a unified call for police partnerships and heightened community awareness, GHVFHC joined residents as they descended on their local streets in a symbolic stance against crime.

Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center is tightly interwoven into the fabric of Orange County. They stand as

a trusted partner to residents, willing to extend themselves well beyond the parameters of medical care. Dr. Silber recalls the gratitude of one family when staff organized a fundraiser for their baby’s funeral. “We’re so much more than a medical provider,” he says. The center’s genuine concern for the community coupled with their strong foundation allows them to assist people in such a special way.

It is the strength of their programs, services and relationship with the community that enables the health center to thrive in these mercurial times. While health care reform leaves many wondering about what lies ahead, GHVFHC has a positive outlook, given the quality and comprehensiveness of their services. Ms. Muller says that in the last several years, they have enhanced their primary care program in a way

# Watch for Elder Abuse

As the population ages, and more people take advantage of long-term care options, either in the home or in a facility, concern has increased regarding abuse, fraud, neglect and exploitation of older adults. During visits with older patients, pay special attention to the possibility of their being victims of elder abuse.

## Some examples of abuse are:

- Hitting, pinching or other physical abuse
- Threats, insults or causing mental anguish
- Limiting patient's access to family, friends or other people
- Inappropriate sexual relations with caregiver
- Inadequate food, shelter or health care
- Abandonment by the caregiver
- Use of money or belongings without that person's approval
- Use of physical or chemical (medicine) restraints

## Look for these signs of abuse:

- Slap marks, bruises or burns
- Changes in patient's demeanor
- Bedsores, lack of health or dental care
- Dirty clothes, unclean body, untended hair or nails
- Weight loss

that addresses care delivery issues and increases their service capacity for the future. "We are well positioned to absorb new patients," she says. And, if anything, they consider health care reform a boon to their operations, further channeling them along a path of expansion and improved customer service. Funding through the Affordable Care Act financed their dental suite and, in part, paid for the construction of the Harper Health and Highland Falls sites.

Health care reform is a pivotal focus today, but it is uncertain what issues will take center stage within the industry in years – or even decades – to come. GHVFHC knows that strong leadership is key to planning for the future and remaining adaptable in a rapidly changing environment. As they look down the road to securing future successes, they have established the Emerging Leaders Program. "We'll be in good hands when I leave," says Ms. Muller. The program is designed to prepare the next generation of clinical and

## Other issues to discuss:

- Any sudden changes in bank accounts or checks unaccounted for
- Any changes in their will

## The following are ICD-9 codes that are used for abuse:

995.80-995.85, V15.41, V15.42, V15.49, V61.10, V61.11, V61.8, V61.81

For specific definitions of each ICD-9 code, access the following website:

[https://www.encoderpro.com/lepro/cptHandler.do?\\_k=101\\*67210&\\_a=view&searchTerms=67210&codeTypes=15&mrad=true&#selected](https://www.encoderpro.com/lepro/cptHandler.do?_k=101*67210&_a=view&searchTerms=67210&codeTypes=15&mrad=true&#selected)

Be sure to report suspected cases of abuse to one of the contacts below:

- New York State Elder Abuse Hotline at 800.342.3009 (Toll free in New York) – Press Choice 6; <http://www.health.ny.gov/facilities/nursing/>, 866.893.6772.
- Office of Aging and Senior Citizen Hotline: 800.342.9871.

administrative leaders to advance GHVFHC's mission. Dr. Silber is the program's most recent success story.

Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center is excited about their current progress and looks forward to new opportunities to improve the quality of people's lives. "We're focused on the community and committed to their care," said Ms. Muller. Noting that Affinity and Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center share a commitment to addressing the needs of underserved populations, she happily promised, "We will continue to do everything necessary to assure Affinity Members receive the care they need."

## Affinity Contact Information

### Affinity Health Plan

2500 Halsey Street  
Bronx, New York 10461  
Toll-Free Number: 866.247.5678  
Select options 1, 3 and then  
5 to speak to a customer  
service associate.

Fax Number: 718.794.7808  
Website: [affinityplan.org](http://affinityplan.org)

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of Payment. This provision also applies to Child Health Plus members. Please note that those Child Health Plus members with Developmental Disabilities and Traumatic Brain Injury are exempt from the annual benefit limit when not covered by the Early Intervention Program.

In addition, effective January 1, 2014, the DME threshold for authorization will be increased to \$1,000. The DME threshold is based on charges. If line item charge exceeds \$1,000, the authorization requirement will apply. This threshold also applies to prosthetics,

orthotics, medical supplies and implants. DME codes set for automatic denial can be found on our website at [affinityplan.org/Providers.aspx](http://affinityplan.org/Providers.aspx).

As of January 1, 2014, prior authorization will not be required for ambulatory surgery services performed in a free-standing surgery center. Authorization will still be required if performed in a hospital-based ambulatory surgery setting.

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact your provider relations representative.

## Additional Summer/Fall 2013 Articles

### Visit *Synergy Spillover*

[affinityplan.org/Affinity/Providers/For\\_Providers/Synergy\\_Spillover.aspx](http://affinityplan.org/Affinity/Providers/For_Providers/Synergy_Spillover.aspx)  
for more provider news and updates.

#### Additional articles include:

- ICD-10 Migration
- Behavioral Health Formulary
- Pharmacy Intervention to Keep Warfarin Patients Safe

... and more!

