

Aetna® update on Change Healthcare service interruption

March 8, 2024

On February 21, Change Healthcare took several of their services offline in response to a cyber security incident they experienced. This is impacting certain Aetna business operations, as well as the operations of other companies nationally. There is no indication that Aetna's systems have been compromised. We're committed to ensuring access to care as we navigate through this network disruption. We have business continuity plans in place to minimize disruption of service and apologize for any inconvenience our network providers and members may experience. We will continue to utilize our business continuity plans to minimize disruption until the Change Healthcare services are restored.

Aetna uses Change Healthcare as an intermediary for certain Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transactions across all of our lines of business. Additionally, we are aware that many of our Aetna network providers may use Change Healthcare to transmit claims information to us. This bulletin provides information to our network providers that are experiencing impact from the Change Healthcare network disruption.

Below is a set of Frequently Asked Questions that address the mitigation plans in place for providers to complete transactions with Aetna during the Change Healthcare service interruption. It is based on what is currently known and we will continue to share additional information as it becomes available.

What mitigation plans are in place for claims submissions while the service interruption continues?

For Aetna Commercial, Individual & Family Plan and Medicare: We've been advising our network providers who directly use Change Healthcare for EDI transactions for Aetna to stay "digital first" and use one of our other business partners for their electronic transactions until Change's service interruption is resolved. Here is [a list](#) of our approved electronic transaction vendors.

Providers can also use our existing medical provider portal hosted by [Availity](#) or dental provider portal hosted by [Dental Exchange](#) or electronic claims submission.

If providers work through a billing partner, practice management system or other vendor partner, they likely can advise on an alternate connection method for electronic transactions with Aetna.

Finally, when digital submission isn't possible, providers can also reach out to our Aetna provider contact centers about submitting paper claims. A [list of phone numbers](#) is available for providers to select from based on the specific transaction they are calling about.

For Aetna Better Health (Medicaid) plans: Providers need to use Office Ally for electronic claims submissions.

How do network providers get access to Availity?

Providers need to register to use Availity; many of our network providers already are registered, but do not currently use the portal. Availity offers provider training, and Aetna is considering any additional support needed. It's important to keep in mind this service interruption has a nationwide industry impact. Availity is a multi-payer portal and has confirmed with Aetna they are prepared to handle an increased volume of digital transactions. You can learn more about Availity [here](#).

What should providers do about claims submitted prior to the Change Healthcare service interruption that are still pending or outstanding?

For Medical claims: Providers who have pending or outstanding claims that were submitted prior to the Change Healthcare service interruption on Feb. 21 should resubmit those claims and any correlating electronic attachments through another clearinghouse or the Availity portal. Here is [a list](#) of our approved electronic transaction vendors. Providers need to use Office Ally for electronic submission of Medicaid claims.

For Dental claims: Providers who have pending or outstanding dental claims that were submitted with attachments prior to the Change Healthcare service interruption on Feb. 21 should resubmit those claims, including attachments, through NEA/Vyne or Dental Exchange. If you have already resubmitted these claims, after Feb. 21, through NEA/Vyne or Dental Exchange, then there is no need to resubmit. If you are unsure where your original claim was submitted, please check with your practice management vendor.

How do providers get access to Office Ally?

Providers can register at cms.officeally.com

Will Aetna extend or waive “timely filing” policies on claims processing?

We are assessing the need for this based on current claims submission activity.

How will “timely filing” deadline impacts be handled for claims that may be submitted past a timely filing deadline due to the service interruption?

We are assessing the need for this based on current claims submission activity. Any changes will be communicated to providers.

For providers who are submitting claims through a trading partner or directly to Change Healthcare, will they have to resubmit those claims, or will they ultimately be delivered to Aetna?

We are working to assess the impact to claims that may have been submitted during the service interruption and will provide an update when more information is available.

What alternative methods do providers have to submit “member eligibility and benefits” checks?

For Aetna Commercial, Individual & Family Plan and Medicare: We’ve been advising our network providers who directly use Change Healthcare for EDI transactions for Aetna to stay “digital first” and use one of our other business partners for their electronic transactions until Change’s service interruption is resolved. Here is [a list](#) of our approved electronic transaction vendors.

Providers can also use our existing medical provider portal hosted by [Availity](#) or dental provider portal hosted by [Dental Exchange](#) for member eligibility and benefit checks.

If providers work through a billing partner, practice management system or other vendor partner, they likely can advise on an alternate connection method for electronic transactions to Aetna.

Finally, when digital submission isn’t possible, providers can utilize the Aetna Voice Advantage system. A [list of phone numbers](#) is available for providers to select from based on the specific transaction they are calling about.

For Aetna Better Health (Medicaid) plans: Providers need to use Availity to submit electronic member eligibility and benefits.

How can providers submit prior authorizations to Aetna during the Change Healthcare service interruption?

For Aetna Commercial, Individual & Family Plan and Medicare: We've been advising our network providers who directly use Change Healthcare for EDI transactions for Aetna to stay "digital first" and use one of our other business partners for their electronic transactions until Change's service interruption is resolved. Here is [a list](#) of our approved electronic transaction vendors.

Providers can also use our existing medical provider portal hosted by [Availity](#) or dental provider portal hosted by [Dental Exchange](#) for electronic prior authorization submissions.

If providers work through a billing partner, practice management system or other vendor partner, they likely can advise on an alternate connection method for electronic transactions to Aetna.

Finally, when digital submission isn't possible, we recommend that providers call first and, if needed, fax any prior authorization submissions to Aetna. A [list of phone numbers](#) is available for providers to select from based on the specific transaction they are calling about.

For Aetna Better Health (Medicaid) plans: Providers need to use Availity to submit electronic prior authorization requests.

Will you start to temporarily liberalize some policies such as prior authorization requirements to help further ensure member access to care while the service interruption continues?

We are not liberalizing any policies at this time. We have assessed the situation over the last few days and the alternative processes in place – in addition to available Aetna phone call support – should help us manage this important utilization management step with our network providers during this time. If this changes, we will provide an update.

What mitigation plans are in place for provider payments?

We are aware that some providers across our lines of business and affiliates may not be getting timely payments at this time, and we take this very seriously. At this time, we're exploring contingency payment options, particularly for providers in our Medicaid plans who receive payment via paper check and are enrolled in the Virtual Credit Card program.

For providers who have not been paid yet at this time, will you issue advanced payment?

We are continuing to assess the situation regarding payments while we actively work to get contingency solutions in place. We take the matter of timely claims payment to our network providers very seriously and we recognize the disproportionate impact of the Change Healthcare service interruption on payment of Medicaid claims. In some instances, we may help alleviate unusually difficult financial circumstances for providers submitting Medicaid claims.

What mitigation plans are in place for electronic remittance advice (ERA) files?

Providers that are currently enrolled with Change Healthcare to receive their electronic remittance advice (ERA) files for Commercial, Individual and Family Plans and Medicare claims have two options:

- Providers can access Explanation of Benefits files manually through the Availity portal for medical claims and the Aetna Dental portal for dental claims.
 - Providers can enroll with a different vendor to begin receiving ERA files for claims going forward. Here is the [ERA/EFT enrollment](#) form for medical providers for Commercial, Individual and Family Plans and Medicare claims.
 - Here is the [ERA/EFT enrollment](#) form for dental providers for Commercial, Individual and Family Plans and Medicare claims.
- For Medicaid claims, we are working toward a contingency solution to issue ERAs and will provide an update as soon as we can.

Providers cannot create an electronic connection directly with Aetna to receive ERA files; a vendor must be utilized to receive these files.

Will interest payments be included in any payments that are past “timely payments” deadlines as a result of this service interruption?

We are working to assess the impact to claim payments and will share more at a later date.

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