



[www.asuris.com/provider](http://www.asuris.com/provider)

*Feature:*

**Treatment Cost Estimator gives patients access to network average cost information**

When discussing a patient's treatment options, it is common for the cost of a recommended service or treatment to become a part of the conversation. It can be difficult for providers to give patients the answers they seek with the lack of available cost information.

This spring, we will launch our newest online feature on **myAsuris.com** designed to give our members information they consider important when making value-based health care decisions. The Treatment Cost Estimator will allow our members the ability to access network average costs for an initial select range of treatments, which will be expanded each quarter. This feature is intended to enable members to more accurately predict the duration of the treatment their provider is recommending, as well as the associated costs.

"The Treatment Cost Estimator provides Asuris Northwest Health members with a trusted, reliable resource for seeking treatment cost information," said Dr. Dennis Chong, Asuris chief medical officer. "It is through access to information that we are able to make more informed health care decisions, resulting in better health outcomes."

continued on page 2

**Contents**

## Treatment Cost Estimator gives patients access to network average cost information

continued from page 1

### Contents

#### Feature

Treatment Cost Estimator feature coming soon 1-2

#### Administrative and Billing Updates

2009 code changes 3

Correct Code Editor (CCE) updated 3

Infusion therapy codes replaced 3

Pre-authorization changes 4

*Administrative Manual* updates 4

New policy regarding claims inactivity 5

New requirements for reconstructive breast surgery 5

#### Medical Policies

Investigational and medical necessity reviews 5

Sacral nerve stimulation 6

Pulmonary vein isolation (PVI) 6

Spinal manipulation under anesthesia 7

Emerging surgical treatments for glaucoma 7

Change to *Varicose Vein Treatment* medical policy 7

#### News

Enhance your provider profile today 8

New Provider Services Vice President 9

2009 provider workshops and schedule available 9

#### Medicare

New Customer Service phone number 10

Medicare compliance training 10

#### Pharmacy

Medication policy updates are available online 10

#### Online Resources

*The Connection Online*<sup>SM</sup> 11

#### Contact Us

We're here for you 12

In designing the Treatment Cost Estimator, Asuris sought to make the feature valuable to as many members as possible. To determine which medical conditions to highlight initially, we evaluated the number of times an individual condition or topic area was viewed on **myAsuris.com**, competitive sites and cost tools, as well as the volume of claims in our system for that particular condition. To calculate the network average cost, Asuris used geographic regions. Network average costs were calculated based on where residents would most likely receive care.

Using the Treatment Cost Estimator, members can access network average costs within their own geographic area for common treatments within the following categories: children's health; chronic care; dental services; ear, nose and throat; joint conditions of the hand, hip, knee or shoulder; men's health; women's health; and mental health.

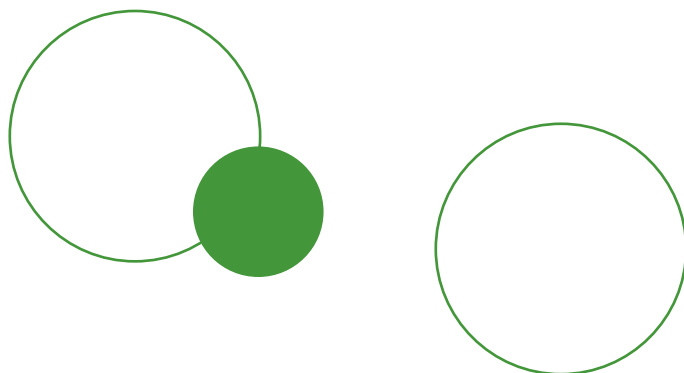
For more information about the Treatment Cost Estimator, please contact your provider consultant.

### Join our online member community today

Register as a guest on **myAsuris.com**. By using the Guest Pass code PROVIDER, your access to the site will not expire.

### Contents - *The Connection Online*

Additional articles are available on our *Provider Web Site*. See page 11 for a list of online articles.



The policies and procedures in this section were reviewed due to:

- The addition, deletion or revision of codes published in the 2009 *Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)* and *Health Care Procedure Coding System (HCPCS)* manuals
- A regularly scheduled review
- Requests from physicians, other health care professionals or facilities
- Updates from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Policies are reviewed using CMS' National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI) rules and edits, language and descriptions contained in the American Medical Association's (AMA) CPT and HCPCS manuals, the *AMA's CPT Assistant*, other recognized coding publications, and state and federal regulations.

Codes that require clinical information are updated monthly. A complete list of code groupings can be found on our *Provider Web Site* in the Claims & Billing section, under Coding Toolkit.

Medical and reimbursement policies are available in the Provider Library section of our *Provider Web Site*. If you have questions about our policies, please contact Customer Service or your provider consultant. Our contact information is on page 12.

### 2009 brings code changes for many services and supplies

Please remember to review your 2009 CPT, HCPCS and International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) coding publications for codes that have been added, deleted or changed and to use only valid codes.

### Correct Code Editor (CCE) updated

The Asuris CCE identifies code pair edits used in addition to CMS' NCCI edits. These code pair edits are compiled using CMS' NCCI written rules, CPT language and other recognized sources. The code pair edits are followed for all lines of business.

Our CCE is updated quarterly (January, April, July and October) and is available on our *Provider Web Site* in the Claims & Billing section, under Coding Toolkit. Updates are clearly labeled with the corresponding version of CMS' NCCI. Our CCE, updated in January, currently corresponds to NCCI Version 15.0. Our next update in April will correspond to NCCI Version 15.1.

### Use of infusion therapy codes in a facility setting

Several 2008 infusion therapy CPT codes will be replaced in 2009. These codes include injections and infusions for chemotherapy and nonchemotherapy administered in a facility setting for:

- Hydration **CPT 90760-90761**
- Intravenous or subcutaneous infusions for therapy, prophylaxis or diagnosis **CPT 90765-90779**

The 2009 codes that replaced the above codes include:

- Hydration **CPT 93630-93631**
- Intravenous or subcutaneous infusions for therapy, prophylaxis or diagnosis **CPT 96365-96379**

According to the AMA, *CPT 2009 Professional Edition*, these codes are not intended to be reported by the physician in the facility setting. Therefore, effective May 1, Asuris will not reimburse for these codes when billed by a physician (MD or DO).

### Changes to our pre-authorization lists

Our *Medicare* and *Group and Individual Products Pre-authorization Lists* have been reviewed and updated. We also made a formatting change to our *Medicare Pre-authorization List*.

The updated lists are effective May 1 and have been added to our *Provider Web Site*, in the Care Management section, under Pre-authorization. A print-friendly feature on the bottom of each page allows you to print the lists.

### Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) reminder

Effective March 1, we will enforce the pre-authorization requirement for all SNF admissions for Asuris TruAdvantage patients. We are requesting participation from hospitals, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the SNF to pre-authorize each admission. Regardless of any preliminary contact by hospital discharge planners, a pre-authorization is not considered complete unless the SNF contacts our Medical Management team. If we are not contacted on the date of admission or the subsequent working day, the services will be denied. These denied services are considered a provider write-off and may not be billed to the patient.

To complete the pre-authorization process, please contact our Medical Management team at 1 (800) 824-8563, option 3. If you are transferred to voicemail, please leave a message with the details of the admission.

The Medicare Advantage Plans section of our *Administrative Manual* has been updated to reflect this change.

### Updates to our *Administrative Manual*

We recently revised several sections of our *Administrative Manual*. Updated sections are listed below and are available to view and print from our *Provider Web Site* in the Provider Library section, under Manuals. For a paper copy of the updated manual sections, contact your provider consultant.

- Embark<sup>SM</sup>, Vantage<sup>SM</sup> and Motivate<sup>SM</sup> Plans (renamed Self-managed and Consumer Directed Products, includes information on our new Health Savings Account product—see related article in *The Connection Online*)
- Glossary
- Product Overview (new section)
- Who to Contact

In addition, we have reformatted and renamed several sections. Those sections are listed below:

Current section name	New section name
Accidental Injuries	Included in Filing Claims
Asuris TruAdvantage	Medicare Advantage Plans
Billing Information	Filing Claims
Coordination of Benefits	Included in Filing Claims
Corrective Coding Edit Information	Included in Payment
Member Cards	Identifying Members
Message Codes	Included in Payment

We have retired our *Behavioral Health Manual*. You can now find the same information in the Behavioral Health section of our *Administrative Manual*.

## Administrative and Billing Updates

## New policy regarding claims inactivity

Effective January 1, a new policy was implemented to ensure the network information we share with our members is accurate and up-to-date. If a participating physician, other health care professional or facility has not submitted claims for at least five different members within a six month period, Asuris may terminate that provider's contract due to inactivity.

## New pre-authorization requirements for reconstructive breast surgery

New codes are being added to our *Group and Individual Products Pre-authorization List* for reconstructive breast surgery performed to restore the normal appearance of the breast after surgery, accidental injury or trauma. The following CPT codes are being added:

- **CPT 19330** *Removal of mammary implant material*
- **CPT 19340** *Immediate insertion of breast prosthesis following mastopexy, mastectomy or in reconstruction*
- **CPT 19350** *Nipple/areola reconstruction*
- **CPT 19355** *Correction of inverted nipples*

The procedures listed above always require pre-authorization when they are performed for any reason other than a diagnosis of cancer. Pre-authorization is not required for procedures performed in response to cancer diagnoses.

See our medical policy *Reconstructive Breast Surgery/ Mastopexy, and Management of Breast Implants* (Surgery #40) for more information. Detailed policies and the complete *Medical Policy Manual* are available online at <http://blue.regence.com/trgmedpol/index.html> or upon request by contacting your provider consultant.

## Investigational and medical necessity reviews

The following summaries outline recent changes to Asuris medical policies and include references to the sections and policy numbers. This list does not include medications or Medicare medical policy exceptions. For additional information related to medication policy updates, see the related article on page 10.

### New or updated investigational or medical necessity policy criteria

#### Medicine

**Hyperbaric Oxygen Pressurization** (#14) Added to the list of indications considered medically necessary: crush injuries, compartment syndrome and pre-and post-treatment for patient undergoing dental surgery (non-implant related) of an irradiated jaw. Added to list of investigational indications: avascular necrosis, cerebellar hypoperfusion and viral encephalitis/encephalopathy.

#### Surgery

**Emerging Surgical Treatments for Glaucoma** (#164) New medical policy. See related article on page 7.

**Facet Joint Injections** (#135) Revised criteria to add limitation maximum of six injections per year per American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP) practice guidelines. Added viscosupplementation therapy (injection of hyaluronic acid) as an investigational indication.

**Surgery for Morbid Obesity** (#58) Criteria regarding pre-surgical weight loss program revised: time period decreased from 12 months to 6 months, and other related criteria clarified. Added statement that bariatric surgical procedures are considered investigational for the treatment of conditions other than morbid obesity, (e.g., gastroesophageal reflux disease). Added criterion that endoscopic procedures to treat weight gain after a bariatric procedure are investigational.

**Surgical Treatment of Hyperhidrosis** (#165) Removed criteria for medical treatments; policy now addresses only surgical treatments. This policy became effective on January 1.

**Varicose Vein Treatment** (#104) Criteria changed. See related article on page 7.

## Sacral nerve stimulation considered investigational

After careful review of current scientific literature, Asuris considers sacral nerve stimulation, also referred to as sacral nerve neuromodulation, to be investigational for the following conditions, including, but not limited to:

- Chronic constipation
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Fecal incontinence
- Stress incontinence
- Urge incontinence due to a neurologic condition, including, but not limited to:
  - Detrusor hyperreflexia
  - Multiple sclerosis
  - Spinal cord injury
  - Diabetes with peripheral nerve involvement
- Other types of chronic voiding dysfunction

Effective May 1, the following codes will be reviewed as potentially investigational:

- **CPT 64561** *Percutaneous implantation of neurostimulator electrodes; sacral nerve (transforaminal placement)*
- **CPT 64581** *Incision for implantation of neurostimulator electrodes; sacral nerve (transforaminal placement)*
- **CPT 64585** *Revision or removal of peripheral neurostimulator electrodes*

See our *Sacral Nerve Modulation/Stimulation for Pelvic Floor Dysfunction* (Surgery #134) medical policy for more information.

## Pulmonary vein isolation (PVI)

Transcatheter ablation of arrhythmogenic foci in the pulmonary veins, or pulmonary vein isolation (PVI), is considered investigational by Asuris as a treatment for atrial fibrillation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Focal ablation within the pulmonary veins
- Segmental ostial ablation
- Circumferential pulmonary vein ablation or pulmonary vein isolation

*Note:* This policy is not intended to address atrial ablation, which may be considered medically necessary for the treatment of atrial fibrillation.

If PVI is performed, **CPT 93799** *Unlisted cardiovascular service or procedure* should be billed for this procedure.

PVI may be performed alone or in conjunction with **CPT 93651** *Intracardiac catheter ablation of arrhythmogenic focus; for treatment of supraventricular tachycardia by ablation of fast or slow atrioventricular pathways, accessory atrioventricular connections or other atrial foci, singly or in combination.*

To consistently administer this policy, effective May 1, Asuris will require submission of the operative report with all claims submitted for **CPT 93651**. See our *Transcatheter Ablation of Arrhythmogenic Foci in the Pulmonary Veins as a Treatment for Atrial Fibrillation* (Surgery #138) medical policy for more information.

## Spinal manipulation under anesthesia

Asuris considers spinal manipulation performed either with the patient sedated or under general anesthesia to be investigational. Anesthesia may be considered medically necessary for spinal manipulations only in the presence of vertebral fracture or dislocation.

Effective May 1, the following codes will be denied as investigational:

- **CPT 00640** *Anesthesia for manipulation of the spine or for closed procedures on the cervical, thoracic or lumbar spine*
- **CPT 22505** *Manipulation of spine requiring anesthesia, any region*

See our *Spinal Manipulation Under Anesthesia* (Medicine #103) medical policy for more information.

## Emerging surgical treatments for glaucoma

A new surgical code for the treatment of glaucoma, **CPT 0177T** *Transluminal dilation of aqueous outflow canal; with retention of device or stent*, was introduced in July 2008. After careful consideration of the available scientific documentation, Asuris has determined that this code, and the codes already noted in our *Emergency Surgical Treatments for Glaucoma* (Surgery #164) medical policy, do not meet our technology assessment criteria and are, therefore, considered investigational.

As of May 1, **CPT 0177T** will be denied as investigational and ineligible for reimbursement. See the medical policy for more information.

## Change to Varicose Vein Treatment medical policy

Effective May 1, the criteria for varicose vein treatment will change as follows:

- The trial period for compression stockings will increase from six weeks to three months. Failure of the trial is required before additional interventions will be considered.
- Only one treatment session per extremity will be approved at a time; future treatment sessions will be considered only when the clinical outcome of the prior treatment is documented.
- Documentation will be required to demonstrate recurrent significant episodes of superficial phlebitis unrelated to sclerotherapy.
- The accessory saphenous vein will be removed from the list of medically necessary veins.
- Nomenclature for long and short saphenous veins will be updated to greater and lesser saphenous veins.
- Activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental ADLs will be defined in the policy criteria related to symptoms. Symptoms must be documented and must be "persistent, severe lower extremity symptoms attributable to varicose veins."

*Note:* All services related to varicose vein treatment, including ligation and phlebectomy procedures, require pre-authorization.

See our *Varicose Vein Treatment* (Surgery #104) medical policy for more information.

## Reach prospective and current patients by enhancing your profile on myAsuris.com

In November 2008, Asuris launched the Enhanced Provider Profile feature, giving participating physicians, dentists and other health care professionals the opportunity to enhance the information presented in their individual profile pages on the **myAsuris.com** Provider Search tool.

Every week, hundreds of Asuris members use the Provider Search tool to look for a physician, dentist or other health care professional. The Enhanced Provider Profile feature enables Asuris members to choose the provider that is right for them based on several criteria, including the provider's philosophy of care, practice areas of expertise, appointment availability, awards and other distinctions, as well as the provider's patient age and gender mix.

"It can be difficult for patients to find the provider that will best meet their and their family's needs solely by looking at a list of names," said Dr. Dennis Chong, Asuris chief medical officer. "The Enhanced Provider Profile gives Asuris participating providers a venue to communicate directly to current and prospective patients and to share detailed information about their practice."

In a study conducted among Asuris members, many indicated that information about a physician's practice was important to health care decision making. As a result, the following benefits are available to Asuris contracted providers who choose to participate in enhancing their profile:

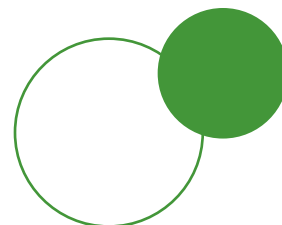
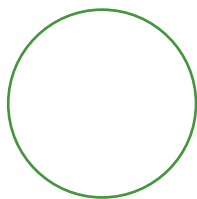
- A direct link to the provider's practice Web site can be added to the provider's individual profile on **myAsuris.com**.
- Better alignment of patient needs with provider characteristics may result in improved provider-patient relationships.
- Online presence allows providers who do not already have a practice Web site more visibility to the Asuris member community.
- Future releases will enable members to sort, filter and compare physicians, dentists and other health care professionals based on data captured in the profiles using the **myAsuris.com** Provider Search tool.

### Submit your Enhanced Provider Profile today

Asuris recognizes that your time is valuable. We have taken steps to ensure that enhancing your individual profile page is quick and simple.

### To enhance your individual profile, you must have access to Asuris Online Services for

**Providers.** If you already have access to this free, Web-based tool, you will find information for submitting your practice information on the Asuris Online Services for Providers home page. If you have not yet registered for this tool, we strongly encourage you to do so. More information about Asuris Online Services for Providers is available on our *Provider Web Site*.



## Beth Johnson joins Asuris as vice president of Provider Services

We are pleased to announce that Beth Johnson has joined Asuris as vice president of Provider Services. Beth comes to Asuris from First Choice Health in Seattle, where she has been responsible for network management since 1998.

Beth brings in-depth business knowledge of the Washington provider community and experience managing a network of 50,000 providers spanning multiple states. Her resume includes provider and network management positions with Multicare Health Systems and Medical Consultants Northwest, Inc. Beth earned a master's degree in public health from the University of South Carolina and has an undergraduate degree from James Madison University in Virginia.

## 2009 provider workshops and schedule now available

The 2009 workshop schedule is now available in the Workshops section of our *Provider Web Site*. In our continuing effort to reduce waste and to conserve resources, workshop registration is available online. You will receive notification of our upcoming workshops via a postcard. We look forward to sharing the following instructor-led and online workshops with you this year:

### Instructor-led workshops

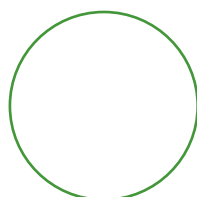
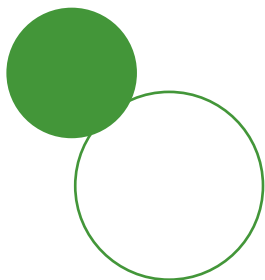
The **New Office Staff Orientation Workshop** has been redesigned based on your feedback and includes "a day in the life of a claim," which provides helpful information about what happens when a claim is submitted and processed by Asuris. It also includes other useful information on resources available to you.

The **Educational Workshop** includes information about the provider appeals process, as well as our online tools such as Asuris Online Services for Providers, fee schedules, reimbursement and medical policies.

### Online workshops

This month we are adding a new online workshop, **Tools of the Trade**, an overview of our Coding Toolkit, including our Correct Code Editor (CCE). This new workshop and several others are available on our *Provider Web Site* in the Workshops section, under Online Workshops. Other online workshops will be added later this year.

If you have any questions, please contact our Provider Services department at 1 (800) 562-2156.



### New Asuris TruAdvantage Provider Customer Service phone number

Effective February 1, providers will be required to use a new toll-free phone number for inquiries regarding their Asuris TruAdvantage patients: 1 (877) 508-7362. After this date, any provider calls received via other lines will be transferred to this designated provider line and placed at the end of the queue. Our Asuris TruAdvantage Provider Customer Service phone number will bypass member survey prompts and other messages.

### Medicare compliance training required for Asuris TruAdvantage providers

Effective January 1, new CMS regulations require compliance training for “first tier, downstream and related entities” of a Medicare Advantage plan. Physicians and other health care professionals who contract with a Medicare Advantage plan, such as Asuris TruAdvantage, are considered “first tier” entities. This designation applies not only to Asuris TruAdvantage, but to any Medicare Advantage plan with which you contract.

For your convenience, we have developed an online workshop that meets the CMS requirement. You can access the online course in the Workshops section of our *Provider Web Site*. Training developed internally or by third parties may also be used. Training must be completed yearly and documented.

### Updates to medication policies are available online

Summaries of recent changes to our medication policies are available online. Detailed policies and the complete *Medication Policy Manual* are available at <http://blue.regence.com/trgmedpol/drugs/PolicyUpdates.pdf>.

Our *Preferred Medication List/Formulary* (PML) is also available online at [www.regencrx.com/learn/covered/alpha/index.html](http://www.regencrx.com/learn/covered/alpha/index.html). Updates are made to the list as needed. The complete list of recent updates is available at [www.regencrx.com/pharmacy/docs/genericNoticeOfFormularyChange2008.pdf](http://www.regencrx.com/pharmacy/docs/genericNoticeOfFormularyChange2008.pdf).



## The Connection Online

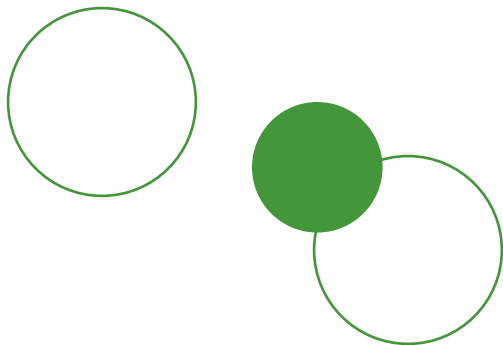
In November 2008, we introduced *The Connection Online*, our supplemental newsletter available on our *Provider Web Site*. In an effort to improve our online newsletter, we have added a subscribe feature that allows you to receive an email notification when a new edition of *The Connection Online* is available for viewing.

The articles listed on the right are available in *The Connection Online* on our *Provider Web Site* in the Provider Library section, under Newsletters.

In addition to our newsletters, our *Provider Web Site* offers extensive information and resources to support you. You can find information on our site about:

- Submitting paper or electronic claims (Claims & Billing section)
- Identifying members, including sample member cards and benefit summaries (Products section)
- Pre-authorizing services or prior authorizing medications (Care Management section)

Take a few minutes to visit our *Provider Web Site* today.



### Contents - *The Connection Online*

#### Administrative and Billing Updates

Form W-9 reminder  
NCCI edits and use of Modifier -59  
Fourth quarter claims processing results

#### Medical Policies

Join our medical policy discussions

#### News

Asuris Behavioral Health and Wellness programs  
Wallet cards available for patients  
Tobacco cessation programs available

#### Products and Networks

New Individual product offered  
Asuris HSA Healthplan 2.0<sup>SM</sup> now available

#### Medicare

Signature stamps no longer accepted  
Annual update on Medicare accessibility results  
Advance directive documentation  
HEDIS<sup>®</sup> medical record review coming  
New electronic prescribing incentive program

#### Pharmacy

Updates to medication policies  
Epocrates<sup>®</sup> and downloadable formularies

#### TriWest

Online behavioral health course  
Submitting Coordination of Benefits (COB) claims electronically  
Patient eligibility available via phone  
Cancer screening initiative underway

#### Online Resources

Asuris Online Services for Providers enhancements  
Electronic transactions resources and webinar

## Contact Us

<b>Provider Services</b>	1 (800) 562-2156
<b>Provider Customer Service</b>	1 (800) 462-5680
<b>Provider Web Site</b>	<b>www.asuris.com/provider</b>
Asuris TruAdvantage	<b>NEW</b> 1 (877) 508-7362
Behavioral Health	1 (800) 780-7881
Healthy Options	1 (800) 669-8791
Embark, Vantage, Motivate and HSA Healthplan 2.0	1 (888) 349-6558
Pharmacy Services	1 (800) 732-9157
TriWest	1 (888) TRIWEST (874-9378)
Washington Health Forum Web site	<b>www.wahealthforum.com</b>
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*The Connection* is published quarterly by Asuris Provider Communications. It is written to keep our participating physicians, other health care professionals and facilities aware of our programs, guidelines and policies. Customer Service numbers listed above are for claims and benefit inquiries only. For information not related to claims or benefits, contact your provider consultant. A complete listing of contact information is available on our *Provider Web Site* at **www.asuris.com/provider/contact** and in the Who to Contact section of our *Administrative Manual*.



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