



KERN HEALTH SYSTEMS POLICY AND PROCEDURES			
Policy Title	UM Staff Access & Availability Regarding UM Issues	Policy #	30.61-P
Policy Owner	Utilization Management	Original Effective Date	7/12/2023
Revision Effective Date		Approval Date	02/24/2025
Line of Business	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medi-Cal <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate		

I. PURPOSE

To outline the mechanism for ensuring staff accessibility for providers (contracted and non-contracted) and members to discuss Utilization Management (UM) issues.

II. POLICY

Kern Health Systems (KHS) has established procedures to facilitate member and provider access to UM staff for inquiries related to the Utilization Review process and authorization of care.

III. DEFINITIONS

TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Normal Business Hours	The hours in which staff are regularly scheduled to work exclude weekends and holidays.
TDD or TTY	Telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or TTY (telephone typewriter, or teletypewriter) are electronic devices for text communication via a telephone line, used when one or more parties have hearing or speech difficulties. The organization provides a separate phone number for receiving TDD/TTY messages or uses the State 711 Relay Services.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Availability during normal business hours

1. KHS UM staff are available at least eight (8) hours a day, during normal business hours (excluding holidays), to receive inbound communications or toll-free calls regarding UM issues. KHS provides support to members and providers 24 hours, 7 days a week.
2. KHS staff responds to general UM inquiries, which may include fax or telephone communications, including voicemail.
3. KHS staff documents inbound communications and their response. KHS staff triages and refers specific UM inbound communications to UM staff.
4. Communications are responded to within one business day.
5. KHS UM provides phone and fax numbers, as well as TDD/TTY toll-free access to practitioners and members for inbound communications.
6. KHS UM staff are available eight (8) hours a day during normal business hours to perform outbound communication and to respond to UM-related inquiries and issues. Communications received after normal business hours are returned on the next business day and communications received after midnight on Monday-Friday are responded on the same business day.
 - a. Outbound communications may include directly speaking with practitioners and members, as well as fax or telephone communications, including voicemail.
 - b. Staff identify themselves by name, title, and organization name (Kern Health Systems) when initiating or returning calls regarding UM issues.
 - c. Inquiries and responses are documented in the member's case file.
 - i. All written communication (including fax) will be retained in the case file.

B. Availability outside normal business hours

1. KHS staff can receive inbound communication regarding UM issues after business hours. KHS provides a toll-free number and staff to accept collect calls regarding UM Issues.
2. UM staff retrieves and triages, or responds to, all messages no later than the next business day.
3. Capacity of voicemail service and answering service is adjusted as needed to accept the volume of incoming calls.

C. Disclosure regarding access to UM services

1. Information regarding the process for accessing UM services is disclosed in member and provider materials. Materials include:

- a. Normal business hours of operation for the UM department.
 - b. The organizations toll-free numbers and fax numbers, as appropriate for UM inquiries.
 - c. Information regarding the after normal business hours communication process.
- 2. Upon request, UM staff verbally inform members, hospital, and facility personnel, attending physicians, and other ordering practitioners, and health professionals of specific UM requirements and procedures.
- D. KHS ensures that all verbal and non-verbal communications is effective. This includes but is not limited to, providing access to TDD/TTY contact numbers, complying with language assistance program requirements to discuss issues providing access to translation services while considering individual cultural and linguistic needs.
 - 1. Toll-Free: (800) 391-2000
 - 2. Local: (661) 632-1590
 - 3. TTY: 711 Relay Services
- E. For members requiring language assistance to discuss UM issues, please refer to the Member Handbook, Section “Other Languages and Formats,” regarding Language Assistance Program.
- F. Additional communication provided by KHS regarding the UM process to contracted and non-contracted providers include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Provider Manual
 - b. Provider Newsletters
 - c. Provider Onboarding/Annual Training Materials
 - d. How to submit a referral request
 - e. How to obtain UM policies and procedures
 - f. How to obtain UM criteria

V. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A:	N/A
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VI. REFERENCES

Reference Type	Specific Reference
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Regulatory	NCQA (National Committee for Quality Assurance) Standards and Guidelines.
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VII. REVISION HISTORY

Action	Date	Brief Description of Updates	Author
Effective	7/12/2023	The policy was created by the UM Department to align with NCQA standards and State & Federal requirements.	UM

VIII. APPROVALS

Committees Board (if applicable)	Date Reviewed	Date Approved
Choose an item.		

Regulatory Agencies (if applicable)	Date Reviewed	Date Approved
Choose an item.		

Chief Executive Leadership Approval *		
Title	Signature	Date Approved
Chief Executive Officer		
Chief Medical Officer		
Choose an item.		
Choose an item.		
*Signatures are kept on file for reference but will not be on the published copy		



Policy and Procedure Review

KHS Policy & Procedure: 30.61-P UM Staff Access & Availability Regarding UM Issues.

Reason for Creation: The policy was created by the UM Department to align with NCQA standards and State & Federal requirements.

Director Approval		
Title	Signature	Date Approved
Christine Pence Senior Director of Health Services		
Dr. Maninder Khalsa Medical Director of Utilization Management		
Amanda Gonzalez Director of Utilization Management		

Date posted to public drive: _____

Date posted to website (“P” policies only): _____