



September 12, 2013

John P. D. Shemo, M.D., DLFAPA  
Medical Director  
Psychiatric Alliance of the Blue Ridge  
1228 Cedars Court, Suite B  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Dear Dr. Shemo,

I am writing to follow up on my August 1, 2013 letter regarding Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Virginia's reimbursement of claims submitted on behalf of your patient, [REDACTED].

We have reviewed the records you provided relating to Ms. [REDACTED] diagnosis and treatment, as well as our own records regarding how that claim was processed. Based on the information we have reviewed, we agree that reimbursement for CPT code 90836 should not have been denied. Accordingly, Anthem will reprocess this claim so that you are reimbursed for both CPT code 99213 and CPT code 90836.

With respect to the comments in your letter regarding mental health parity, Anthem respectfully disagrees that it is violating mental health parity laws to the extent it reimburses evaluation and management services performed by psychiatrists at a lower rate than evaluation and management services performed by other physicians. Anthem's reimbursement rates for psychiatrists and other physicians are market driven and reflect a myriad of factors, including the fact that psychiatrists, on average, have a lower cost structure than most other physicians. Parity requires the use of comparable processes, strategies, evidentiary standards, and other factors, for mental health benefits and medical/surgical benefits, and it requires that these factors are applied in a comparably stringent manner. It does not require that the reimbursement rates for evaluation and management services performed by psychiatrists and other physicians be the same.

Finally, any suggestion that Anthem was intentionally dilatory in implementing its 2013 behavioral health fee schedule to take into account the AMA's CPT code changes is baseless. Anthem worked hard to develop and implement reimbursement rates for the new CPT codes in a timely and effective manner. Nevertheless, those changes did result in some unanticipated claims processing issues as I previously indicated, which Anthem has addressed as they have been identified.

Anthem recognizes the importance of mental health services to its members and values its relationships with the psychiatrists who treat Anthem's members and the associations who represent them. We appreciate you for bringing your concerns to Anthem's attention and giving us the opportunity to address them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'APelonero', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anthony L. Pelonero, M.D., CPE  
Medical Director, Behavioral Health Care