

# THE QUARTERLY COMPASS

SPRING 2025  
Newsletter



**Saint Alphonsus  
Health Alliance**

A Member of Trinity Health

# President's Message



**T**he new year has brought many changes from the payer landscape, new administration in government and unanticipated policy changes. But regardless of the political climate or societal changes, Catholic healthcare's mission remains clear: to serve the most vulnerable with dignity, to act with reverence, and to be a voice for those in need. In times of transition, it is crucial that we remain active in living out this mission, ensuring that silence never overshadows our call to heal and advocate for the common good.

The Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance (SAHA) continues to focus on supporting our network providers through constant education, performance focused data and resources to assist patients on their health journey. While we were disappointed in the loss of some of our successful advanced payment model (APM) arrangements, due to payer exits from the market or ongoing negotiations, we are excited by the opportunity to pivot resources and deepen focus into remaining payer relationships. This will allow us greater impact, focusing on more of the rising risk patients so they can enjoy more healthy days, at home doing the things they love.

As always the Health Alliance is ready to serve both the patients and network providers in hopes to reduce burden, lessen stress and improve health outcomes. We all need a helping hand, and the Health Alliance is poised and ready.

Warm Regards,

**Stacy Meyr, DC**

President

Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance & Community Health and Well-Being





## Do your patients need additional support?

The Health Alliance Care Management (ACT) team is a free resource to your clinic and patients to help manage those with complex care needs. The advanced payment models (APMs) are listed below that our team can help support. The best way for us to engage patients is referral from you, their clinician. If you have a patient that needs that extra support, who struggles to manage their medications or needs the extra touchpoints to keep them enjoying healthy days as home, let our team help by referring those patients today!



## SAINT ALPHONSUS HEALTH ALLIANCE

### Alliance Clinical Team (ACT) Referral Protocol

#### What supports are available via ACT?



**RN Care Manager** - Care coordination for high risk transition of care from an acute episode, or chronic illness with complexity.



**Social Work Care Manager** - LCSW/LMSW Navigation of complex social needs impacting medical treatment (mental wellbeing, legal, financial, and/or crisis support)



**Pharmacy** - Provides PharmD consult, Medication Reconciliation (CMR), Patient education, and/or Medication adherence counseling.



**Community Health Worker** - social care hub assistance with community or social resources to reduce barriers to accessing care call to (208) 367-4482.

#### How are patients referred to the ACT?

**Patient must have an eligible coverage in an APM contract (see list below)**

Send a <secure> email to:

[BOHSCareManagement@saintalphonsus.org](mailto:BOHSCareManagement@saintalphonsus.org)

Include the following:

1. Patient **Name & Patient DOB**
2. Patient **PCP**
3. **Payer Coverage** (see list below)
4. **Reason** for referral/services requested

Questions? Please call **(208) 367-4103**;

or **FAX to: (208) 367-7238**

Alliance APM (Alternative Payment Model) Contracts		
Payer/Coverage Name	Category	Identifiers
Aetna Trinity - Colleague Health Plan	Commercial; Employer self-funded	Aetna Trinity group numbers: 469691, 468513, 891194, 469688, 469687, 469690
Blue Cross Idaho - Connected Care	Commercial; Small Group only	BCI Connected Care Small Group Commercial only,
Idaho Department of Health & Welfare	Medicaid VCO	SAHA Medicaid VCO Healthy Connections only
Mountain Health Co-Op	Individual Exchange Carrier	Mountain Health Co-Op Access Care
Medicare Shared Savings Plan (MSSP) ACO - Trinity Health Integrated Care (THIC)	Traditional Medicare ACO	Must be on MSSP Master Beneficiary List, Medicare A&B & showing on Registry "ORID THIC MSSP ACO" in EPIC snapshot registry. For MSSP questions call 208-367-4103
MODA	Individual Exchange; Small Group	"ModaSelect" in Idaho counties: Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, and Washington
Regence MA Blue Shield of Idaho HMO	Medicare Advantage HMO	Regence "Blue MedAdv HMO" or "Blue MedAdv HMO Plus" (H1969-002, H1969-004)
Regence Blue Shield of Idaho	Individual Exchange; Small Group	Regence Individual & Regence Accord Small Group
Saint Alphonsus Health Plan MA	Medicare Advantage HMO	SAHP (formerly Medigold MA) Essential Care (H6910-001), True Advantage (H6910-002), Classic Preferred (H6910-003), Medical Only (H6910-004)
SelectHealth	Individual Exchange; Small Group	SelectHealth "SAHA Network" in counties: Ada, Boise, Canyon, Gem, Payette, and Washington.



## **Version 28 of the HCC-CMS risk coding is here! Now what in the world does that mean?**

In brief, this is the model that the government uses to determine what “counts” towards a Medicare or Medicare Advantage risk score. The higher the score, theoretically, the sicker the patient and more likely that they would need expensive care. Plans with overall high-risk scores receive higher revenue to support those potential higher costs. Unfortunately, the old system was opaque, difficult for providers to understand, and open to manipulation by health insurances.

I continue to see providers confused about what truly notes sickness in the eyes of Medicare. There are countless diagnoses like hypertension, anxiety, chronic back pain, recurrent UTIs, OSA, diverticulitis, or esophageal stricture—none of which contribute to a patient’s risk score. Meanwhile aortic atherosclerosis noted incidentally on imaging would code just as highly as a patient with uncontrolled diabetes. This led to physicians coding every single problem during an Annual Wellness Visit just to ensure they captured all potential options. Of course, no provider could truly do a wellness and evaluate twenty problems during one visit. It simply was too big of an ask.

Fortunately, v28 offers some relief. Certainly, it is not a perfect system, but it eliminates over 2,000 codes and simplifies some of the conditions. The best example is diabetes. Previously chronic conditions were needed to gather the highest score. If you had documented “Diabetes Uncomplicated” you would realize about half the risk adjustment. Thus providers were encouraged to document sometimes 5 or 6 ICD 10 codes for a single diabetic (DM with HTN, with HLD, with Neuropathy, with CKD, with Retinopathy, with Obesity, etc). Today, the scores are balanced out so any diabetic patient gets the same RAF.

*Continued on next page*



# Risk Coding in 2025



Other examples of eliminated codes include Peripheral Vascular Disease (including Aortic atherosclerosis), Immunodeficiency due to medications, Neuropathy, Aortic aneurysms, Thrombocytopenia, Protein Calorie Malnutrition, Toe amputations, and Hyper/hypoparathyroidism. If your clinic uses EPIC, hopefully your BPA is already adjusted to remove those codes! It is vital that your clinic have a tool to identify which codes are v28 HCC risk codes. Depending on your (or my!) memory is a poor substitute for the support of a good coding team & EHR overlays.

In the meantime, continue to do your best to recapture the limited remaining risk codes and have staff focus on making sure your Medicare patients are seen at least once a year. For savvy physicians, I recommend looking for the following commonly missed coding opportunities:

1. Morbid Obesity when BMI >35
2. Chronic Respiratory Failure due to OSA with untreated or undertreated patients with low SpO2s
3. Emphysema/COPD in patients getting Lung Cancer Screening CT's but perhaps not needing inhalers
4. Opioid Dependence if taking opiates daily, Sedative Dependence for nightly zolpidem use, or Benzodiazepine dependence if taking regular anxiolytics
5. HFpEF when patients have diastolic dysfunction and symptoms like swelling, fatigue, SOB, DOE, etc
6. History of Alcoholism when appropriate.

As always, I am available to answer questions or provide further insights to you or your clinic free of charge.

**Risk Coding is complex, but it is getting better. That, we can all support!**

## **Michael Twomey | MD**

Executive Medical Director

Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance CIN & Trinity Health Integrated Care ACO

1055 N Curtis Rd Boise, ID 83706

Cell: 508.395.0199





## Why Choose an Outpatient Surgery Center?

For many common surgical procedures, physicians and patients choose the more intimate setting of an outpatient surgery center. A surgery center is designed and built for same-day procedures. The surgical suites are equipped with all the latest tools and technology, with in patient comfort during the short stay. Outpatient surgery centers provide cost effective and safe surgical care for many common procedures without the need for a hospital admission. The Ten Mile Surgery Center provides care for all age groups. Ten Mile Surgery Center is a physician-owned joint venture with investors who are community physicians and Saint Alphonsus Health System.



## Why Choose Us?

Our state-of-the-art surgery center was built to provide accessible, affordable, personalized service in the heart of the Treasure Valley at Ten Mile & I-84 in Meridian. Completed in 2021, our 22,500 square-foot surgery center has five operating rooms, and one procedure room equipped with the latest technology. Our doctors and staff are committed to providing excellent and comprehensive care in our custom-designed surgery center. Our surgical suites are designed to perform any surgical procedure that does not require an overnight stay for patients recovering. When you send patients for surgical procedures, they'll receive the best care possible.

Here are some reasons to send patients here for your surgery:

- The nursing staff is always tracking and in touch with the patient, making sure that the process of care runs smoothly and efficiently. No waiting is the goal. The care team makes sure you get what they need, when they need it.
- Services are coordinated to increase quality and efficiency. Patient preparation, surgery, and recovery all take place in the same area.
- Digital diagnostic radiological studies are available to doctors and nurses during surgical procedures. The size and design of the surgical centers enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff.
- The proximity of the rooms means patients can be monitored quickly and continuously while they recover.

## Cost Transparency

Ten Mile Surgery center has made a commitment to cost transparency. As in every aspect of medical care, there can be great variances in costs for outpatient surgery procedures. Our team is working to ensure physicians and patients can easily access an accurate cost calculator (Cost Estimator) for procedures at the Ten Mile Surgery Center. We understand our community is growing and we are proud to increase access to cost-effective outpatient procedures in our cutting-edge surgery center. Our physician leaders have partnered with the respected medical technology and device companies to ensure our patients receive the safest, most effective care available, in the easy to access, intimate setting of an outpatient surgery center.

For more information on the specialties and procedures we have to offer, please visit our website:

[Ten Mile Surgery Center | Home](#)

# Maintaining Your Licensure, Malpractice Insurance, and Demographic Information: A Key to Smooth Practice Operations



## Maintaining Your Licensure, Malpractice Insurance, and Demographic Information: A Key to Smooth Practice Operations

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure a seamless experience for both you and your patients, we want to highlight the importance of keeping your licensure, malpractice insurance, and demographic information up to date with Saint Alphonus Health Alliance (SAHA). Regular updates are vital to maintaining smooth operations and preventing unnecessary disruptions in your practice.

You may use the link for quick access for updates [Provider Information Sheet - September 2024](#)

Saint Alphonus Health Alliance Website <http://www.saintalphonushealthalliance.org/>

## Why is it Important to Keep Your Licensure and Malpractice Insurance Updated?

### 1. Preventing Legal and Financial Disruptions

It is crucial to keep your licensure updated with the relevant state licensure boards to avoid any lapses. If your licensure expires, it can result in the inability to legally practice, claims being denied, or significant payment disruptions from health plans. You may even face legal consequences for practicing without an active license.

*Continued on next page*



# Maintaining Your Licensure, Malpractice Insurance, and Demographic Information: A Key to Smooth Practice Operations



## 2. Ensuring Smooth Claims Processing

Along with your licensure, it's equally important to ensure that your malpractice insurance details are current with health plans and insurers. If your licensure or malpractice insurance information is outdated, claims can be rejected or delayed, potentially impacting your practice's revenue and disrupting patient care. Health plans require up-to-date licensure and insurance documentation to process claims and reimbursements effectively.

## 3. Maintaining Accurate Contact Information

If there have been any changes to your practice—such as a new address, phone number, email, or fax number—please update your demographic information with SAHA. Keeping your contact details current is essential for efficient communication and to avoid issues with scheduling, billing, or claims processing.

## Who is Responsible for Keeping These Documents Updated?

The responsibility for keeping your licensure, malpractice insurance, and demographic information current lies solely with you, the provider. It is your responsibility to regularly check and submit updated documentation to ensure that your information is accurate and up to date.

## Actions You Should Take

To avoid any potential issues and ensure that your practice runs smoothly, please follow these steps:

### 1. Ensure Your Licensure is Current with Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance

Regularly check renewal dates with the relevant licensure boards and submit your renewal documents to SAHA in advance to prevent any lapses.

### 2. Update Your Malpractice Insurance Information with Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance

If there are any changes to your malpractice insurance coverage, please notify SAHA promptly to ensure there are no disruptions in your ability to practice or receive payments.

### 3. Verify Your Information with Health Plans

Confirm that your licensure and malpractice insurance details are accurately reflected in your provider profiles with the health plans you work with to avoid claim denials and payment issues.

### 4. Update Your Demographic Information

If there have been any changes to your practice's contact information (address, phone, email, fax), please complete the Provider/Practice Information Sheet, available here:

Provider Information Sheet - September 2024

By taking these simple yet crucial steps, you will safeguard your ability to practice without interruptions and avoid unnecessary financial setbacks.

## You may reach the Health Alliance Credentialing Team at:

Fax: 208-367-8762 | Email: [sahs-alliance@sarmc.org](mailto:sahs-alliance@sarmc.org)





# Network Breakfast Invite



## Semi-Annual 2025 Spring Network Breakfast

Open to all Practitioners, Providers, Clinical Leads, Practice Managers and Office Representatives

Please join us on **April 23rd from 7:00-9:00am** in the McCleary Auditorium at the Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Boise to participate in the **Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance Spring Network Breakfast**.

In addition to a brief overview of how the Alliance team continues to support providers success, the morning will focus on “**Improving Patient Experience with the Right Site of Care**” while prioritizing physician/patient partnerships. Our hope is through a morning of targeted discussion, dynamic speakers, and ever evolving healthcare for all, you will walk away with a renewed connection to processes, technology and relevance as we continue caring for patients across care settings, at home and in the community.

Come join SAHA for a hearty breakfast, connection, and comradery. Saint Alphonsus Clinical leaders look forward to moderating light table discussions to get your suggestions for how to improve care for our patients.

### Our speakers include:

**Kara Kuntz, MD** – Dementia Treatments  
Saint Alphonsus Medical Group, Geriatric Clinic

**Christopher Reising, MD** - Ambulatory Surgery Center  
Saint Alphonsus Medical Group, Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery

**Michael Twomey, MD** – Revamping Risk Adjustment in 2025  
Executive Medical Director, Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance

To register please click [here](#)



# Get Involved!



We are currently accepting applications to join our Alliance Board and committees, which include Finance & Contracting, Quality & Informatics and Provider Network Committee.

If you are interested in learning more and applying to be considered, please contact [Joy.Gustafson@saintalphonsus.org](mailto:Joy.Gustafson@saintalphonsus.org) via email for additional information.

