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Provider News

WellCare of Kentucky, Gov. Beshear honor 2025 Community Health Champions

by Darren Levitz

WellCare of Kentucky recently hosted its sixth annual Community Health Champions Awards at Churchill Downs. The Community Health Champions Awards honor individuals and organizations throughout the Commonwealth that play a pivotal role in removing barriers, improving outcomes and supporting community well-being.

“I see our Community Health Champions as examples of the best of Kentucky,” said WellCare of Kentucky Plan President Corey Ewing. “Each of these individuals and organizations has worked to ensure that Kentuckians are physically, emotionally and mentally healthy – and they did it in deeply personal ways, giving their time, talent and heart in the process.”

This year’s 12 winners were selected from hundreds of nominations from across the state. Those honored represent the eight Kentucky Medicaid regions, three outstanding health care providers, and one statewide winner. WellCare awarded a \$3,000 grant to each of the regional winners and a \$5,000 grant to the statewide winner.



Gov. Andy Beshear

Gov. Andy Beshear attended the event and joined in celebrating this year’s award winners.

“There are so many factors at play keeping our communities healthy,” Gov. Beshear said. “These Community Health Champions give their fellow Kentuckians a lifeline, a helping hand, letting them know that they are not alone when they need it the most. This year’s winners are crucial in supporting the wellbeing of Kentuckians.”

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Community Health Champions, continued

Marshall Tyson, CEO of United Way of Northeast Kentucky, received the most prominent overall award.

Tyson was honored for his proactive and visionary leadership. He doesn't simply manage the status quo; he actively innovates to address community needs, going far beyond the traditional requirements of a CEO role.

He is a hands-on architect of community solutions. Tyson initiated and championed key programs for Northeastern

Kentuckians, most notably the Bridge Builders program. This program mobilizes hundreds of student volunteers to address social determinants of health needs throughout the community.

WellCare was honored to recognize Tyson's vision of bringing people together so they can get the counseling, education, resource assistance they need—and advance their progress to self-reliance.



WellCare's Community Health Champions pose with their awards following the ceremony.



Regional winners include:

Region 1: Dianne Owen, [West Kentucky Educational Cooperative](#)

Region 2: Karyleen Irizarry, [River Valley Behavioral Health](#)

Region 3: Olivia Raley, [Bardstown Police Department](#)

Region 4: Cameron Levis, [Bowling Green Parks and Recreation](#)

Region 5: David Cozart, [Commonwealth Center for Fathers and Families](#)

Region 6: Greg Mebs, [Band of Helping Hands](#)

Region 7: Sandy Bellomy, [Two Hearts Pregnancy Care Center](#)

Region 8: Patty May, [CNA Bluegrass Care Navigators](#)



Provider winners include:

Health Care Provider: [Appalachian Regional Healthcare](#)

Behavioral Health: [Option to Success](#)

Hospital: [The Sun](#)



Getting to Know WellCare's Chief Medical Officer Chirag Patel

What led you to joining WellCare of Kentucky? I followed Corey, our CEO from Indiana. I believed in his leadership and vision for the future.

What are the key priorities for WellCare of Kentucky in the coming year? Continue to focus on our 3-pronged mission of delivering high quality, cost-effective care and member focused experience

Talk about the importance of the WellCare/Provider relationship. Our providers are critical to the mission. It's important to understand their challenges and provide support when possible.

If you could share one piece of information with our providers, what would it be? Please keep the lines of communication open, without open dialogue if there are issues, we won't be able to address them.

What do you believe is the most important quality for a successful team? Communication, and trust

What was your first job, and what did you learn from it? My first job was as a Pulmonary Critical Care physician in Georgia. I learned a tremendous amount, but the most important thing I learned is that health care is a team sport, and it takes everyone to have a good outcome for our members and patients.

What motivates you? I am intrinsically motivated by my belief in equitable health care and equitable outcomes for everyone

What is your favorite go-to midnight snack? Dulce de Leche Brownie Ice cream

What TV show are you currently binge-watching? Slow Horses season 4

What's the best advice you've ever received? Don't ever sacrifice the standard that's been set for the team, because "The standard is the standard" said by Mike Tomlin.

Coordination of Care: What It Is and Why It Matters

At WellCare, we know that delivering high-quality, coordinated care is only possible through strong partnerships. Our providers are at the heart of this work—your dedication, expertise, and commitment make a lasting difference in the lives of our members. Together, we can ensure smoother care transitions, safer outcomes, and better experiences for those we serve. We are grateful for your partnership and proud to walk alongside you in advancing the health of our communities.

We also recognize the essential role you play in delivering patient-centered care. Together, we share a commitment to ensuring every member receives consistent, effective, and coordinated care aligned with evidence-based clinical practice guidelines.

What Is Coordination of Care?

Coordination of care is a proactive process that involves identifying a patient's needs, organizing services, and ensuring timely communication among all parties involved in the patient's care. This includes primary care providers, specialists, behavioral health practitioners, home care agencies, labs, hospitals, caregivers, and care managers.

When care is well-coordinated across these settings, it leads to:

- Safer, more effective care delivery
- Reduced hospital admissions and readmissions
- Fewer delays and complications
- Smoother transitions between care settings

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- Greater efficiency and lower costs
- Improved patient health and experience

The Provider's Role in Coordinated Care

Providers are central to the success of care coordination. Your efforts directly impact the quality measures by which both our health plan and provider network are evaluated, contributing to improved performance, patient satisfaction, and shared success.

Key responsibilities include:

- Aligning with evidence-based practice guidelines
- Facilitating communication across care teams
- Engaging patients and families in care planning
- Documenting care transitions and preventive services
- Participating in quality improvement initiatives

These practices are reflected in member experience surveys, including the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®), where care coordination is a key domain.



Best Practices for Providers

To strengthen care coordination, consider the following strategies:

- Use clear, culturally sensitive communication to engage patients and families
- Leverage electronic health records (EHRs) to share timely updates across care teams
- Develop individualized care plans that reflect the patient's goals and preferences
- Ensure smooth transitions between inpatient, outpatient, and community-based services
- Monitor and address gaps in care, especially for high-risk populations and chronic conditions

By prioritizing coordinated care and adherence to clinical guidelines, we can continue to deliver on our shared mission: improving the health and well-being of our members. Thank you for your continued partnership and for the meaningful work you do every day.

Additional Information

For more information about CAHPS, health literacy, and care coordination visit:

<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/index.html>

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/tool5.html>

<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/improvement-guide.html>

<https://www.ahrq.gov/ncepcr/care/coordination.html>



Metabolic Monitoring for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotic Medications (APM)

By: Carolyn Kelley

The state of Kentucky has seen an increase in prescribing of psychotropic medications for children and adolescents, especially within the Medicaid and foster care population. Studies indicate Kentucky's prescribing rate is nearly twice the national average, with 14 % of Medicaid recipients and 42% of children in the foster care system being prescribed at least one psychotropic medication.

Among these medications being prescribed to youth, antipsychotic medications may be prescribed to assist in management of symptoms related to a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Tourette Syndrome, Bipolar Disorder, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. When prescribing antipsychotic medications to children and adolescents it is essential to ensure they receive annual metabolic screenings to monitor for potential side effects.

WellCare of Kentucky adheres to the standards set by The National Committee of Quality Assurance (NCQA), which recommends children and adolescents aged 1 to 17 years, who have been prescribed two

or more antipsychotic medications within a year to complete a metabolic screening. These medications carry serious and potentially long-term side effects, including increased risk for diabetes, weight gain and obesity, hyperprolactinemia, and hyperlipidemia. As a provider, it is important to emphasize to caregivers the significance of completely these yearly screenings.

Recommended Annual Metabolic Screenings:

- At least one blood glucose or HbA1c test
- At least one LDC-C test

How Providers and Prescribers Can Support Screening Compliance:

- Educate medical staff on the risk associated with antipsychotic medications and the importance of annual metabolic screenings.
- Discuss potential side effects with caregivers and encourage them to have their child screened by the appropriate lab or provider.

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Metabolic Monitoring, continued

- As the prescriber, ensure you receive and review the lab results to monitor changes over time.
- Conduct thorough mental health evaluations to confirm diagnosis and consider alternative interventions before prescribing antipsychotic medication.
- Ensure access to a child psychiatrist for evaluation and case consultation

A copy of the HEDIS® Measurement Year 2025 Toolkit is available on our website at [WellCare of Kentucky Quality](#). This toolkit provides detailed guidance on the APM measure and outlines the codes required to meet adherence.

Metabolic Screen Codes:

Labs	CPT Codes	LOINC Codes
HbA1c	83036, 83037 CAT-II: 3044F, 3046F, 3051F, 3052F	17855-8, 17856-6, 4548-4, 4549-2, 96595-4
Blood Glucose	80047, 80048, 80050, 80053, 80069, 82947, 82950, 82951	10450-5, 1492-8, 1494-4, 1496-9, 1501-6, 1504-0, 1507-3, 1514-9, 1518-0, 1530-5, 1533-9, 1554-5, 1557-8, 1558-6, 17865-7, 20436-2, 20437-0, 20438-8, 20440-4, 2345-7, 26554-6, 41024-1, 49134-0, 6749-6, 9375-7
Cholesterol or LDL-C	82465, 83718, 83722, 84478, 80061, 83700, 83701, 83704, 83721 CAT-II: 3048F, 3049F, 3050F	2085-9, 2096-3, 2571-8, 3043-7, 9830-1, 12773-8, 13457-7, 18261-8, 18262-6, 2089-1, 49132-4, 55440-2, 96259-7

Sources:

National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), 2025

[HEDIS MY 2025 Measures and Descriptions](#)

[Antipsychotic Medications in Children and Adolescents - NCQA](#)

University of Louisville School of Medicine

[Rate of prescribing psychotropic drugs to Kentucky kids studied at UofL — School of Medicine University of Louisville](#)

Supporting Member Health Through Certified CHWs

By: Heather Blair

Community Health Workers (CHWs) play a vital role in improving health outcomes by serving as trusted liaisons between healthcare systems and the communities they serve.

With deep cultural understanding and a network of community partnerships, CHWs help bridge gaps in care by:

- Connecting members to health and social services
- Providing education and advocacy tailored to individual needs
- Supporting chronic condition management and preventive care
- Enhancing service quality and cultural responsiveness

WellCare is proud to have a fully CHW-certified Care Coordination staff actively engaged in member outreach. Our CHWs are trained to identify barriers to care, assist with appointment scheduling, and provide follow-up support to ensure members receive the services they need.

How We Support Your Patients

Our CHW team collaborates with providers to:

- Address social determinants of health such as transportation, housing, and food insecurity
- Promote preventive screenings and wellness visits and support scheduling assistance
- Share educational resources to improve health literacy

If you have patients who could benefit from additional support, our CHWs are here to help. Together, we can improve access, engagement, and outcomes for the communities we serve.

You can request a CHW support service by calling us at 1-844-901-3780.

Helping Our WellCare Members With Cultural and Language Preferences

By: Chuck Knight

Why We Collect Race, Ethnicity and Language Information

At WellCare of Kentucky, we are committed to advancing health equity and ensuring our provider network reflects the diverse communities we serve. As part of this effort, we are collecting race, ethnicity, and language information from practitioners in our network.

Why This Matters

Helps us connect members with practitioners who share or understand their cultural and language preferences.

Supports compliance with federal and state requirements related to health equity reporting.

Enhances our provider directory by offering members more complete and meaningful information when selecting a practitioner.

What We Need from You

Please update your race, ethnicity, and the languages you speak on CAQH. This information will be used to:

- Update our provider directory to assist members in making informed choices.
- Improve our ability to address disparities in access to care.

Your Privacy

This information is voluntary and will not impact your credentialing, contracting or participation with WellCare of Kentucky. Data will be safeguarded and reported only in aggregate unless directory display is specifically requested.

Your partnership helps us create a more equitable and inclusive healthcare system for all. Thank you for your support.



Partnering for Better Outcomes: Closing Care Gaps with WellCare

By: Heather Keeton

At WellCare, we believe that improving health outcomes is a shared mission—and providers are at the heart of that effort. As we move through the 2025 HEDIS® measurement year, we're focused on supporting providers in closing care gaps across high-impact measures like CIS, IMA, WCV, A1C, PPC, and BCS. These measures not only reflect quality care, but they also drive performance, member satisfaction, and value-based success.

Key Measures to Prioritize

WellCare encourages providers to focus on the following high-impact HEDIS measures:

- **CIS (Childhood Immunization Status):** Ensure children receive all recommended vaccines by age 2.
- **IMA (Immunizations for Adolescents):** Complete Tdap, Meningococcal, and HPV vaccinations by age 13.
- **WCV (Well-Child Visits):** Annual visits for children and adolescents ages 3–21.
- **A1C (Glycemic Status Assessment):** Monitor and manage diabetes with HbA1c <8.

■ **PPC (Prenatal and Postpartum Care):**

Timely prenatal visits and postpartum follow-up.

■ **BCS (Breast Cancer Screening):**

Mammograms for women ages 40–74.

These measures are critical for preventive care and chronic condition management. They also directly impact HEDIS scores, CAHPS® satisfaction ratings, and provider incentives through programs like the 2025 P4Q initiative.

Why Care Gaps Matter

Care gaps occur when recommended screenings, immunizations, or follow-ups are missed. Closing these gaps improves preventive care, chronic condition management, and overall member

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Partnering for Better Outcomes, continued

experience. Every gap closed is a step toward better health—and a reflection of the provider's commitment to quality care.

WellCare's Collaborative Support

We know that closing gaps takes more than reminders, it takes teamwork. That's why WellCare offers a full spectrum of support:

- Provider Relations Representatives help navigate processes and resolve issues.
- Quality Practice Advisors (QPAs) offer hands-on guidance with documentation, coding, and measure compliance.
- Case Managers and Care Coordinators work directly with members to schedule appointments, arrange transportation, and follow up on care plans.

Together, we ensure that providers have the tools and insights needed to deliver timely, high-quality care.

Engaging Members to Support Providers

WellCare actively engages members to help close care gaps—so providers aren't doing it alone. Through outreach campaigns, educational materials, and incentive programs like My Health Pays®, we encourage members to complete screenings, attend wellness visits, and follow through on care plans.

Our teams use personalized strategies, including:

- Text and email notifications designed to encourage members to schedule appointments and complete necessary healthcare.
- Direct outreach to support members in accessing services and overcoming barriers to care.

- In-home visit coordination for hard-to-reach members.
- Member rewards for completing key health activities.

These efforts align with provider goals and make it easier to meet HEDIS benchmarks.

Best Practices for Closing Gaps

To improve performance across HEDIS measures, providers are encouraged to:

- Screen and document consistently at every visit.
- Use CPT II codes to capture services and outcomes.
- Schedule follow-ups proactively, especially for post-partum care and chronic condition management.
- Providers are encouraged to utilize the care gap report provided by their QPA to identify outstanding care gaps for their members, supporting clinical decision-making and ensuring timely, comprehensive care delivery.

Let's Work Together

Every gap closed is a step toward better health—and WellCare is here to help. Whether it's through education, outreach, or direct support, we're committed to partnering with providers to transform care delivery and improve outcomes.

For questions or to connect with your QPA or Provider Relations Representative, reach out to your WellCare contact or visit the Provider Portal.

Together, we can close gaps, elevate care, and build healthier communities—one member at a time.



Together for Better Health: Empowering Tobacco-Free Journeys

At WellCare, we believe that improving patient experience starts with meaningful conversations—and when it comes to smoking cessation, providers are at the heart of that effort. Every interaction is an opportunity to support healthier choices, and the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) survey reflects just how impactful those moments can be. By consistently screening for tobacco use and offering tailored support, providers not only help patients take the first step toward quitting—they also contribute to stronger CAHPS scores and better overall care quality.

Understanding the CAHPS Smoking Cessation Questions

The CAHPS survey asks adult members about their experiences with tobacco cessation support from their healthcare providers. Key questions include:

- Advice to Quit: “In the last 6 months, how often were you advised to quit smoking or using tobacco by a doctor or other health provider?”
- Medication Support: “How often was medication recommended or discussed to assist with quitting?”
- Non-Medication Strategies: “How often did your provider discuss or offer other methods or strategies to quit?”

These questions are not only indicators of quality care but also directly influence CAHPS scores and, by extension, health plan ratings and reimbursement.

Best Practices for Providers

To improve performance on these measures, providers are encouraged to:

- Screen for Tobacco Use at Every Encounter: Document tobacco status and submit appropriate billing codes.
- Advise Every Tobacco User to Quit: Even brief advice can significantly increase quit rates.
- Offer Interventions: Discuss both pharmacologic and behavioral strategies. Refer patients to resources like **1-800-QUIT-NOW**.
- Coordinate Care Thoughtfully: Ensure medical records are up-to-date and discuss care received from specialists during visits.

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Every Visit Counts: Helping Patients Quit Tobacco with Confidence and Compassion

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. As providers, we have a powerful opportunity to change that—one conversation at a time. At WellCare, we recognize the vital role providers play in helping patients quit smoking. That's why we're committed to supporting you with tools, training, and collaboration to make every patient interaction count.

Screen Every Patient, Every Time

The most effective tobacco cessation efforts begin with a simple step: asking. Providers are encouraged to screen for tobacco use at every visit, regardless of the reason for the appointment. Whether it's a routine check-up, a follow-up for chronic conditions, or an urgent care visit, tobacco screening should be part of the standard workflow.

Talk About Techniques That Work

Once tobacco use is identified, providers can make a meaningful impact by discussing proven cessation strategies. These include:

- **- Brief Counseling:** Even a short conversation can motivate change.
- **- Pharmacotherapy:** Recommend or prescribe FDA-approved cessation medications when appropriate.
- **- Behavioral Support:** Share strategies such as setting a quit date, removing tobacco products from the home, and seeking support from family and friends.
- **- Quitline Referrals:** Encourage patients to call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free, confidential support from trained counselors.



Remember to mention the “MY Health Pays” incentive

Encourage enrollees ages 12 and older who use tobacco products to register and complete a Kentucky Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program and quit for at least six months in a row to receive a reward of select products for their hard work.

- Adults ages 18 and older may call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or text QUITNOW to 333888.
- Enrollees ages 17 and younger can call My Life, My Quit at 1-855-891-9989 or Text START MY QUIT to 36072.
- Enrollees can be rewarded select products or 250 point once per year.

Let's Make Every Conversation Count

Whether your patient is ready to quit today or just beginning to consider it, your words matter. By screening consistently and discussing cessation techniques with empathy and clarity, you help patients take the first step toward better health.

WellCare is here to support you! Together, we can improve health outcomes, elevate patient experiences, and build healthier communities—one conversation at a time.

Provider-Preventable Conditions

By: Libby Caudill

Provider-Preventable Conditions: WellCare follows CMS guidelines regarding “Hospital Acquired Conditions,” “Never Events,” and other “Provider-Preventable Conditions (PPCs).”

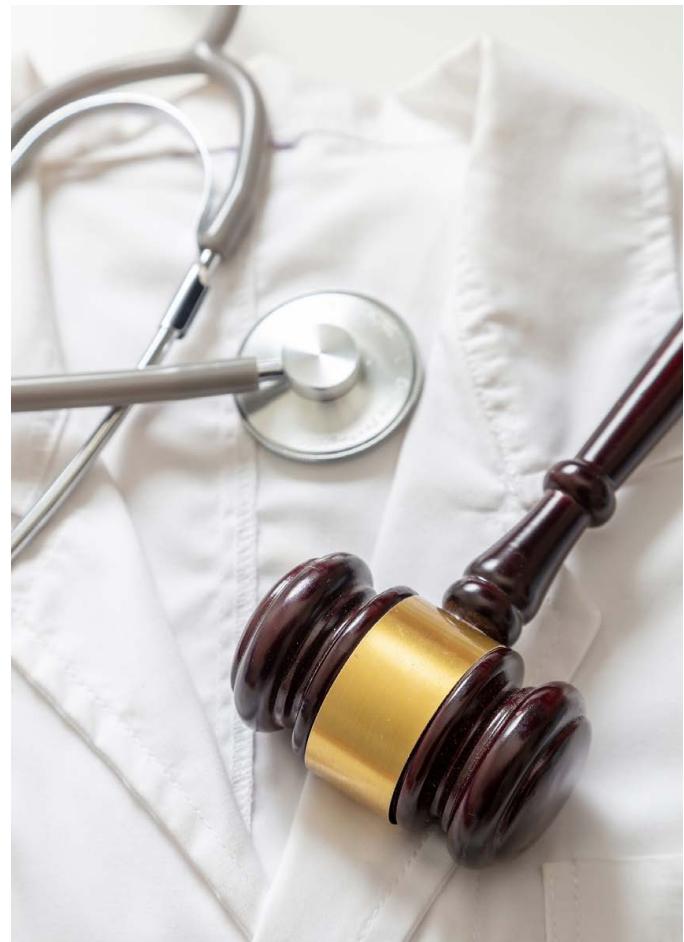
Under Section 42 CFR 447.26 these PPCs are non-payable for Medicaid and Medicare. Additional PPCs may be added by individual states.

WellCare will not pay a Provider for a provider-preventable condition that meets the following criteria:

- A.** Is identified in the State Medicaid plan;
- B.** Has been found by the Kentucky Department for Medicaid Services, based upon a review of medical literature by qualified professionals, to be reasonably preventable through the application of procedures supported by evidence-based guidelines;
- C.** Has a negative consequence for the Enrollee;
- D.** Is auditable; and
- E.** Includes, at a minimum, wrong surgical or other invasive procedure performed on a patient; surgical or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong body part; surgical or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong patient.

All Providers are to report provider-preventable conditions associated with claims for payment or Enrollee treatments for which payment would otherwise be made. Never Events are defined as a surgical or other invasive procedure to treat a medical condition when the practitioner erroneously performs:

- The correct procedure but on the wrong body part;
- The correct procedure on the wrong patient ;
- A different procedure altogether.



Providers are required to append one of the following applicable HCPCS modifiers to all lines related to the erroneous surgery(s):

- **PA:** Surgery Wrong Body Part
- **PB:** Surgery Wrong Patient
- **PC:** Wrong Surgery on Patient

Hospital Acquired Conditions are additional non-payable conditions listed on the CMS website at <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/payment/fee-for-service-providers/hospital-acquired-conditions-hac> and include such events as an air embolism, falls and catheter-associated urinary tract infections.

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