

Provider View

Avera 
Health Plans

October 21, 2025

October has arrived, and with it, a season of reflection and preparation. The cooler air and shorter days often invite us to slow down and take stock—of our health, our priorities and the months ahead.

But this year, the usual rhythm of fall has been disrupted by the ongoing federal government shutdown, now entering its third week.

This shutdown has brought uncertainty across many sectors and health care is no exception.

Amidst the policy shifts and uncertainty, I've found it helpful to return to small, grounding routines. I recently finished *When McKinsey Comes to Town* by Michael Forsythe and Walt Bogdanich—a powerful read on the influence of consulting firms in shaping institutions. It reminded me how important it is to stay informed and reflective, especially in times of change. If you've read something recently that's helped you navigate these times, I'd love to hear about it. Please share your recommendations with me at AHP.Providers@Avera.org.

Thank you for being an in-network provider and thank you for the care you provide to our members.

With gratitude,

Josephine



Vice President, Provider Network Management



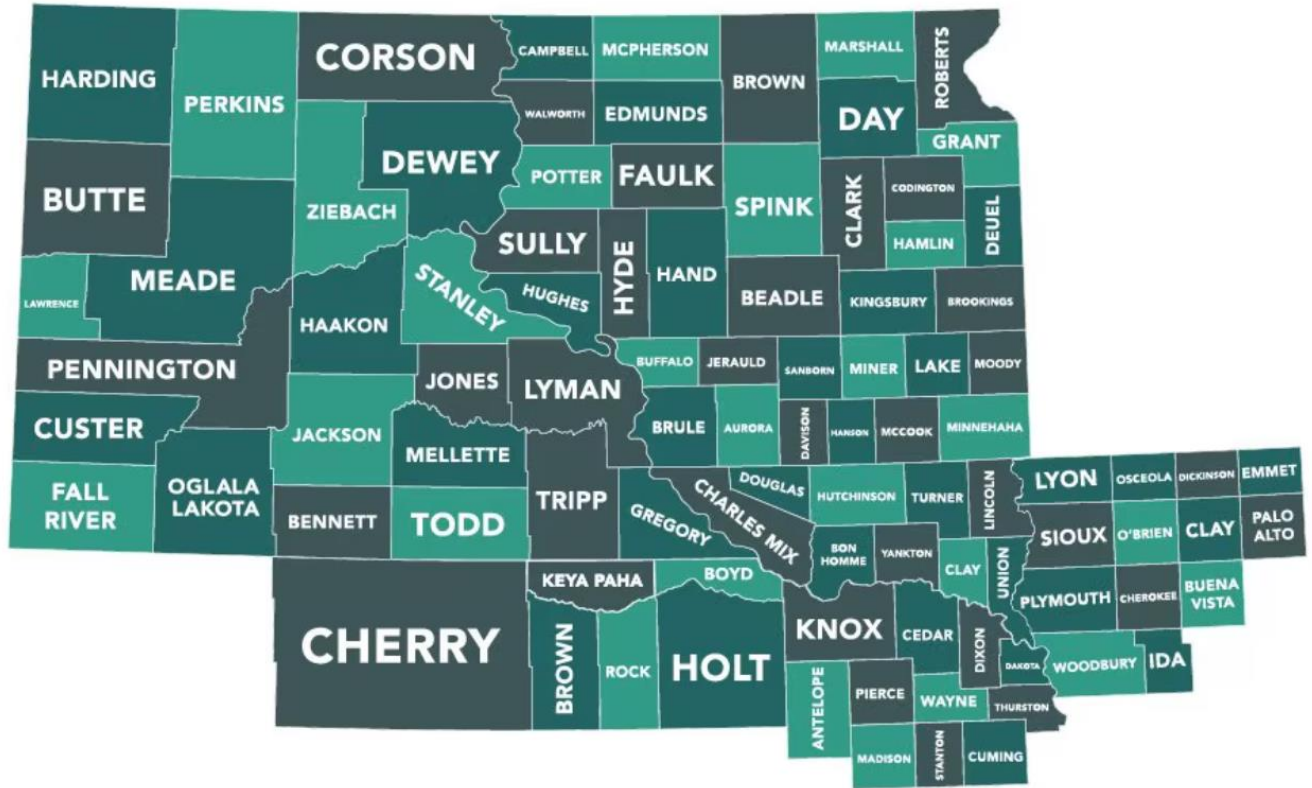
Answering Your Questions about TotalChoice

As announced in September's ProviderView, we recently launched [TotalChoice](#), our newest PPO network. We understand that many of you have questions regarding this new network. Below are some frequently asked questions we have received.

What does the ID card look like?

			
Subscriber: Bugs Bunny Group: Dakota Tube Member: Bugs Bunny		Subscriber #: 10002222201 Group #: A0005982 Member #: 10002222201	
PCP Copay \$35 Specialist Copay \$70 In-Network Ind Ded \$5000		Out-of-Network Ind Ded \$10000 In-Network Ind OOP \$6000 Out-of-Network Ind OOP \$15000	
If services are rendered outside South Dakota or surrounding counties in the Avera Service area, please reference the back of the card.		RXBIN: 026952 RXPCN: AVERA	
		MEMBERS: Customer Care: 1-888-322-2115 Pharmacy Member Services: 1-833-464-7663 Log in to see benefit information at: AveraHealthPlans.com This card does not guarantee eligibility for benefits or payment of claims.	
		PROVIDERS: Providers outside South Dakota or surrounding counties in the Avera Service area, submit medical claims to: UHSS, PO Box 30783, Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0783. Payor ID 39026 UHSS Provider Services: 888-830-0179 https://uhss.umn.com UnitedHealthcare® Options PPO Network UHSS Member ID: UN1000145202 UHSS Group ID: 78-800328 For Prior-Authorizations call UHSS: 866-397-7466. Failure to get prior-authorization may reduce benefits.	
		Providers inside South Dakota or surrounding counties in the Avera Service Area, submit medical claims to: First Choice Health Network, PO Box 2289, Seattle, WA 98111-2289. Payor ID AH002. Avera Health Plans Provider Services: 833-964-0711. Visit AveraHealthPlansTotalChoice.com for details. For Prior-Authorizations: https://Avera.org/PA . Failure to get prior-authorization may reduce benefits.	
		First Choice Health MidlandsChoice	

What is the TotalChoice service area?



Where do I send claims?

- For services rendered inside the TotalChoice service area, send all claims to First Choice Health, at PO Box 2289, Seattle, WA 98111-2289 using Payer ID AH002.
- For services rendered outside the TotalChoice service area, send all claims to UnitedHealthcare Options PPO Network, at UHSS, PO Box 30783, Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0783 using Payer ID 39026.

Am I included in this network if I am within the service area?

- For providers already contracted with Avera Health Plans, they are included in the TotalChoice network.

When can I expect to start seeing TotalChoice ID cards?

- Starting Jan. 1, 2026, providers can anticipate seeing more TotalChoice member ID cards.

Where can I view the TotalChoice provider directory?

- Please visit this [link](#) to view the participating provider directory.

I have viewed the TotalChoice directory, but my provider is not showing up or is incorrectly listed?

- We are aware of some errors within this early version of the directory and are actively working with our partners to correct them. If you happen to see an error, please email us at AHP.Providers@Avera.org. If you haven't already, view the [TotalChoice Provider Directory](#) to confirm your providers are listed. If you are currently part of the Avera Health Plans network today, you should already be included in the new directory for TotalChoice.

If you have any questions or concerns beyond this, please do not hesitate to contact us at AHP.Providers@Avera.org or 888-322-2115. The [TotalChoice webpage](#) is also a great resource to reference for common questions and concerns.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we launch this new product!

Rebranding: DirectConnect and ConnectPlus

With the new addition of TotalChoice to our networks, we also recently rebranded two of our existing network plans.

[DirectConnect](#), which was formerly known as Avera Direct Network, is our HMO network offered to members or employers in select South Dakota counties.

[ConnectPlus](#), which was formerly known as AHP Network, is our regional network that includes Avera Health as well as Monument Health system and many independent providers.

There are no other changes to these networks beyond their names and logos. New member ID cards with the updated logos will be issued in the coming year. As always, please refer to member ID cards if you are unsure of which network a member has access to.

symlr is Live!

We have officially gone live with symlr, our new credentialing vendor, as of Oct. 7! We are still in the process of fine tuning this experience for our providers, so we appreciate your patience. Be on the lookout for information from symlr about any of your credentialing activity. As always, if you have any questions, please contact us at AHP-Credentialing@Avera.org or [888-322-2115](tel:888-322-2115).

Authorizations

As of Oct. 13, prior authorization requests for Ambry Genetics testing, Zoll Medical equipment and Hematologics testing will be performed by our partner, UnitedHealthcare Shared Services. This change is for our PPO members only. This supports standardizing how we perform prior authorization reviews for our members.

Please refer to the member's ID card to determine PPO vs HMO members.

Connection Established with ClaimMD for Electronic Remittance Advice (835s)

We are pleased to announce that we can now deliver Electronic Remittance Advices (ERAs or 835s) to ClaimMD. If your practice uses ClaimMD as your EDI Clearing House and you previously applied with us for ERAs but were declined, or if you are currently using ClaimMD and you would like to begin receiving ERAs, please complete our ERA/EFT enrollment form as found at the link provided below. Enrollment for ERA requires that we also set you up for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). There are no fees associated with the EFT as we make a direct deposit to your bank account via secure Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions. Please note when completing the form for enrollment that we

also require either a voided business check or a letter from your bank providing secondary validation of the bank routing and account number information. We are excited to announce this new connection for delivering ERAs.

ERA/EFT Enrollment: [ERA / EFT Enrollment Form](#)

Please Take the Provider Satisfaction Survey!

Please take our annual [Provider Satisfaction Survey](#) if you have not already done so. We appreciate and look forward to your feedback!

AAP Vaccination Schedule Updates

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) updated their vaccine schedule, with guidance that breaks the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Below are some significant changes:

- **Influenza Vaccines:** The recommended influenza vaccines have been updated from quadrivalent to trivalent formulations. Annual flu shots are still recommended for all children aged 6 months and older without medical contraindications.
- **COVID:** The AAP's recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination include a strong recommendation for all children aged 6 – 23 months, citing their higher risk of severe illness. For children aged 2 – 18 years, vaccination is recommended for those at higher risk, including individuals with chronic medical conditions, residing in long-term care facilities, or who are unvaccinated. The AAP also states that the vaccine should be available to any child whose parent or guardian desires it and recommends using the most updated vaccine version
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Prevention:** The schedule now includes nirsevimab administration within one week of birth for infants born between October and March, preferably during birth hospitalization. Nirsevimab is also recommended for infants born to mothers who did NOT receive Abrysvo during the pregnancy (even if Abrysvo was previously received in prior pregnancies).
- **Meningococcal B Vaccine:** The schedule for Bexsero has been updated for adolescents aged 16 – 23 years, with a recommended two-dose series based on shared clinical decision-making. For high-risk patients aged 10 years or older, a three-dose series is recommended.
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine:** The AAP recommends starting the HPV vaccine series between the ages of 9 and 12 years.
- **MMRV Vaccine:** A new contraindication for MMRV has been added for individuals with human immunodeficiency virus.
- **Hib Guidance:** Additional guidance for Hib has been included for individuals with immunoglobulin deficiency and complement disorders.
- **Polio Catch-up Vaccination:** Updates have been made for polio catch-up vaccination for individuals aged 18 years with incomplete vaccination.
- **MMR for International Travel:** New vaccination requirements for international travel have been introduced