

## Twin Falls Times News, Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2012 – by Kimberlee Kruesi (2 pages)

*Local Medicaid providers have mixed responses to improvements by the company handling their claims.*

# Medicaid Mess Eases

TWIN FALLS -- Molina Medicaid Solutions may show signs of improving, but to local Medicaid providers, the company still has a ways to go.

In 2010, Idaho placed Molina in charge of handling claims and issuing payments for Medicaid reimbursement in the state. Almost immediately, health care companies began reporting multiple delayed payments, causing severe financial stress for many providers.

Now, a 2011 audit by Idaho's Office of Performance Evaluations shows that Molina's satisfaction among state Medicaid providers has almost tripled over the past year. Local providers also reported signs of improvement, but not all are happy with how long it took to get there.

The brief experience Smiles 4 Kids Children's Dentistry in Twin Falls had with Molina ended sour when the state decided to process children's dental claims through DentaQuest.

Pending claims within Molina's system got lost in the switch, said Rhonda Elquist, the provider's office manager. "We can't get anyone to pay for them and these are some of our larger claims," Elquist said. "We're not going to get that money back. It's frustrating because DentaQuest says they won't pay them, and Molina probably should but they won't either."

There have been financial incentives for Molina to improve how it interacts with providers. The 2010 delayed payments debacle caused the state to withhold some payments to Molina. The state also implemented a pay-for-performance contract that penalizes Molina financially whenever the company doesn't meet the contract standards.

However, Kent Jensen, owner of KJ's Pharmacy in Twin Falls, said Molina's claims process is still tedious and time-consuming.

He files multiple Medicaid claims a week and every day, he said, he has to fix errors the computer system falsely identifies. For example, if a patient renews a prescription exactly every 30 days, the system will detect the renewal as a duplicate prescription.

"It's a pain in the butt," Jensen said. "We have to remember to go back and fix all the errors and if we don't do it in a certain amount of time, we don't get reimbursed." The West End Senior Center in Buhl receives Medicaid reimbursements for its home-delivered meals service with little to no hassle, said Lynnette Butler, the center's site manager.

When she first went to file her claims with Molina, she said the system often reported glitches and it wasn't unusual for her to be placed on hold for 45 minutes.

According to the audit, Molina received 4,000 calls a week between July 2010 and Feb. 2011, with an average wait time of 35 minutes. Now, the average wait time is two minutes.

"It's not that bad anymore," Butler said. "I'm pretty happy with it but I'm also not using the system that often."

### ***Now and Then***

Idaho Medicaid providers are becoming more satisfied with service received through Molina, according to a recent audit.

Satisfied/unsatisfied

2010 72 percent/16 percent

2011 33 percent/43 percent