

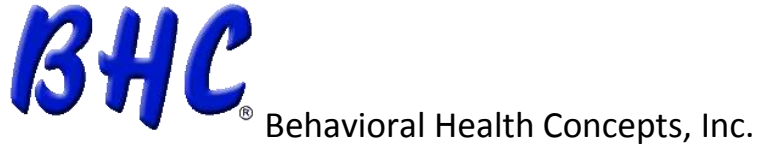
2015

MO HealthNet Managed Care  
Health Plan Website Accuracy and  
New Patient Acceptance Rates

SURVEY

*A survey examining the accuracy of the Managed Care Health Plans' websites in the State of Missouri and the rates of physicians listed on those websites who accept new patients.*





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# Summary Report

## *2015 Survey of MO HealthNet Managed Care Health Plan Website Accuracy and New Patient Acceptance Rates*

### **OVERVIEW**

The ability of MO HealthNet’s (MHD) Managed Care Plan members to schedule and receive services is dependent upon the member having access to accurate information on the health plan provider network, and upon those providers having adequate accommodations for new and returning patients when appointments are requested. To this end, MHD’s managed care health plans (MCHPs) are contractually obligated to have up-to-date provider information on their website with an accuracy rate of at least 90%, and also to have at least 90% of their Primary Care Physicians (PCPs) and Psychiatrists available to accept new patients.

To determine the degree to which the MCHPs are in compliance with these contractual requirements, MHD asked its EQRO, Behavioral Health Concepts, Inc. (BHC), to develop and conduct a “Secret Shopper” survey. The survey targeted PCPs and Psychiatrists in each of MHD’s three MCHPs (Aetna Better Health of Missouri, Home State Health, and Missouri Care) across all three managed care regions (Western, Central, and Eastern).

- Central Region**
- Eastern Region**
- Western Region**



## **METHODOLOGY**

Between September 1, 2015 and October 15, 2015, associates at BHC called a random and statistically valid sample of primary care physicians (PCPs) and psychiatrists from those listed on each of the MCHP's websites as "accepting new patients". A total of 1,664 calls were completed (See Table 1).

The goal of each call was to replicate the experience of someone new to MO HealthNet Managed Care. BHC Surveyors were trained to act as if they were in need of a physician and were seeking to choose a physician through the MCHP's website provider listings. A script (See Appendix A) was provided to guide each call in obtaining answers to the following questions:

- Did the provider phone number on the website reach the office location of the listed provider?
- Was the provider's office address accurate as listed on the website?
- Did the provider accept the target MCHP's insurance?; and
- Was the physician currently taking new patients?

Each of these questions was rated 'Yes' or 'No'. The percentage of 'Yes' responses were tabulated to produce each MCHP's rate for that question. Credit was given if the Provider reached was not taking new patients, but a colleague in the same location was taking new patients and was available to members. Averages were calculated for each MCHP by region and overall.

Phone research was conducted during a six week period. The results therefore are a snapshot of physician availability at a particular time. A change in timing or approach could yield different results.

Table 1. Survey Call Count

<b>Provider Type</b>	<b>MCHP</b>	<b>Website Provider Count</b>	<b>Survey calls made</b>
<b>PCP</b>	Aetna Better Health of Missouri	4,999	357
<b>PCP</b>	Home State Health	2,021	323
<b>PCP</b>	Missouri Care	2,243	329
<b>Psychiatrist</b>	Aetna Better Health of Missouri	636	240
<b>Psychiatrist</b>	Home State Health	187	187
<b>Psychiatrist</b>	Missouri Care	558	228

## Findings

The accuracy of each website listing was determined by calculating the percentage of 'Yes' responses for the four questions examined. An overall plan average was calculated from the MCHP's individual listing scores.

### **PCP listing accuracy did not meet 90% requirement**

The overall accuracy of the PCP listings on the MCHP's websites ranged from a high of 74.54% (Home State Health) to a low of 50.35% (Aetna Better Health). At 79.61% accurate, Home State Health's Eastern Region had the highest level of accuracy for PCP listings.

When examining the survey questions individually, the widest range in level of accuracy exists in the areas that pertain to the physical location of the providers that were sampled. The average number of PCPs who were located at the office reached by phone ranged from a high of 81.56% (Home State Health – Eastern) to a low of 40.67% (Aetna Better Health – Eastern). The average number of PCPs with the correct address and phone number listed ranged from a high of 81.56% (Home State Health – Eastern) to a low of 46% (Aetna Better Health – Eastern).

Overall, the accuracy of Home State Health's website for PCP listings was consistently higher in each MCHP region than the other two MCHP's websites and the accuracy of Aetna Better Health of Missouri's website was consistently lower in each MCHP region than the other two MCHP's websites.

### **Forty-two percent of providers were not taking new patients**

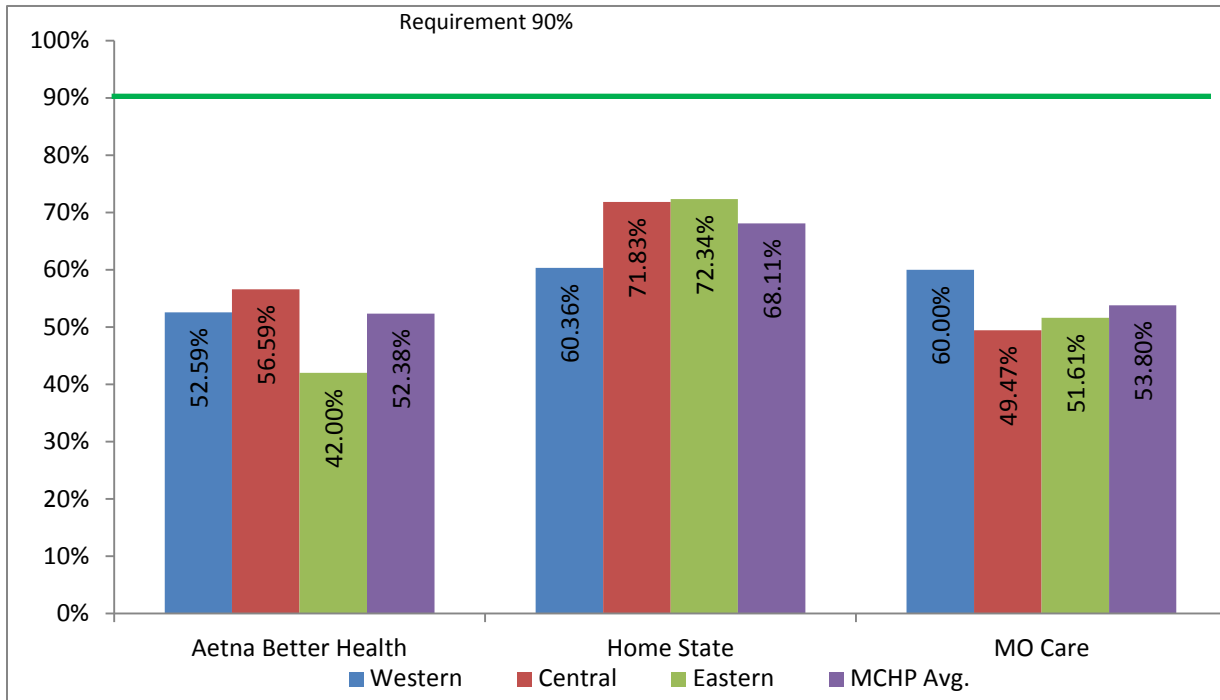
Forty-two percent of providers could not offer appointments because they were not accepting new patients enrolled in the MCHPs. Although all the providers surveyed were designated as accepting new patients, the results indicate that MO HealthNet members may not be able to make an appointment with 42% of the PCPs listed on their health plan's website. In fact, the average number of PCPs taking new patients ranged from a high of 72.34% (Home State Health – Eastern) to a low of 42% (Aetna Better Health – Eastern). In much the same vein, the surveyors also found that the average number of PCPs that indicated they were actually accepting the MCHP, specified during the call, ranged from a high of 82.98% (Home State Health – Eastern) to a low of 47.33% (Aetna Better Health – Eastern).

In an Office of Inspector General *Access to Care* study, they surveyed providers in 32 States and found that 51% of those providers could not offer appointments to Medicaid managed care members due to non-participation at the listed location or not accepting new patients enrolled in the plan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> OIG, *Access to Care: Provider Availability in Medicaid Managed Care* (OEI-02-13-00670)

Figure 1. PCPs taking new patients



The impact of the providers’ inability to take new patients can create a significant obstacle for members seeking care. “Moreover it raises questions about the adequacy of provider networks – it suggests that the actual size of provider networks may be considerably smaller than what is presented by Medicaid managed care plans. It also raises questions about whether these plans are complying with their States’ standards for access to care.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Following is a listing of accuracy variables, including new patient acceptance rates for each MCHP.

Table 2. Accuracy of PCP listings on MCHP's websites

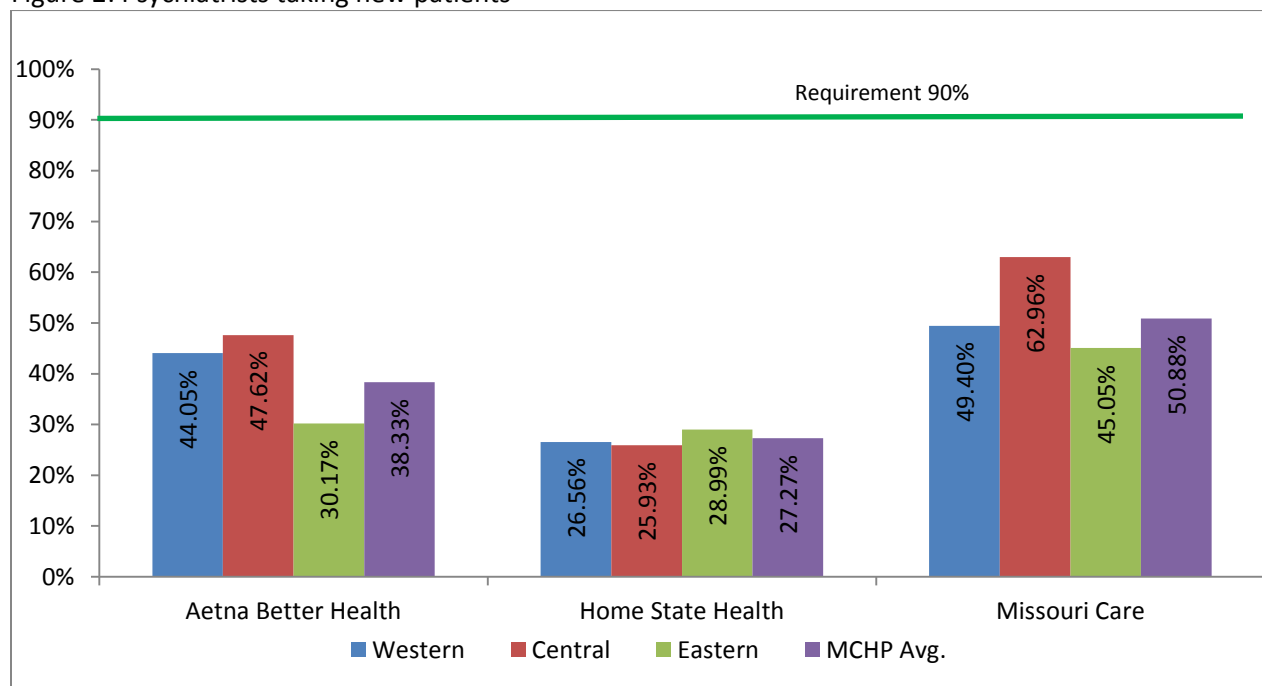
	Sample size	Dr. at this location	Correct Phone/Address	Taking New Patients	Accepts MCHP	Average Total Accuracy
<b><u>Aetna Better Health</u></b>						
Western	135	48.89%	49.63%	52.59%	57.04%	52.04%
Central	72	44.44%	52.78%	56.94%	62.50%	54.17%
Eastern	150	40.67%	46.00%	42.00%	47.33%	44.00%
<b>MCHP Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>45.10%</b>	<b>49.30%</b>	<b>52.38%</b>	<b>54.62%</b>	<b>50.35%</b>
<b><u>Home State</u></b>						
Western	111	68.47%	77.48%	60.36%	72.97%	69.82%
Central	71	66.20%	74.65%	71.83%	74.65%	71.83%
Eastern	141	81.56%	81.56%	72.34%	82.98%	79.61%
<b>MCHP Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>73.68%</b>	<b>78.64%</b>	<b>68.11%</b>	<b>77.71%</b>	<b>74.54%</b>
<b><u>MO Care</u></b>						
Western	110	55.45%	70.91%	60.00%	70.91%	64.32%
Central	95	58.95%	69.47%	49.47%	69.47%	61.84%
Eastern	124	59.68%	65.32%	51.61%	67.74%	61.09%
<b>MCHP Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>58.05%</b>	<b>68.39%</b>	<b>53.80%</b>	<b>69.30%</b>	<b>62.39%</b>

## Psychiatrist listing accuracy did not meet 90% requirement

The overall accuracy of the Psychiatrist listings on the MCHP’s websites was much lower than the accuracy of the PCP listings. The overall MCHP accuracy of Psychiatrist listings ranged from a high of 59.87% (Missouri Care) to a low of 46.26% (Home State Health). At 62.91% accurate, Missouri Care’s Eastern Region had the highest level of overall accuracy for Psychiatrist listings.

When examining the survey questions individually, the widest range in level of accuracy exists in the areas that pertain to the providers who were taking new patients. The average number of Psychiatrists who were taking new patients new patients ranged from a high of 62.96% (Missouri Care - Central) to a low of 25.93% (Home State - Central).

Figure 2: Psychiatrists taking new patients



Although the average number of Psychiatrists taking new patients varied significantly, the overall numbers for all the MCHPs were well below the 90% requirement.

In the other areas for which the surveyors collected data regarding Psychiatrists the following was found:

- the average number of Psychiatrists who were located at the office reached by phone ranged from a high of 73.63% (Missouri Care – Eastern) to a low of 40.63% (Home State Health-Western);
- the average number of Psychiatrists with the correct address and phone number listed ranged from a high of 74.07% (Home State Health – Central) to a low of 51.81% (Missouri Care - Western); and



- the average number of Psychiatrists accepting the MCHP ranged from a high of 74.07% (Missouri Care - Central) to a low of 34.38% (Home State - Western).

Following is a listing of accuracy variables, including new patient acceptance rates for each MCHP.

Table 3. Accuracy of Psychiatrist listings on MCHP's websites

	Sample size	Dr. at this location	Correct Phone/ Address	Taking New Patients	Accepts HP	Average Total Accuracy
<b><u>Aetna Better Health</u></b>						
Western	82	53.66%	52.44%	44.05%	53.57%	51.52%
Central	42	59.52%	69.05%	47.62%	69.05%	61.31%
Eastern	116	55.17%	58.62%	30.17%	48.28%	48.06%
<b>MCHP Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>55.42%</b>	<b>58.33%</b>	<b>38.33%</b>	<b>54.17%</b>	<b>51.56%</b>
<b><u>Home State</u></b>						
Western	64	40.63%	70.31%	26.56%	34.38%	42.97%
Central	54	50.00%	74.07%	25.93%	37.04%	46.76%
Eastern	69	59.42%	59.42%	28.99%	47.83%	48.91%
<b>MCHP Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>50.27%</b>	<b>67.38%</b>	<b>27.27%</b>	<b>40.11%</b>	<b>46.26%</b>
<b><u>MO Care</u></b>						
Western	83	51.81%	51.81%	49.40%	66.27%	54.82%
Central	54	55.56%	57.41%	62.96%	74.07%	62.50%
Eastern	91	73.63%	68.13%	45.05%	64.84%	62.91%
<b>MCHP Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>61.40%</b>	<b>59.65%</b>	<b>50.88%</b>	<b>67.54%</b>	<b>59.87%</b>

## Discussion

Missouri Care significantly changed their website around 8/30/15. Missouri Care's change did not seem to change the number of providers, but it did change the search mechanism and caused BHC to have to re-pull the sample for calls.

Home State significantly changed the providers listed on their website during the month of September. BHC called all the Psychiatrists listed on the site as of 9/15/15 because the previously pulled sample was no longer accurate. These changes caused the total number of listings for Psychiatrists to go from 437 to 187 on Home State's website.

### Ease of Website Use

The navigation of each health plan's website can be tricky:



#### **Aetna Better Health of Missouri**

- A "PCP" search on Aetna Better Health of Missouri's website produces individual physicians and group practices.
- Aetna Better Health of Missouri's website was often slow and the results seemed to change from prior visits. At the last visit, BHC was unable to search for providers by name. The website produced a blank screen when a provider name was searched.

#### **Home State**

- The Home State website requires a zip code before you can search for a provider.
- The Home State website is not forgiving with spelling, if you misspell the name of a provider or city, you will not get any results. Partial spelling is not permitted. Abbreviations for "Sainte" and "Saint" are not allowed (i.e. Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis). Aetna Better Health of Missouri and Missouri Care websites allow for partial spelling.
- The Home State website results are not alphabetized and not sortable. The results are listed in order of distance from the zip code you designate. The other two websites provide sortable listings.

#### **Missouri Care**

- On the Missouri Care website, you cannot search for "Psychiatrist" as a Provider Type. You can search for Psychiatry, but that doesn't limit your search to only Psychiatrists. The search for "Psychiatry" returns other mental health providers including Psychiatric Nurses, Psychologists and Social Workers.

### Accuracy of phone numbers

Inaccurate phone numbers comprised a large percentage of the errors found. The bulk of these were disconnected or no longer in service. However, some numbers connected BHC to unexpected places.

Aetna Better Health of Missouri PCP calls included 30 incorrect phone numbers. Nine were personal cell phones for individuals unaffiliated with the PCP. Aetna Better Health of Missouri Psychiatrist calls included 40 incorrect phone numbers, one was the St. Louis University student center.

Home State Health PCP calls included 33 incorrect phone numbers, of which one was the number for the “payments only line” for a hospital billing department. Home State Health Psychiatrist calls included 20 incorrect phone numbers, of which two were personal cell phones and one was the Chase Park Plaza Hotel.

Missouri Care PCP calls included 42 incorrect phone numbers, of which eight were hospital departments (i.e., billing, anesthesiology and dermatology). Missouri Care Psychiatry calls included 20 incorrect phone numbers, of which three were hospital floors, one was a personal cell phone, and one was a Women’s Clinic.



### Accuracy of Provider Office Addresses

Many providers had never practiced in the location reached and some had left a year or more before BHC’s phone calls. For Aetna Better Health of Missouri, the PCP listings included 27 moved or retired PCPs, most of these physicians were gone at least one year prior to BHC’s call. In the case of Aetna Better Health of Missouri’s Psychiatrist listings, 24 moved or retired Psychiatrists were found, one had relocated 10 years prior to BHC’s call. The survey of Home State PCP listings included 17 moved or retired PCPs and 31 moved or retired Psychiatrists. The survey of Missouri Care PCP listings included 34 moved or retired PCPs and 27 moved or retired Psychiatrists.

### Accuracy of Provider Specialties



Another observation was the number of “hospitalist” physicians who were included in both the PCP and Psychiatrist listings. These physicians only see members who are inpatient. If a member were to search for a PCP or Psychiatrist these physicians would be included in the list from each MCHP’s website.

- Aetna Better Health of Missouri – 45 listings were Hospitalists, ER docs, or Administrators who were designated as PCPs or Psychiatrists, but do not take appointments.
- Home State - 33 listings were Hospitalists, ER doctors or Urgent Care only and do not take appointments.
- Missouri Care – 51 listings were Hospitalists, ER docs, or Administrators who were designated as PCPs or Psychiatrists, but do not take appointments.

### Responsiveness of Office Staff

Many of BHC’s phone calls were met by voice message lines. When possible, BHC left a message for a return call. However, Aetna Better Health of Missouri physician offices did not return 32 messages, Home State offices did not return 18 messages, and Missouri Care offices did not return 7 messages.



## Conclusion

Behavioral Health Concepts' 2015 Survey of MO HealthNet Managed Care Health Plan Website Accuracy and New Patient Acceptance Rates offers a snapshot of the difficulties a new MO HealthNet member would face when attempting to find a PCP or Psychiatrist on any of the MCHPs' websites.

These website listings often contained errors that would significantly hamper a member's search. With the average level of PCP listing accuracy ranging from 44% to 79.61% and the average Psychiatrist listing accuracy ranging from 42.97% to 62.91%, the likelihood of a member successfully finding a MO HealthNet physician is small.

However, even if the member is able to contact a physician from a MCHP's website, the likelihood of one taking new patients ranges from 42% to 72.34% for PCPs and only 25.93% to 62.96% for Psychiatrists. Again, the odds are against the member.

There is a long way to go before the MCHPs reach the contracted requirement of 90% accuracy.

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MO HealthNet  
Secret Shopper Survey Script  
Survey 1 – Availability & Listing Accuracy

**Instructions:**

On the day of each call, please look up provider/by Health Plan on the MCHP’s website. Verify that the provider is listed as “accepting new patients”, and verify the address/phone number on the MCHP’s website.

If the provider is no longer “accepting new patients”, please take a screen shot of your computer screen.

Proceed after verification that the provider is listed as “accepting new patients”.

**Complete this sheet for all calls made:**

**Listing to be verified:**

<Doctor’s name> <Office address>

<Phone number>

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date and Time call began**

1. “Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I’m new to this area and am looking for a doctor.”

2. “Can you give me your address/location?”

Address matches information on website: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If no, list address as given: \_\_\_\_\_

3. “Yes, I have insurance/coverage?? I just enrolled my  (son/daughter/children) in (Health Plan Name) .”

If they do not ask about insurance, inquire as follows:

- “Do you accept  (name of MCHP) ?” Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If **no**, reply as follows:

I’m on the (Health Plan Name) website right now and your office is listed as accepting this plan.

Record their response here:

\_\_\_\_\_



4. "Is Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ accepting new patients?" Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

*If yes, end call (see #5)*

*If no (Dr. is not accepting new patients), ask:*

*"I'm on the (Health Plan Name) website right now and it indicates that Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ is accepting new patients?"*

*Response: \_\_\_\_\_.*

*"Are any other doctor's in your office taking new patients?" Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_*

*If yes:*

- Ask names and list here: \_\_\_\_\_

*If no, end call (see #5).*

*If the answer is "that physician is not located at this office":*

- Ask: Do you know where he/she is located? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Do you have his/her number at that location? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. End call – "Thank you, I appreciate your time."

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date and Time call ended**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Caller's initials**