

# A Practical Path to Mental Health Parity Compliance

Friday, May 15, 2026

# Before We Get Started



Message  
Lauren  
Hammett  
for any  
*tech*  
*issues*



Use the  
chat box for  
*questions*  
and to  
*introduce*  
*yourself*



Explore  
*resources*  
we'll share  
in the chat  
box



Recording  
and slides  
will be  
shared next  
week

# Agenda for Today

Welcome and Introductions

About URAC

Why Parity Enforcement Matters

Discussion: Achieving Parity Compliance

URAC Tools and Resources



# Today's Presenters



**Shawn Griffin, MD, FAAFP**  
President and CEO  
URAC



**Karen Watts, PhD, RN, PMP**  
Vice President  
Accrediting and Client Services  
URAC



**Allison Bergquist, MSN**  
Director, Quality Management  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota

We have *over 35 years of experience* as  
an accreditor

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We believe in growth through *education*  
*and quality improvement*

\*\*\*

We understand that *excellence looks*  
*different* in every organization

\*\*\*

We accredit organizations in the *US and*  
*internationally* across telehealth, AI,  
pharmacies, health plans and health systems



**Modern Healthcare**

**2025 BEST IN  
BUSINESS**



**ACCREDITED**



**CERTIFIED**

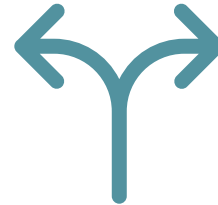
# URAC's Approach

Accreditation is all we do with quality as the focus

Our rigorous, meaningful standard reflect what quality looks like in health care for today and the future



**Education:** Helps teams build the knowledge to sustain improvements for the long haul



**Flexibility:** Recognizes strengths and needs of each organization



**Trust:** Builds long-term relationships to support ongoing excellence

# URAC's Accreditation Programs



## Digital Health

- Health Website
- Remote Patient Monitoring
- Telehealth



## Health and Dental Plan

- Dental Network
- Dental Plan
- Health Network
- Health Plan
- Health Plan with Long-Term Services and Supports
- Marketplace Health Plan
- Medicaid Health Plan
- Medicaid Health Plan with Long-Term Services and Supports
- Medicare Advantage



## Patient Care Management

- Case Management
- Disease Management
- Health Contact Center
- Health Utilization Management
- Independent Medical Examination
- Independent Review Organization
- Workers' Compensation Utilization Management



## Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder (MH/SUD) Parity

- Compliance Guide
- ParityManager®
- Accreditation



## Administrative Management

- Clinically Integrated Network
- Community Health Worker
- Credentials Verification Organization
- Employer-Based Population Health
- Health Contact Center
- Provider-Based Population Health
- Health Care Management\*



## Excellent Health Outcomes (FKA Health Equity)



## Mental Health at Work



## Pharmacy

- Infusion Pharmacy
- Medicare Home Infusion Therapy Supplier
- Mail Service Pharmacy
- Pharmacy Benefit Management
- Pharmacy Services (choose up to four modules)
  - Community Dispensing
  - Drug Therapy Management
  - Point of Care Testing
  - Vaccine Administration
- Specialty Pharmacy
- Specialty Pharmacy Services
- Rare Disease Center of Excellence\*



## Health Care AI

\* Denotes program is a certification

# A Shifting Environment: Why This Matters Now

- Increased state and federal scrutiny
- Focus on access to MH/SUD care
- Looking at how coverage works in practice not in theory
- Parity has been important for a long time but now there this greater attention and follow through
- Regulators are looking at how plans operate



# What Does Enforcement Look Like?

States are taking action

*Different states, same pattern*

BECKER'S  
**PAYER ISSUES** Strategy ▾ Leadership & Workforce ▾ Policy ▾

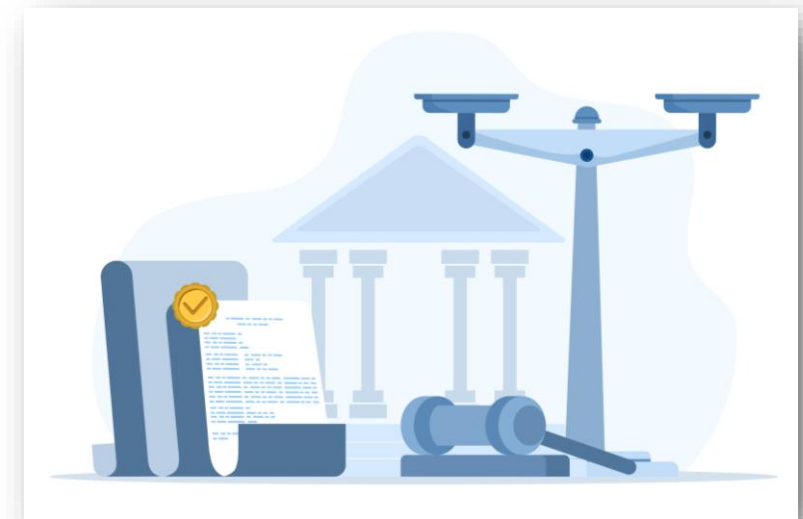
Payer

Georgia issues \$25M in fines to 11 insurers over mental health parity violations

BECKER'S  
**PAYER ISSUES** Strategy ▾ Leadership & Workforce ▾ Policy ▾

Legal

Aetna fined \$550K in Pennsylvania for mental health parity violations



# What Do Government Entities Expect?


- Comparable coverage across behavioral and medical care
- Evaluation of QTLs and NQTLs
- Consistent application of policies
- Clear, defensible documentation
- The expectation is not just alignment on paper
- Plans need to show how decisions are made and applied
- Documentation and process are central to that





# Discussion: A Parity Accreditation Journey




*Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association*

 What drove your organization to pursue URAC's Parity Accreditation?

 How did the accreditation change internal workflows or stakeholder collaborations? What internal changes resulted from the accreditation process?

 What impact have you seen so far?

 How do you plan to sustain parity compliance long term? What does maintenance look like post-accreditation?

 What lessons do you have for other health plans starting their parity accreditation?

# Accreditation Timeline

*URAC's updated and streamlined standards allow organizations to earn accreditation in as little as six months*



“URAC accreditation is more than a seal, it’s a *commitment to continuous quality improvement* that raises the standard of care. We *measure what matters* in health care to help organizations deliver safer, more effective care every day.”



# Connect with URAC

## **Sales and New Accreditation Inquiries**

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