



## QAPI Bulletin

February 2026

Please review the following information which includes updates based on the most recent Salt Lake County audit results.



**An attestation you have read and agree to implement these changes is required.**

**After reading, please [click here to attest](#).**

### Please note:

- The Utah Medicaid Rehabilitative Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services manual has been renamed to the Behavioral Health Services manual. Providers are encouraged to review the [Behavioral Health Services](#) provider manual available at the Medicaid website.

- The Division of Integrated Healthcare issues a bimonthly Medicaid Information Bulletin containing important information for Medicaid providers. If you are not already subscribed, please do so. [Medicaid Information Bulletin](#)



## **Optum Medicaid Member Handbook**

All Providers are required to offer the Optum Salt Lake County Member Handbook to new members at the initiation of services. Providers must review the following sections with each member: Grievances/Complaints, Member Rights, Transportation, Emergency Services and Choice of Therapist.

Providers are expected to assist members in accessing the online version of the Member Handbook, available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), on the Optum Salt Lake County website.

Documentation in the member's record must demonstrate that the Member Handbook was offered and the specified sections were reviewed. Providers may use the Optum Member Acknowledgement Form to satisfy this requirement. The Member Acknowledgement Form is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), on the Optum Salt Lake County website.

If a member initially receives treatment through a different payor and later becomes eligible for Salt Lake County Medicaid, the provider must offer the member the Member Handbook and review the required sections. This must be documented in the clinical record. Providers may use the Optum Member Acknowledgement Form to satisfy this requirement.

Providers who do not have a current process for this requirement must submit a written process to the [Optum QAPI Department](#) by March 27, 2026. *Providers who do not will be placed on a corrective action plan.*



## **Releases of Information (ROIs)**

All providers are required to comply with HIPAA regulations governing the use and disclosure of protected health information (PHI). To meet these

obligations, a fully completed ROI must be obtained before any exchange of PHI occurs.

It is essential that every ROI:

- Contains all required elements, including the specific information to be released, the purpose of the disclosure, the party authorized to receive the information, expiration details, and the member's signature and date.
- Includes no blank fields, as incomplete ROIs are not valid and may result in noncompliance with HIPAA standards.
- Is properly documented and stored in the member's clinical record to support all past, current, or future disclosures of PHI.

Additionally, Salt Lake County DBHS requests that ROIs include reference to 45 CFR to help members understand their protections under HIPAA.

Providers must ensure that ROIs are readily accessible in the clinical record and available upon request, including during quality review audits. Having accurate, complete ROIs on file protects members' privacy, supports clinical coordination, and ensures organizational compliance with federal privacy laws.



### **Fee agreement language review**

As highlighted in last year's QAPI bulletin, the Utah Medicaid regulations and your contract with Optum state members may not be billed or balance billed for Medicaid Covered Services. Signed fee agreements between a provider and members eligible for Optum Salt Lake County Medicaid must include the following statement:

*Optum Salt Lake County Medicaid members do not have to pay for covered services when they have Medicaid.*

Providers whose current fee agreement does not include the required language indicated above must update their form immediately and submit the revised form to the [Optum QAPI Department](#) by March 27, 2026.

*Providers who do not submit a revised fee agreement will be placed on a corrective action plan.*

Providers are expected to begin using the revised form with new and existing Optum members immediately.



## **Assessing for and documenting nicotine-related disorders and offering nicotine cessation resources**

The Utah Office of Substance Use and Mental Health mandates that providers screen all members for nicotine use. When clinically appropriate, providers must assign a corresponding DSM-5 diagnosis and offer cessation services. Documentation of the screening, diagnosis, and any offered cessation services must be included in the member's record. If a member declines cessation services, this must also be documented. All Optum SLCo network providers are required to maintain policies supporting this initiative.

Additionally, all publicly funded Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and Mental Health (MH) programs must be nicotine-free and comply with the following requirements:

- No one will be denied treatment because of their nicotine use.
- Assessment, education, treatment planning and Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) will be provided to all members as appropriate.

[Nicotine cessation resources](#) are available on the Optum Salt Lake County website. Additional resources may be accessed at:

- [For Healthcare Professionals - Way to Quit](#)
- [Smoking | National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [Tobacco Cessation Program - Medicaid: Utah Department of Health and Human Services - Integrated Healthcare](#)



## **New Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community**

Optum SLCo/TCO is now using the Thought Industries Learning Management System to provide 24/7 online access to required trainings and additional provider resources.

Courses are organized into micro-courses that offer brief, focused learning modules. These modules are combined into a larger learning paths to

ensure all required content is included and to provide flexibility in completing required trainings.

**Key features:**

- **New content notifications:** Alerts when required modules are added.
- **Reminder notifications:** Prompts for any outstanding required actions.
- **CEU certificates:** Real-time download of CEU certificates upon course completion.

You may access the learning community at [Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community](#).



**Timely Access and Eligibility micro-course**

As highlighted in last year’s QAPI bulletin, Timely Access requirements remain a priority. A dedicated micro-course is now available in the [Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community](#). This training outlines Medicaid timely access standards and documentation requirements for all SLCo mental health and substance use disorder providers.

**Mandatory Training:** At least one staff from each SLCo contracted provider must complete this micro-course in the [Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community](#). Completion is required by March 27, 2026.

*\*Providers exempt from this mandatory training include those working in inpatient settings, as well as providers who exclusively offer psychological testing, ECT, TMS, or ACT services.*



**Treatment Planning Professional Practice micro-courses**

In response to feedback from the 2024 Treatment Planning trainings, Optum has updated the training material to include additional examples and practice micro-courses. The revised training and professional practice micro-course for both Adult and Youth Treatment Planning trainings will be available in the [Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community](#) by March 15, 2026.

SLCo providers are strongly encouraged to review the updated trainings and complete the newly added Professional Practice micro-courses.



## OQ<sup>®</sup> Measures learning path

Optum is in the process of revising and updating the Beginner and Advanced OQ<sup>®</sup> Measures learning paths. Providers will be notified via e-blast once these become available in the [Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community](#).

Please note that Optum will not offer live OQ<sup>®</sup> Measure trainings in 2026.

**Mandatory Training:** At least one independently licensed clinician from each SLCo contracted provider must complete either the Beginner or Advanced OQ<sup>®</sup> Measures learning path in the Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community. The e-blast announcing the learning path availability will include a timeframe for completion.

*\*Providers exempt from this mandatory training include those working in inpatient settings, as well as providers who exclusively offer psychological testing, ECT, TMS, or ACT services. Additionally, the completion of OQ<sup>®</sup> questionnaires is not required for members who receive only SUD treatment and/or youth under age 5 in treatment.*



## Progress Notes learning path

The Clinical Skills training for calendar year 2026 focuses on Progress Notes. This course will be available in the [Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community](#) by March 15, 2026.

**Mandatory Training:** At least one independently licensed clinician from each SLCo contracted provider must complete this learning path. Completion is required by April 14, 2026.

If you are unable to log in to the Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community, please reset your password. If you are still unable to log in, contact [Optum SLCo/TCO Communications](#) for assistance.



## Member Deaths

If a member receiving services from you passes away during the course of treatment—regardless of the location or cause of death—providers are

required to contact the Optum Clinical Team at **1-877-370-8953**. Timely reporting allows Optum to take the necessary actions to ensure the member's coverage and services are managed accurately and respectfully.



## Sentinel Events

A **sentinel event** is defined as a serious, unexpected occurrence involving a member that is believed to represent a possible quality of care issue on the part of the practitioner/facility providing services, which has, or may have, deleterious effects on the member, including death or serious disability, that occurs during the course of a member receiving behavioral health treatment.

For more information on what incidents qualify as Sentinel Events, please review the Sentinel Event micro-course on the [Optum SLCo/TCO Learning Community](#).

The definition of facility-based treatment has recently been updated to include only the following behavioral health levels of care:

- Behavioral health inpatient
- Residential
- Partial hospital program (PHP)
- Day treatment
- Intensive outpatient program (IOP)
- ASAM Levels 3.5 through 2.1

***Members in supportive living placements and/or receiving only ACT services are no longer considered to be in facility-base treatment.***

Although there are 11 possible events that meet the definition of a sentinel event, only the following four apply to members receiving **outpatient treatment, ACT, or supportive living**, and therefore require reporting to Optum:

- A **completed suicide** by a member who, at the time of death, was engaged in behavioral health treatment at any level of care *or* was engaged in treatment within the previous 60 calendar days.
- A **serious suicide attempt** by a member, requiring an overnight admission to a hospital medical unit or overnight active medical treatment in the emergency room, *and* the attempt occurs within 30 days of discharge from behavioral health facility-based treatment.

- A **homicide** that is attributed to a member who, at the time of the homicide, was engaged in behavioral health treatment at any level of care or was engaged in behavioral health treatment within the previous 60 calendar days.
- An instance of care (at any level) ordered or provided to a member by an individual **impersonating** a physician, nurse, or other health care professional.

Upon discovery of an incident meeting the Sentinel Event definition, providers must:

1. Contact the Optum QAPI Department at 1-877-370-8953 as soon as reasonably possible.
2. Submit the [Optum Sentinel Event Report Form](#) within 24-hours of the initial phone contact.
  - Fax to: 1-866-588-9583
  - OR emailed to the [Optum QAPI Department](#).

To assist in ease of reporting, please use the [Optum Sentinel Event Report Form](#). This form is encrypted and requires the password **SE** to open.



## **Optum SLCo Provider Directory**

The Optum SLCo Provider Directory is a vital tool for members and providers to locate contracted service providers for mental health and substance use disorder treatment. To ensure accuracy, it is essential that providers regularly review their directory listings and update information in their profile at [Provider Express](#).

Maintaining accurate and ADA-compliant information helps ensure equitable access to care for all members and it will no longer be acceptable for providers to indicate “Not available/Unknown” under the “Accessibility” section.

All SLCo contracted providers are required to review their provider directory listing and attest to one of the following:

1. The current listing accurately reflects the office’s ability to accommodate individuals with physical disabilities, including but not limited to accessible parking, entrances, restrooms, exam rooms, and medical equipment;
- OR



2. The listing requires updates to reflect ADA accessibility features, and all necessary revisions will be completed by March 27, 2026. *Providers who do not update their provider directory listing to reflect ADA accessibility features will be placed on a corrective action plan.*

If you need assistance please see [How to update your practice information](#).



## Credentialed Clinical Staff

To ensure the adequacy of our provider network and to identify potential gaps in mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, it is essential that all SLCo contracted providers submit a complete and current list of license and/or certification types for all credentialed clinical staff to the Optum Network Department.

Maintaining accurate and up-to-date credentialed provider information enables Optum to effectively evaluate network capacity, ensure member treatment needs are met, and support the claims validation process by monitoring providers for qualified service delivery and appropriate supervision.

All SLCo contracted providers are required to submit this information by March 27, 2026 to the [Optum Salt Lake County Network Box](#).

Additionally, providers must notify the Optum Network Department **within 10 business days** of any changes to credentialed clinical staff, including updates to license or certification status, as outlined in your provider contract.