

Thank you for your interest in the Southwest Behavioral Health IPA (SWBHIPA)

We want to provide you with a guideline of what SWBHIPA can (and cannot do), so that you are aware of what your membership provides.

SWBHIPA is a **contracting** entity. SWBHIPA has contracts with the following plans, which members may be able to participate in:

- Western Sky Community Care (Medicaid only)
 - Molina (Marketplace and Medicare Adv. only)
 - Christus Health Plan (Medicare only)
 - True Health NM (plan may have network adequacy restrictions in some areas)
 - NM Health Connections (Exchange plan)
 - HealthSCOPE
 - Prime Health Services
 - PNOA
 - America's Choice PPO
 - Three Rivers PPO
- SWBHIPA is not a credentialing entity, meaning it does not gather your information for CAQH or verify that the information you have provided is accurate. This has to be done by you.
 - SWBHIPA does not complete Medicaid or Medicare applications. This has to be done by you.

Credentialing vs Contracting (and don't forget Loading):

These are two terms that are often used interchangeably, *but they are not the same thing*.

Credentialing is the process by which an insurance plan checks to see if your education, licensures, insurance, work history, etc. are valid, verified and up to date. CAQH is a credentialing platform that most plans use now. You will need to have a CAQH account set up and up to date. You can do that through Proview: <https://proview.caqh.org/Login/Index?ReturnUrl=%2f>

Plans, by law, have 45 days to credential you. The time typically starts when they open your file, not when you submit your application or letter of interest. If there are any issues with them accessing your credentialing file or them finding your information is not up to date during the credentialing process, this "stops the clock" until those issues are resolved.

Contracting is the process by which you become legally engaged with a plan so that you can offer services to their members. A plan will need to credential you when they contract with you. It is part of the contracting process.

SWBHIPA helps facilitate the contracting process by providing you a streamlined method to apply. Because SWBHIPA already has the contracts in place with the plans, once credentialing is completed, the respective plans can typically add you to the SWBHIPA contract(s) faster than if you had obtained a direct contract.

Loading: This is often the step that plans forget to mention. Once a plan has contracted and credentialed you, then they need to load you into their system. Some plans want up to 30 additional days to do this, which can add to your wait time to see their clients. Things can influence this, such as whether or not you are already in their system with another group or entity or if they allow for retroactive effective dates. Each plan has their own way of doing things and there is little consistency between them. SWBHIPA does help facilitate this to make it move as quickly as possible.

Getting Things Started with Your Practice:

These are the things that you need to have in place before you start the contracting and credentialing processes:

- **Type 1/Individual NPI number:** An individual National Provider Identifier (NPI) number can be obtained through NPPES: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/#/>
- **SSN or EIN:** There are 2 types of Tax Identification Numbers (TINs). An SSN or an EIN (Employee Identification Number). If you are going to bill under your SSN, then you should have that already. However, if you plan on operating as an LLC, sole-proprietorship, corporation, or other entity, you will be considered a “group” (even if you are the only person in that group) and you will submit your billing under an EIN. EINs are obtained from the IRS.

Operating as a group will require you to obtain additional numbers and may make the initial process to set up take a little longer up front. But, if you are going to want to operate your practice this way, it is better to put the time in now rather than change it later. (It becomes more complicated when you try to make this switch with an insurance company later.)

- **Type 2/Group NPI:** This is necessary if you plan to bill using an EIN. This can also be obtained through the same account you use for your Type 1 NPI: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/#/>
- **Medicaid:** If you plan to offer services to the Medicaid population, you must apply and register with Medicaid. You register with Medicaid with the company called Conduent. Both the individual and the group have to register. So, if you plan on using and billing your services with an EIN, you need to get a Medicaid number for both yourself and the EIN/Group. All of this is done through Conduent’s online Medicaid application portal at: <https://nmmedicaid.portal.conduent.com/webportal/enrollOnline>

Contact them with questions at NMPRSsupport@Conduent.com or 1-800-299-7304 or 505-246-0710. It seems that Medicaid applications are taking about 6 weeks to process, but that is not a guarantee.

Please note, once you are registered with Medicaid, you will still need to contract with the 3 Medicaid plans (BCBS, Presbyterian and Western Sky) to see those Medicaid members that are enrolled with those 3 plans.

- **Business License:** In order to apply with Medicaid, you must have a business license. You should contact your county to obtain this.

If you join SWBHIPA with these things already in place, it typically takes 6 to 8 weeks to get you added to the bigger plans (less time with the smaller plans).

If you still need to get these things set up, please add another 6 to 8 weeks to the process.