

Provider News

Massachusetts



Update: BH claims coding modifiers for master's-level practitioners

We are extending the grace period during which we will accept the AJ modifier code for BH services performed by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LICSW), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) through March 31. After March 31, providers are expected to use the correct HO modifier to avoid claim denials.

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Thank you again for being a part of the WellSense provider network.

If you are a behavioral health (BH) provider who has recently experienced a claim denial for using modifier code AJ for BH services performed by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LICSW), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) please know that we are working to approve your claim and issue payment. Read on for full details, including expectations regarding submitting future claims with the HO modifier code instead.

The issue

Jan. 31 marked the end of our first month of operating our behavioral health (BH) benefit entirely in-house, having terminated our relationship with Carelon Behavioral Health on Dec. 31, 2025. In that time, we've discovered an issue with the way claims have been being submitted for BH services performed by LICSWs, LMHCs and LMFTs. Carelon historically accepted the modifier code of AJ (a modifier to LICSWs, LMHCs and LMFTs) for these claims. The WellSense insourced model aligns with EOHHS guidance and requires use of the HO modifier for CPT codes submitted for covered services performed by LICSWs, LMHCs and LMFTs.

How we are addressing the issue

We understand that some providers may not have been aware of the difference in modifier requirements of the insourced model, and we are moving swiftly to reprocess any claims that were denied for this reason. You can expect full payment for such claims starting with Feb. 9 check runs.

Moving forward, we will temporarily continue to approve claims submitted with either the AJ or HO modifier for dates of service through March 31. We are providing this period for impacted providers to update their coding practices to use the standard

HO modifier.

We will provide a reminder of the March 31 deadline to cease use of the AJ modifier in our monthly WellSense Provider News and Updates email newsletter on Feb. 27.

As always, we thank you for your partnership. We are incredibly grateful to all our providers for helping us deliver best-in-class care to our members.

Questions?

For more information about working with use as BH provider, please visit the [BH provider page of wellsense.org](#).

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to contact us at bhproviders@wellsense.org.

These policies and prior authorization requirements are applicable for members enrolled in a WellSense Health Plan product. All WellSense policies are located on the Provider's page at [wellsense.org](#). If you do not have web access, you may contact your provider relations consultant for a copy of the policies. If you have any questions about this notification, please contact your dedicated provider relations consultant or call the provider line at 1-888-566-0008.

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