

# **Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe**



## **Circle of Health Policy & Procedures**

Approved by Circle of Health Board

Date: 9/22/2009

## ***Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe*** **Circle of Health Introduction**

Circle of Health is a nonprofit body politic, of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Circle of Health began in 1998, and was located in Onamia, MN until September 2007, when the offices moved to the Chiminising Community Center in Isle, MN. Daily operations are overseen by the Director. The Circle of Health Board governs program services, budgets, and band statutes.

These policies are intended to provide Mille Lacs Band Members with a general understanding of Circle of Health's policies and procedures.

However, these policies cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about health care claims. It is not intended to create obligation of any kind, by Circle of Health.

The Circle of Health Board of Directors reserves the right to change, revise, or eliminate any of policies or benefits described, herein. The Circle of Health Board is subject to follow all Band Statutes and provisions.

### **Circle of Health Board:**

The Circle of Health Board is comprised of 6 total persons; The Commissioner of Health and Human Services; as Chair-indefinite; one member from each district, chosen as follows: The Representative from each District shall provide the Chief Executive with the names of two persons from which the Chief Executive shall nominate one person (one term-three years) and inform the appropriate Representative. A district representative board member may serve no more than two consecutive terms (6 years), and then may not be elected/appointed for another term until he/she has been off the board for at least one year. After at least one year absence from the board, former board members are eligible for election/appointment for two more consecutive terms. Finally, two health care professionals, actively involved in the provision of health care to American Indians, as appointed by the Commissioner of the Health and Human Services who can designate or continue terms, in these positions only.

### **Purpose:**

Circle of Health is a Mille Lacs Band Program that pays for deductibles, copays and insurance premiums for Mille Lacs Band members. All Adult Band members are entitled for benefits regardless of income or where they live. A primary insurance must already be in place; this could be through an Employer, Medicare, Medicaid or other programs. To further be eligible there must be a Mille Lacs Band Member on the primary policy. Circle of Health pays for single or family medical/dental premiums. One policy per family.

## **Mission:**

Circle of Health's mission is to promote physical and mental well-being in all of our communities, by assisting Mille Lacs Band Members to acquire health coverage, and eliminating barriers to health care access.

## ***Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Circle of Health Policy & Procedures***

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Circle of Health Staff

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Primary Responsibility</u>
Michele Palomaki	Director	Supervision/Day-to-Day operations
David Boyd	Claims Processor	Manages claims A-L
Roberta Lemieux	Claims Processor	Manages claims M-Z
Dawn Chosa	Benefit Coordinator	Assists Band Members with Insurance
Patricia Jackson	CoH Receptionist	COH processing
Shirley Boyd	File Clerk	Filing

Circle of Health Board Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Term</u>
Don Eubanks	Circle of Health Board – Chair	began 7/6/2009
Loretta Kalk	District I Representation	began Fall 2002
Jenny Gahbow	District II Representation	began 4/17/2008
Janice Taylor	District III Representation	began Fall 2002
Ginger Weyaus	Professional	began 2004
Stephanie Grady	Professional	began 4/27/2006

## **101 CONFIDENTIALITY**

In order to protect confidentiality Circle of Health follows HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Security Regulations.

The reason for this policy is to ensure confidentiality, integrity, and to protect against any threats or hazards to the security or integrity of band member information. In an unlikely event that any information is released, or obtained by our office; Circle of Health will notify all active band members immediately. Disciplinary along with legal action will follow when applicable.

## **102 ENROLLMENT**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to have all Mille Lacs Band members who submit claims for medical/dental services and additional services to fill out an **enrollment form**.

The purpose is to maintain updated information from the Band members regarding information and who is eligible on their policy. An enrollment form needs to be completed along with a copy of the band member's identification card, and copies of health insurance cards, prior to paying for any claims through the Circle of Health. Information will be recorded into a file on ACT and updated annually. Circle of Health cards will not be issued until all paperwork is obtained.

## **103 CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

At the time of enrollment or updating information, it is the policy of Circle of Health to have all band members fill out a Consent Form. This will enable Circle of Health staff to process your claim, and directly dealing with providers, employers or insurance companies.

## **104 ELIGIBILITY**

Band members should accept and be willing to apply for medical/dental coverage that may be available through an employer or from a governmental program in your state. The Benefit Coordinator will assist Band members in understanding and applying for applicable insurance policies.

The Circle of Health Office reserves the right to individually do pre-determinations for state or private eligibility. Also, the right to deny payment or reimbursement of health premiums due to no prior consultation with the Circle of Health office.

## **105 COVERAGE**

Circle of Health pays for deductibles, copays and insurance premiums for Mille Lacs enrolled Band members.

### **106 NON-ENROLLED FIRST LINE DESCENDANT**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to recognize first line descendancy until the age of 18. The descendant must be on an active band member's policy for co-pays and deductibles to be paid, and proof will be required. The Circle of Health Board reserves the right to review/discontinue co-pays, deductibles, and premium amounts of a non-enrolled descendant. It is the policy that the Circle of Health Board must review and act on financial matters in relation to cost containment and plan for the future of Circle of Health Program. This includes the nonpayment of monthly premium amounts for children over the age of 18, where their coverage increases the monthly premium amount.

### **107 NON-ENROLLED FAMILY MEMBERS**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to not cover co-pays and deductibles of non-enrolled family members (includes prescriptions). This coverage ended April 30, 2008.

### **108 ONE POLICY PER HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to pay one premium per household or family. If there are band member children who could be on a mother's or father's policy; but they are on a non-band member's policy, and no legal documents can be provided relatively, the non-band member premium can be denied.

### **109 ADOPTION OF BAND MEMBER CHILDREN**

In the event that a band member child has been adopted by a non-band member family, who do not qualify for Circle of Health Benefits, this policy has been put into place to insure that all other resources have been exhausted before Circle of Health will assist with health/dental premium amounts.

Each county in Minnesota has specific requirements to qualify for Adoption Assistance Program, which includes: reimbursement of non-medical items, financial assistance, and provides Medical Assistance as a backup to a families' health insurance.

If an adoptive family fits the counties' requirements, federal law requires states to provide medical assistance for children receiving Adoption Assistance. If the family already has a private plan in place, medical assistance is a supplement.

If your private health insurance requires you to pay an additional premium amount for your adopted child you may be eligible for reimbursement of the premium. A medical assistance worker will have you complete a Cost Effective Review Form. If the premium is determined to be cost effective, then Medical Assistance will require you to enroll your child under your private insurance plan and you will be reimbursed for the premium from the state. If Medical Assistance determines it is not cost effective, they cannot require you to enroll your child in that policy. Medical Assistance will then be you child's primary insurance. Due to the support and services offered; Circle of Health will request a copy of

the acceptance or denial from the Adoption Assistance Program before any determinations are made. If the adopted band member child is added to a private health insurance plan, a premium reimbursement will only be made for the band member portion of the premium. Proof of the increased premium will need to be provided by your insurance. Circle of Health will review all instances on a case by case basis, provided that all other options have been exhausted.

As long as the agreement/adoption is in place the child continues to be eligible for Medical Assistance. A copy of the medical assistance identification card will need to be in our records, this supplement of insurance will cover any co-pays/deductibles, in which case there should be no billings to the Circle of Health office. Circle of Health is the payor of last resort, submission of claims must show that Medical Assistance has already been billed and denied

### **110 DIVORCE**

It is the policy of Circle of Health, to not become financially responsible for payment of premiums when a divorce proceeding has begun. Circle of Health makes no commitment where marital matters are concerned; this is a Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Band Member program.

It is further understood that under state guidelines, that coverage cannot be terminated by either party in the divorce. Circle of Health does not have authority to terminate any policies, and cannot be held responsible for non-payment of the two parties involved.

Circle of Health reserves the right to only reimburse co-pays and deductibles instead of making payments to providers. The Courts may have ordered that both parents have equally been given the financial responsibility of those costs, and should not be obligated to Circle of Health.

Divorce proceeding paperwork should be sent to our office as soon as available, and any dealings with Circle of Health will only continue with the band member or his/her legal representation, if an appropriate consent of release of information has been provided.

### **111 LEGAL SEPERATION**

It is the policy of Circle of Health, to not become financially responsible for payment of premiums when a non-band member parent has non-enrolled band members. First line descendency does not qualify for assistance from the Circle of Health program without a band member on a policy.

### **112 CARE OF ANOTHER ADULT**

It is the policy of the Circle of Health to not pay co-pays or deductibles due to legal guardianship or care of another adult family member if they are not an enrolled Mille Lacs Band tribal member.

Additionally, if an otherwise single policy has been changed to family coverage due to this agreement Circle of Health reserves the right to only reimburse or pay premiums to the lesser coverage amount.

### **113 MULTI-FAMILY SETTING**

Adult Enrolled Mille Lacs Band Members in a temporary multi-family setting and exceeding one policy per household may be subject to household income guidelines, health history review in regards to medical necessity, proof of financial hardship or additional information qualifying determination of need or exhaustion of all other avenues.

### **114 MEDICARE**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to recognize all Band members who are 65 and older, or who are 65 and younger, disabled, and are eligible and enrolled with Medicare.

The purpose, to maintain information from the Band members and ensure that reimbursements are made for the premium amount. Copays and deductibles are also covered, but must never exceed the maximum allowable amount for Medicare. Proof of this insurance is the annual award letter issued from the Social Security Department.

This letter is sent out every November into December. A copy of this letter needs to be provided to Circle of Health, for our records.

Reimbursements are made, to those qualified, on a quarterly basis, they should arrive the second week of each new quarter. For example, the end of the second week in October for the months October, November and December.

Medicare Part D deductions and supplement plans premiums should also be sent to our office. Medicare is an individual policy.

### **115 COBRA COVERAGE**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to pay COBRA premiums for Band Members whose employment has ended. The Band Member must have already been on the employer's health coverage plan, before their last day of work. Circle of Health will assist with the payment for a maximum of 6 months, after this time the band member must pay for the amount themselves, or the coverage will be discontinued.

The Band member should fill out COBRA paperwork as soon as it is received from the former employer. A copy then needs to be provided to Circle of Health, with the premium amounts to be paid.

At least 60 days prior to the expiration of the policy, band members must contact our office to inquire about private coverage, or any circumstances that need to be brought to the Director or Circle of Health Board level.



Most employers include Life Insurance costs within COBRA premiums, Circle of Health does not pay or reimburse for anything other than medical or dental.

### **116 MEDICAID SPENDDOWN**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to evaluate each case on an individual basis. After information becomes collective, it is then provided to the Circle of Health Board for possible changes.

Medicaid Recipients should be working with their County Case worker to determine the best per capita disbursement. The Office of Management and Budget has agreed to work with the Circle of Health office if changes are needed, to eliminate medicaid spenddowns.

### **117 PRIVATE COVERAGE**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to assist band members with payment of private coverage policies for 1 (one) year.

This allows ample time for the band member to attain employer's insurance or apply for applicable state coverage. Also, for band members to research other health coverage policies that are less costly, but does not decrease any current benefits. Ultimately, becoming better consumers of health policies and sustaining the Circle of Health program.

If a private policy is in place, because you are an independent business owner Circle of Health reserves the right to make sure that premiums are being billed or paid only for the Employee portion. It may be necessary to get this information from your insurance administrator, and Circle of Health will request a copy along with the enrollment, and consent forms on an annual basis.

### **118 DENIAL PROCESS FOR PRIVATE INSURANCE**

It is the policy of Circle of Health for the Benefit Coordinator to assist band members with applying for Private Insurance, if denied during this process, a denial letter and refund check are issued to you (the band member). It is important that you return this check to our office as soon as possible. Circle of Health will not process another premium payment and you will not longer be eligible for reimbursement or the additional benefits until this check is brought into our office.

But there is another option for band members, coverage through Minnesota Comprehensive Association (MCHA) offers coverage to individuals who in most cases Blue Cross Blue Shield defined as having pre-existing conditions, which is the reason they declined coverage. In which case, the band member will need to fill out another application, and will most likely need to provide additional documentation from a provider.

## **119 MONIES OWED TO CIRCLE OF HEALTH**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to inform band members three times (through letters) to collect any monies that are due. If no agreement is made to pay by the last 30 day request, the debt owed will be sent to tribal court to be garnished out of a future per capita payment. In addition, an administrative fee of \$50 and the \$50 tribal court processing fee will be added to the initial debt amount.

## **120 ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

Circle of Health will cover additional services for enrolled band members only, with prior authorization with a yearly or lifetime limitation:

Eyewear:	up to \$250.00 per fiscal year	(increased 7/1/2008)
DME:	up to \$1,000.00 per fiscal year	(increased 4/16/2008)
Hearing Aids:	up to \$1,000.00 every ten year	(increased 8/26/2008)
Orthodontia:	up to \$3,000.00 lifetime benefit	(increased 3/1/2007)

Circle of Health fiscal year is Oct. 1 through Sept. 30

These services must be pre-approved, the provider needs to call Circle of Health and a claims processor will authorize the charges as deemed by the allowable amount and time period.

DME (Durable Medical Equipment): This benefit has been increased due to need of medical equipment. This benefit does not cover disposable items, due to incontinence (bandages, irrigation, Depends), etc. The benefit allows band members to purchase equipment instead of renting for prolonged use.

## **121 ORTHODONTIA POLICY**

Orthodontia procedures are typically limited to ages 7-19, but in extreme cases and those determined as a medical necessity can be pre-authorized by Circle of Health. The orthodontic appliances recommended time period should be a minimum of 24 months, or the Orthodontia office certificate of medical necessity should accompany a medical provider's orders.

A band member who voluntarily terminated orthodontic treatment (for whatever reason) before the Orthodontia benefit was increased March 1, 2007 will be acknowledged as already exhausting this benefit. Circle of Health shall be released from any responsibility for all consequences caused by the treatment being terminated against the advice of the orthodontist. Thus; relieving any financial responsibility upon Circle of Health to either authorize or make payment or reimbursement for any future duplicate services.

Dentures now fall under the orthodontia benefit, and some procedures prolonging the certain outcome of dentures can be determined on a case by case basis, and again request a letter of medical necessity. The band member will need to provide in writing that they are agreeing to exhaust their \$3,000 benefit towards those procedures, disallowing them any future assistance if dentures are still required in the future.

None of these benefits can be transferred to non-band members within the household.

### **122 DUPLICATIONS FOR LIFETIME ADDITIONAL SERVICE INCREASES**

It is the policy of Circle of Health that there will not be any assistance for duplicate services until the band member pays up to the additional services amount available. For example: A band member previously had braces (already used the first \$1,500 orthodontia benefit), and for whatever reason discontinued this treatment, later he/she wants to use the additional amount of \$1,500 (added to the Orthodontia Benefit 3/1/2007) to start the process over. So if the total is \$3,000 (and there is no primary insurance benefits), the band member would pay \$1,500 first. At which time, the provider office can contact us for the remaining \$1,500 to be billed.

### **123 TREATMENT COSTS**

Effective March 1, 2007 co-pay or deductibles amounts in relation to chemical dependency treatment will only be paid for enrolled Mille Lacs Band Members, with prior authorization.

### **124 AUTO ACCIDENT & WORKERS COMPENSATION CLAIMS**

It is the policy of Circle of Health that no payment will be made in relation to auto accidents or workers compensation. This matter is to be resolved between the insurance companies or employer. If maximum Auto insurance amounts are met, Circle of Health will evaluate on a case by case basis.

### **125 ABORTION, COSMETIC, FERTILITY**

If your primary insurance, does not cover any of these items neither will Circle of Health. In an extraordinary circumstance where the medical condition of the band member life is in jeopardy, due to the unborn child they are carrying; our office should be contacted. Finally, Circle of Health reserves the right to deny any claims that are to be determined extraordinary and of questionable medical necessity.

### **126 NON BAND MEMBERS CARRYING POSSIBLE BAND MEMBER CHILDREN**

It is the policy of Circle of Health, in a case where a couple is not married, and the non-band member is pregnant, and it is believed that a band member fathered the child; no claims will be paid by Circle of Health. When/If the child becomes an enrolled Mille Lacs tribal member or a birth certificate is supplied with band member father's name any paid co-pays and deductibles can be turned in for reimbursement back to when pre-natal care began.

## **127 PROCESSING OF CLAIMS**

It is the policy of the Circle of Health to make certain payments to third parties for the provision of health care benefits to Mille Lacs Band members. These third party providers may include hospitals, physicians and other health professionals, retail medical suppliers and health care insurance providers through either direct or indirect payment of premiums.

The purpose is to improve access to health care services for all Mille Lacs Band members and families where ever they may live. The Circle of Health does not intend to pay false or fraudulent claims. Sufficient proof of a claim will provide Circle of Health with the information to know that a claim is not false. The staff will verify all information on the check request makes the claim eligible for payment. All supporting documentation will be attached to the check request. If all of the information is correct; it will be given to the Director for final approval.

## **128 COPAY OR DEDUCTIBLE PROVIDER PAYMENTS**

It is the policy of the Circle of Health to be the payer of last resort for copays and deductibles for medical and dental services. As a condition of agreement to pay, all persons insured under benefits contained herein must exhaust all other means of health care insurance or third party payment, before COH benefits and payments will be made available.

The purpose of this policy is to insure that members obtain primary insurance they are eligible for.

In order to assure clean claims the Director or designee may use methods including:

- Telephone calls to members
- Written confirmation from requests from employers
- Written confirmation request from members
- Written confirmation from insurance plans
- Copies of members cancelled checks
- Copies of members certificate of coverage

Circle of Health staff shall use wide discretion in confirming that all other insurance plan coverage has been exhausted.

All complete claims will be entered and maintained into the ACT system.

## **129 DENIALS**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to record all denials whether the claim has all of the required information or if the claim is incomplete. The records will date the denial, and the reason the claim was denied. The denial will be mailed to the provider's office or band member.

Most insurance have a 60 day appeal process, your dispute needs to begin with the primary insurance. Reason for denial included:

- Service(s) were not covered by the primary health insurance.
- Amount was not covered by the primary health insurance.
- Service(s) were not covered by the primary dental insurance.
- Amount was not covered by the primary dental insurance.
- Maximum fiscal year benefits have been reached.
- Maximum lifetime benefits have been reached.
- Primary insurance's maximum benefits have been reached for the benefit period.
- Zero amount due from Circle of Health.
- Claim was received after the Circle of Health's time limit of 6 months, determined by date of service or from the date of primary insurance payment.
- Patient is not eligible for Circle of Health.
- No primary insurance on date of service.
- Other: *will be explained.*

### **130 REQUEST FOR PAYMENT AND ACT ENTRY**

It is the policy of the Circle of Health to record all claims submitted for payment in each band member file. The record will show the type of claim, date of service, provider name, the amount of the claim, and initials by the claims processor. Personal reimbursement will include type of reimbursement, and dates of service or coverage.

Check production is not done in our office, but sent to the Office of Management and Budget following their processing schedule. An actual Health Provider Billing Form and Explanation of Benefits (EOB) will accompany all check requests. Premium Payments Coupons or letters will accompany check requests, on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Personal reimbursements requests will be sent with copies of payroll check stubs. Copay and Deductible reimbursements must have two forms of backup, proof of payment and a statement from the provider or a copy of the Explanation of Benefits. Prescriptions must have the prescription tag and a receipt. The Claims Processor will verify that the provider office has not already billed Circle of Health.

### **131 REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to return Explanation of Benefits (EOB) back to providers requesting a billing (HCFA) form. Additionally, to send back statements or explanation of benefits sent in by itself by band members. See Request for Payment and Act entry, for the two forms that must accompany payment or reimbursement.

### **132 SUBMISSION TIME PERIOD**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to process any provider payments and allow billings to reach our office up to 6 months from the date of service, or in some cases from the date of primary insurance payment.

The Circle of Health Board reserves the right to change the personal premium reimbursements to a shorter time period, corresponding more closely to fiscal year expenses.

### **133 PAYER OF LAST RESORT**

It is the policy of the Circle of Health to be the payer of last resort for copays and deductibles for medical and dental services. As a condition of agreement to pay, all persons insured under benefits contained herein must exhaust all other means of health care insurance or third party payment, before COH benefits and payments will be made available.

In order to assure clean claims the Director or designee may use methods including:

- Telephone calls to members
- Written confirmation from requests from employers
- Written confirmation request from members
- Written confirmation from insurance plans
- Copies of members cancelled checks
- Copies of members certificate of coverage

The Director shall use wide discretion in confirming that all other insurance plan. coverage has been exhausted.

### **134 CHECK REQUEST PROCESS**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to utilize a uniform **check request form** for to request payment from OMB for premiums, copays and deductibles and additional benefits of hearing, DME, Orthodontia, and eyewear.

The purpose of this policy is to assure there are checks and balances with claims being processed. All claims will be thoroughly reviewed for eligibility prior to sending to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for processing the check.

All check requests will be filled out completely for all claims submitted. The check request will include:

- Who the check is payable to
  - Amount
  - Date of Service
  - Member name
  - Band ID#
  - Eligible family member name
1. All check requests will be batched and a report will be attached with the requests when sent to OMB.
  2. All claims will be checked for duplicates.
  3. All requests will be paid from an EOB and bill.
  4. All checks will be generated from the ACT program. There should be no writing on them.
  5. All checks will be mailed by Circle of Health staff.
  6. Circle of Health staff will post all checks when they are mailed out and close the file.

### **135 APPEALS PROCESS**

It is the policy of the Circle of Health for claims processors not to pay for claims not covered by a primary insurance.

All claims that do not fit within Circle of Health benefits as a co-pay, premium or deductible amount, will be declined and a denial letter will be sent to the band member.

If a band member feels that their claim was improperly denied, they have the right to bring the matter to the Circle of Health Director, within 30 days of receipt of the denial letter. If the appeal is further denied by the Director, an appeal letter addressed to the Circle of Health Board must be created by the band member, and will be submitted for the Board's consideration at the next monthly Board meeting. After a determination has been made, the band member will be informed by letter through the Circle of Health Director.

### **136 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

If you work for a Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Entity (Government Center, Corporate Commission, Grand Casino Mille Lacs & Grand Casino Hinckley), and there is an eligible band member on the policy, your premium will be deducted from your paycheck. Contact your Human Resource Department as you have an option for the employee premium to be billed directly to our office. This does not happen automatically, our office needs to verify and update your information before authorizing the billing.

### **137 EMPLOYER PREMIUMS**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to reimburse the employee premiums that are deducted from the band member or respective family member's paycheck. A copy of a check stub from an employer showing amount withheld for medical, dental or vision deductions are reimbursed to the individual whose name is on the paycheck. The band member can also discuss the option with their Human Resource Department to allow Circle of Health to pre-pay employee premium amounts a quarterly basis.

If the band member is the owner of the business, the employee portion must be defined from the employer portion from your insurance administrator. The full premium amount, even though a band member is running the business, does not become eligibility to reimburse the full amount.

### **138 MAILING PROCESS**

It is the policy of Circle of Health to make copies of all checks returned from the Office of Management and budget, attach to the check request, enter mailing date in the ACT system, and finally to the post office. All checks are mailed, no exceptions.

It is the policy of Circle of Health to allow claims for reimbursement a 2-6 week grace period, from the date of submission. The band member can contact the corresponding claims processor, if after 6 weeks they still haven't received a denial or payment. There are times when band holidays, OMB deadlines or staff vacations, require more time to process the claims.

The Circle of Health program is not emergency program, and will not honor emergency requests.