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MnFIRE PROVIDER CONNECTIONS

Resources and Tools for the MnFIRE Assistance Program Network

**From Emily Schumacher –
Provider Relations Advocate, MnFIRE**

Hello MnFIRE providers,

Hope your year is off to a good start! My name is Emily Schumacher, the MnFIRE Provider Relations Advocate at Optum. My role is to support you by providing resources and guidance to navigate our network smoothly and provide the best care to MnFIRE members.

Whether you have questions about processes, need help troubleshooting an issue, or simply want to share feedback, please feel free to contact me at emily.schumacher@optum.com.

As we are a growing program, it is important and very helpful to receive constructive feedback. Please consider taking [this survey](#) and completing the written portion as well.



Thank you,
Emily

Emily Schumacher
Provider Relations Advocate, MnFIRE
emily.schumacher@optum.com

[Visit MnFIRE's Website](#)[MAP Network FAQs](#)

Tools for Your Practice



Calm App

Did you know that MnFIRE members can access the Calm app -- for free? The Calm app helps members manage stress, promotes sleep and feel more present. Members can access it after logging in to liveandworkwell.com.

Be sure to mention this resource to members you serve!

Knowledge to Share

Nurture your mind and body for overall wellbeing

What's more important: Your mind or your body? It's a trick question because both are equally important and interconnected. Each needs care for your health and wellbeing.

Here's a quick overview of what the mind-body connection is, why it's so important and tips for feeding it.

How the mind-body connection works

The mind-body connection refers to how your thoughts and emotions can directly impact your physical health and vice versa.

Think about the last time you felt super stressed out. Do you remember what was going on in your mind? What about your body? Chances are your brain raced to find possible solutions, while your body tensed up. Maybe you had stomach issues or a headache or both? Maybe you felt moody, agitated, depressed or even hopeless? If you experience chronic stress, it can lead to long-term mental and physical health concerns like depression, anxiety and high blood pressure.

It works the other way, too. Being in constant pain or having a health problem like heart disease can impact your emotions. You might become depressed, anxious and stressed, which could affect how well you manage or cope with your illness.

Your mind and body can positively influence each other, too.

Your brain produces chemicals that can improve your health, like endorphins, which are natural painkillers, and gamma globulin, which is one of several immune-boosting proteins the body produces.

Your brain's chemical production is influenced in part by your thoughts, feelings and expectations. So, if you're ill but maintain hope, a positive attitude and believe you'll recover, your brain is more likely to produce chemicals that support healing.

On the other hand, negative thoughts and emotions can reduce the production of these helpful chemicals and increase stress hormones like cortisol.

This doesn't mean you should blame yourself for getting sick or feeling down about a health issue. It simply means your thoughts and mindset can be valuable resources.

This is why it's important for your overall wellbeing to nurture both your mental and physical health.

Fueling the connection

While much of life can be out of our control, we can do our best to control what we feed our mind and body. Consuming too much sugar, processed foods, alcohol or caffeine can affect your mood and your body's ability to function. In contrast, diets that support brain health can benefit mental health and wellbeing. They also help reduce stress and improve focus.

To support both mind and body, your diet should include a variety of nutrients – proteins, fibers, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. These nutrients help regulate mood, support clear thinking and keep you alert. They also fuel your body, providing energy for physical activity, maintaining muscle strength, supporting immune function and promoting overall vitality.

The brain-nutrient-mental health connection works both ways. When you're feeling stressed, anxious or sad, you may find it difficult to eat, let alone prepare nutritious meals.

This lack of nutrients can worsen how you already feel, as your brain struggles to function properly without the right fuel. It impacts your physical health, too, leading to fatigue, muscle weakness, disrupted digestion and a weakened immune system, all of which can create a vicious circle. If your digestive system isn't functioning well, your brain doesn't get the nutrients it needs, making it even harder for you to think clearly and feel balanced.

Ways to care for your whole self

1. Identify your feelings

Staying emotionally healthy means being aware of your inner experiences. Learn to recognize your feelings as they arise, noting where you feel them in your body. Instead of pushing them down, practice naming emotions – sadness, anxiety, frustration – and identifying their triggers. This can help you process and cope with your emotions.

2. Practice being grateful

Gratitude is associated with many physical benefits, such as a strengthened immune system, and a decreased risk of depression, anxiety and substance use. By paying attention to and expressing thanks for the good things in your life, you can gain and nurture a sense of satisfaction, contentment, fulfillment and humility. Being grateful can also help you build resilience and cope with adversity. It offers a positive way to deal with stress by giving you a way to draw your focus away from the stressor and toward positivity.

3. Eat nutritious foods

Consider ways to help yourself steer toward nutrient-rich foods. For example, prepare and store nutritious meals and snacks in advance. Making one-pot meals like stews, soups and casseroles can also be a great way to pack in nutrients, while saving yourself cleanup time and hassle. Consider introducing small changes to improve your diet – cook one more meal at home every week instead of eating out, skip dessert or add another serving of vegetables to a meal.

4. Move your body

Activity releases feel-good hormones, like endorphins, which boost mood and reduce stress. Whether it's a brisk walk, home workouts, yoga, sports or simply taking the stairs, find activities that you enjoy and fit them into your day-to-day life to keep your body and mind active and fit.

5. Relax and rest

Schedule time to do things you enjoy. That might mean turning down some invitations to give yourself time and space to recharge or avoid stress triggers. When you have small breaks, try deep breathing, stretching or giving yourself a quick neck and shoulder massage. These small moments of self-care can add up, easing tension and calming your mind.

It's also crucial to get enough sleep. Good rest helps your brain process emotions and improves your overall wellbeing. Consider ways to improve your sleep, such as creating a

calming bedtime routine and going to bed and waking up at the same time each day to help regulate your internal clock.

Sources

- Optum Wellbeing. [How your brain-gut connection can help fuel your mental well-being.](#) January 2024.
- Optum Wellbeing. [What is the mind-body connection? And why is it so important?](#) Accessed Oct. 22, 2024.
- Optum Livewell. [Fostering a mind-body connection with a busy schedule.](#) January 2024.
- Optum Wellbeing. [Benefits of practicing gratitude.](#) Accessed Oct. 24, 2024.
- Optum Livewell. [The benefits of practicing gratitude.](#) October 2021.

Important Information

REIMBURSEMENT RATES

We have some exciting news to share! MnFIRE has increased the reimbursement rate to \$150 a session as of January 1. MnFIRE has made this decision because the organization understands that MnFIRE services are often provided during a time of crisis, when it's crucial to see members in a tight timeframe.

Thank you for your unending support to the fire service and your expertise in this field.

AUTHORIZATION VERIFICATION

While submitting a claim on [Provider Express](#), providers can view insured information. On claim entry step #2, verify that the employer group name is "MnFIRE" to expect the enhanced MnFIRE reimbursement rate.

Insured Information			
Id Number	Insure Name	Address	Telephone
Group Number	Insurance Plan Name	Employer Group Name	
		MNFIRE	

CLARIFICATION ON AUTHORIZATIONS

While speaking with providers throughout the state of Minnesota, a consistent question is "How many authorizations can MnFIRE members receive?" Let's break this down:

MnFIRE Assistance Program (MAP) support specialists are available 24/7, 365 days of the year for unlimited consultations and support. MAP also provides virtual visits and/or face-to-face services with network clinicians specializing in first responders, for up to 5 visits per member, per issue, per year.

The following is an example of per member, per issue, per year. In this case, an "issue" is indicative of an incident or life event, rather than something formal that could be diagnosed.

Say a firefighter calls into MAP support early in the year because they had a death in the family and would like to seek clinical assistance for grief counseling; they would be able to call the MAP support phone number and have a specialist open up an authorization for **five** face-to-face or virtual visits, and then be referred to a clinician to help with that issue.

If the same member calls into the MAP support program later in the year because their spouse lost their job, which has resulted in extra stress and anxiety, they would then be able to call the MAP support phone number again, and have a specialist open up a new

authorization for that issue, and receive another bank of **five** face-to-face or virtual visits and see a clinician for that different issue.

While members are allowed more than one authorization each year, **EAP is not intended for ongoing psychotherapy**. Each circumstance is clinically reviewed prior to authorization to ensure that it is appropriate to address under the EAP benefit.

[Here is more information](#) on the difference between EWS (Emotional Wellbeing Solutions is EAP rebranded) and ongoing psychotherapy.

Utilize the Peer Support Network

Firefighters are exposed to traumatic stress at particularly high rates and getting help from someone who has lived similar experiences can make all the difference. Please utilize [MnFIRE's Peer Support Network](#) to complement the work you are doing in your sessions with firefighters and their families. This confidential service is free to all Minnesota firefighters and offers them the unique opportunity to connect and converse with someone who has been through similar experiences. By providing emotional support outside of the traditional medical system, peer support directly reduces the culture of silence in the fire service that has all too often resulted in worsening mental health and suicide.



Hometown Heroes Assistance Program Elements



- Up to five no-cost, confidential counseling visits per issue per year with trained mental health professionals.
- Confidential Peer Support with fellow firefighters.



- A Critical Illness insurance policy providing up to \$20,000 towards expenses after a diagnosis of cancer, cardiac, PTSD or another critical illness.
- Minnesota firefighters are automatically enrolled.



- Ongoing health and wellness training for firefighters to stay up to date on their occupational health risks.
- Fire departments can choose from general MnFIRE Awareness training and deep-dive sessions covering, emotional wellness, cancer, cardiac, sleep, nutrition and fitness.

Firefighters who are in crisis or need help, need to file a critical illness claim, or need to schedule a training can call our 24-hour hotline at 888-784-6634 or visit

mnfireinitiative.com/hhap.

Claim Reminders

- MAP providers will receive a premium reimbursement rate for eligible services.
- Optum pays providers directly – no patient financial responsibility.
- All MAP claims must include an HJ modifier.
- Claims must also include the 9-digit member ID and authorization number.
- Claims can be submitted at providerexpress.com.
- Providers participating in the MAP network will be reimbursed premium rates for the service codes below *only if* the Minnesota firefighters and their families are *offered an appointment within five business days of request*.

SERVICE CODE	SERVICE TITLE/ DESCRIPTION	FEE: PHD	FEE: MA
90832HJ	30-37 min individual therapy	\$150	\$150
90834HJ	38-52 min individual therapy	\$150	\$150
90846HJ	Family therapy without patient in attendance	\$150	\$150
90847HJ	Family therapy with the patient in attendance	\$150	\$150
90853HJ	Group therapy other than family	\$150	\$150

** Please note that extended therapy visits code (90837) and formal diagnostic assessments code (90791) are not covered for MAP.

Helpful Authorization Tips

- Authorization letters are sent to the individual via email or USPS mail. Ask the member for this information.
- Verify authorization details via our Authorization Inquiry tool at providerexpress.com.
- Call Optum MAP for assistance (1-866-694-9662).

[Quick Reference Guide](#)

Important Contacts

MnFIRE Hotline: 1-888-784-6634

1 – MAP (Firefighter/Family Access)

2 – Peer Support

3 – Critical Illness Insurance

4 – Cardiac & Cancer

5 – Provider Authorization Hotline (Note: this option is not announced on the greeting)

Authorization Hotline: 1-866-694-9662

Provider Questions: emily.schumacher@optum.com



MnFIRE is a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to providing education and support for firefighters and their families with regard to cardiac, emotional trauma and cancer, achieving better health outcomes. For more information, visit mnfireinitiative.com.



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