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#VegasStrong



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## PROVIDER MANUAL to be DISTRIBUTED

There are many details involved in documenting the care provided to each patient. Practice staff are inundated by different requirements and specifics set by Medicare and other insurance companies. Different guidelines for quality reporting. Different systems and programs, each with its own features and conditions. In addition there are varying opportunities for “bonus points” offered by each. It is, at best, difficult to keep track.

Silver State ACO assists its Participant practices in understanding CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) guidelines. In an effort to assist our Participants, particularly in an era when there is so much turnover in staff, Silver State ACO delivers a provider manual to each Participant practice. The manual is a resource for the practices to refer to if/when unsure of particular specifics. It can also be used as an outline for new staff or, in certain instances, an introduction to a particular program that a staff member will begin using.

Over the course of the year, there may be updates to the manual. Please keep your manual up to date by replacing the pertinent pages or sections. Note that some of the updates are based on data received from the practices. In particular, there is a list of all SSACO Participants, as well as providers, included in the manual. Each practice is required to notify us when if a provider leaves – or is added to – the practice. Please remember to let us know when this happens as it is how we can keep our rosters up to date.

Look for the 2023 Silver State ACO manual to be delivered during the month of February. If you have suggestions for anything you’d like added to the manual, or changes that might make it easier for you to use, please let us know.



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Southern Nevada  
February 1, 2023

Northern Nevada:  
February 2, 2023

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## ANNOUNCEMENT FROM the VALLEY HEALTH SYSTEM

The Valley Health System (VHS), a division of Universal Health, is a Preferred Provider, as well as majority shareholder of, Silver State ACO. Their facilities have been very well respected over the years.

In January, VHS announced a decision to close one of its Southern Nevada facilities.



### **Statement Regarding Operational Changes at Desert Springs Hospital**

(January 10, 2023 – Las Vegas, NV) - The leadership of Desert Springs Hospital has informed staff of planned changes to the hospital's scope and operations.

After a very thorough and careful assessment of all viable options for Desert Springs Hospital, the hospital leadership has made the difficult decision to begin an operational change. We are working in conjunction with our healthcare providers and in full collaboration with all necessary government agencies. Our first priorities continue to be our patients, our staff, and our physicians. Our plan is as follows:

Pending approval from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS), our plan is to cease all inpatient operations on or about March 11, 2023. All existing inpatients will receive continued safe treatment and care before being appropriately discharged, transferred to another VHS facility, or moved to the next appropriate level of care at another facility.

The hospital will continue to provide Emergency services to meet community need. Once all inpatient operations have ceased, the existing Emergency Department will be converted to Freestanding Emergency Department (FED) status, continuing to operate for the next 24 months, while a brand new FED is constructed on the Desert Springs Campus. Once complete, Emergency services will vacate the current Desert Springs Hospital Emergency Department and will operate in the new FED, providing a modern environment for patients, staff and physicians.

Multiple factors contributed to this decision. Desert Springs Hospital, which opened in 1971, is an aging facility with complex physical constraints. The required renovations would be highly disruptive to operations and require a significant capital investment. Coupled with the fast-changing landscape of healthcare, which includes labor shortages and cost increases due to inflation, these unanticipated challenges have expedited the need to adapt our operations.

The leadership of Desert Springs Hospital and The Valley Health System would like to recognize the tremendous expertise, compassion and patient-centric focus of Desert Spring Hospital staff who have worked tirelessly over the years to deliver quality patient care, earning many industry distinctions and accolades, and supporting the community.

Information sessions and job fairs are available for current staff who will not remain with the Emergency Department to apply for open career opportunities across all Valley Health System hospitals, Desert View Hospital and Spring Mountain Treatment Center. The Valley Health System aims to transfer all staff members who desire and are eligible for other roles within the organization.

The Valley Health System is committed to delivering high-quality patient care through its network of facilities conveniently located across the greater Las Vegas region.

The Valley Health System is the largest healthcare network serving Southern Nevada and has earned a reputation for excellence in providing quality healthcare to our residents and visitors. Across today's network of seven acute care and specialty hospitals, four freestanding emergency departments, physician practices and a variety of outpatient services, The Valley Health System currently has approximately 9,850 employees and over 2,450 physicians on staff.

For more information, please visit

<https://www.valleyhealthsystemlv.com>

## PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY (PHE) EXTENDED

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, announced the extension of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency for an additional three months. Changes in requirements and procedures enacted in connection



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with the PHE will remain. The PHE was originally declared on January 31, 2020.

After three years of the COVID PHE, and the various strains and waves of illness, practices have become used to the waivers and changes. Silver State ACO continues to advise practices to be alert and remain flexible so that when the PHE is lifted, the practice can quickly and easily pivot and reorient itself to non-PHE rules and regulations.

### NEW PREFERRED PROVIDER ADDED

As part of the drive to deliver excellent care, while reducing costs, Silver State ACO strives to reduce duplications of tests and procedures, as well as to avoid unnecessary ones. (Indeed, allowing the sharing of data was part of the reasoning behind CMS creating Accountable Care Organizations.) We believe that this is best accomplished by engaging providers to be part of the “team” and expanding the team, as appropriate.

As such, we have built a network of Preferred Providers. Specialists are very much part of a patient’s care and, as such, should also be part of the team. SSACO carefully vets specialists, including their historical services and billings for our beneficiaries. If approved, we contract with them, thus stating clearly what SSACO objectives are and assuring that they are in step with those objectives.

We ask our Participant providers to refer to the Preferred Provider Network listing whenever they need to refer patients to a facility or specialist, as appropriate.

We are pleased to welcome Infectious Diseases of Southern Nevada to our Preferred Provider network. Dr. Fadi El-Salibi, CEO of the practice, is available to provide consults on infectious disease issues, as well as infusion services. The practice is conveniently located, adjacent to Henderson Hospital, at 825 N. Gibson Road. Dr. El-Salibi can provide consults in a timely manner, thereby quickly initiating critical treatments for enhanced patient recovery. By starting treatment early, hospital admissions and readmissions may be avoided.

Dr. El-Salibi provides a 24/7 RN hotline so that patients can access his team quickly and be triaged to the most appropriate level of care, sometimes avoiding costly ED visits. Dr. Salibi’s practice can be reached at 702-776-8300 and can often get patients seen within 24-48 hours for their infectious disease or infusion needs.





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## QUALITY MEASURES SPOTLIGHT -2023 MIPS CQM/eCQMs

As discussed in January's newsletter, Silver State ACO is responsible for reporting quality on behalf of our participating practices. We report quality to Medicare in several ways:



- CMS Web Interface Measures – These are manually audited by your Quality Coordinators and pertain to your ACO attributed Medicare Fee-For-Service patients only. Specifications were reviewed in detail in last month's [newsletter](#).

- Merit-Based Incentive Payment System Clinical Quality Measures (MIPS CQM)/ Electronic Clinical Quality Measures (eCQMs) – These are electronic based

measures that are populated and pulled directly from your Electronic Health Record and uploaded via a QRDA Category 1 file. Medicare requires this data be reported for **ALL** patients and **ALL** payers including patients who are not beneficiaries of, or in any way related to, the ACO.



### SPOTLIGHT

- Claims – Two measures are required to be reported on via claims. These are;
  - Hospital-Wide, 30 day, All-Cause Unplanned Readmissions
  - Risk-Standardized Hospital Admission Rates for patients with Multiple Chronic Conditions
- Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) – A survey that covers multiple topics including but not limited to; Timely Care, Provider Communication, Shared Decision Making, Helpful Office Staff and Care Coordination.

As we head into the New Year, we would like to take the opportunity to re-introduce the required MIPS CQM/eCQMs. While the specifications remain the same, each EMR has its own way of documenting these measures in a designated field in order to meet the intent of the measure. We recommend practices reach out to their EMR Company Liaison for a complete understanding on what workflows need to be implemented.

- **Diabetes: Hemoglobin A1c Poor Control:** Patients age 18–75 with diabetes must have an HbA1c completed during the 2023 year. Medicare considers HbA1c "controlled" if it is less than or equal to 9.0%. The last HbA1c completed in 2023 is the reading Medicare requires the ACO to report.

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- **Screening for Depression and Follow-Up Plan:** A screening for depression should occur for all patients age 12 and older using an age-appropriate standardized depression-screening tool AND, if positive, a follow-up plan is required to be documented within the patients chart on the date of the screening or up to two days following the date of the encounter. A follow-up plan must include one or more of the following:
  - Referral to a provider for additional evaluation and assessment
  - Pharmacological interventions
  - Other interventions or follow-up for the diagnosis or treatment of depression
  
- **Controlling High Blood Pressure:** This measure includes patients 18–85 years of age who have a diagnosis of hypertension and whose blood pressure was adequately controlled. Medicare defines “adequately controlled” as less than or equal to 139/89 mmHg. The last blood pressure reading taken in 2023 is the reading Medicare requires the ACO to report.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your Quality Coordinators if you require any assistance or have any questions on any of these measures.

### PHI – WHEREVER and WHENEVER

Practices and staff get the message: implement systems and safeguards to secure and guard Protected Health Information (PHI) and Protected Identifiable Information (PII) in the practice.

But, then what?

Please note and remember that PHI and PII have to be protected from the time a practice receives it until it is properly disposed of. This is true regardless of whether the information was originally received from a patient him/herself or from a different provider, facility or organization.

The Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the federal office that is responsible for overseeing the proper protections, requires that covered entities apply the same appropriate administrative, technical and/or physical safeguards to disposal of PHI as they do to the use or storage of it. This includes limiting improper exposure or disclosure of the PHI and applies



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regardless how old or stale the data is or whether the person is still a patient of the practice.

Proper disposal methods include shredding or burning of paper, and physical or magnetic destruction of electronic data. All data must be completely removed before disposal of computers or other electronic data storage devices (such as thumb drives). It is permissible to hire a third party to dispose of PHI, first confirming that the company is respected, licensed and bonded. (It may actually be preferable to hire a company to do it, simply on the basis that professionals know what actually works.)



REMINDER – POSTERS and BENEFICIARY NOTICES

As reported in the January newsletter, CMS has, changed the verbiage of posters and beneficiary notices for 2023. We remind you that CMS has specifically announced that the use of older versions of the templates is not acceptable. As such, we have attached the templates to this newsletter, again. Please note that the difference in versions is based solely on whether the practice has an online portal, or not. (And, reminder – if not, you should!)

SHARING SUCCESS

Silver State ACO physicians, staff, and management have worked hard to achieve incredible results, earning Shared Savings seven years in a row. The physicians have chosen to share some of this blessing with those less fortunate. The Board of Directors has announced that Silver State ACO Physicians have set aside some of the money to be donated as charitable contributions.



The first of the checks was delivered to Three Square by CEO Larry Preston. Larry had the opportunity to tour the Three Square facility



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and was impressed with the work they do, as well as with their efficiency.

The Board carefully vetted each of the recommended charities to ensure that, among other considerations, the charity be highly rated and that the funds stay in the state of Nevada.



together, we can feed everyone

4190 N. Pecos Rd.  
Las Vegas, NV 89115  
702 644-3663  
[threesquare.org](http://threesquare.org)

OUR MISSION

The mission of Three Square Food Bank is to provide wholesome food to hungry people, while passionately pursuing a hunger-free community. Our vision is simple: No one in our community should be hungry. By bringing together the resources, experience and passion of the people and businesses of Southern Nevada, we can make sure no one has to. Together, we can feed everyone.

*Three Square Food Bank is registered with the Secretary of State and qualified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, and a member of Feeding America. Established in 2007, Three Square is Southern Nevada's only food bank and the area's largest hunger-relief organization. Your charitable contribution to Three Square is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*



## Food for Thought

It's hard to believe we're in our 15th year of feeding hungry neighbors. That's a testament to the tremendous leadership of Brian Burton, the Hilton Family, Paul Plata & Three Square's employees, our volunteers, agency partners — and ultimately to the amazing support of caring friends like you.

From our humble beginnings, when we were granted our South Campus building in 2007, to the opening of our North Campus building in 2009 and Senior Hunger Campus in 2020, it's our wonderful community of supporters who have carried us through and built upon a legacy of feeding hungry people. And the impact you've made is remarkable!

Because of you, the amount of food Three Square Food Bank has distributed these past 15 years has grown beyond our wildest expectations — from 10 million pounds of food the first year to 51 million pounds this past year. **All told, 528 million pounds of food have been distributed to date.**

We count it a privilege every single day to continue reaching hungry people with the food they need, and to have you standing with us. Especially now, when the need is so great. One in seven people in Southern Nevada is currently food insecure. That's 341,000 men, women, and children who are facing hunger. Thankfully every \$1 donated provides 3 meals, which means you have the opportunity to impact many lives.

You will never see the people you're helping, but they know you're there. On behalf of each and every one of them — and all of us here at Three Square — please accept a huge and heartfelt **"thank you."** Here's to another 15 years!

Gratefully,

Michelle Beck

Interim President & CEO/Chief Development Officer

**15 Years of Growth ... Thanks to You!**



12 drivers

23 trucks

~1,302 food deliveries each month

~14,400 miles each month to pick up food donations

## An interview with Paul Plata, continued from page 1

**A:** No, growing up I was lucky enough to have food on the table. I can't imagine how bad it can be when you're hungry. Good thing our community has Three Square to help feed hungry families.

**Q:** Have you ever experienced hunger?

**Q:** How has Three Square changed over the years?

**A:** Three Square obviously grew way

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## PRACTICE MEETINGS

We look forward to seeing you at the quarterly Silver State ACO practice meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup> in Southern Nevada or on February 2<sup>nd</sup> in Northern Nevada. Remember that the Northern Nevada meeting will be held at the Junior League of Reno. Details, below.

Note that the February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Southern Nevada will be held at Desert Springs Hospital. However, given the announcement by VHS discussed above, the remaining Southern Nevada meetings will be held at Summerlin Hospital.

Each meeting focuses on different topics, but the meetings are always educational, informative and interesting. They are a wonderful opportunity to meet staff from other practices, as well as Silver State ACO staff. Team work is how the magic happens. We have been working together to help our practices and to be successful, allowing us to share the success. Please join us.

### **Practice Meeting Schedule for 2023:**

Please note your calendar and watch for emails re: changes to schedule or venue

#### **SOUTHERN NEVADA**

**Meetings are scheduled to be held at 11:30 a.m.**

Wednesday, February 1, 2023 – at Desert Springs Hospital

Wednesday, May 3, 2023 – Summerlin Hospital

Wednesday, August 2, 2023 – Summerlin Hospital (\*Note venue change)

Wednesday, November 1, 2023 – Summerlin Hospital

#### **NORTHERN NEVADA**

Meetings are scheduled for 5 pm “meet and greet”. Program begins at 5:30 pm.

Thursday, February 2, 2023 – Junior League of Reno Office - 190 W. Huffaker Lane, #407, Reno, NV 89511

Thursday, May 4, 2023

NNMC Sparks Medical Building – Ste 201

Thursday, August 3, 2023

NNMC Sparks Medical Building – Ste 201

Thursday, November 2, 2023

NNMC Sparks Medical Building – Ste 201

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**702-751-0834**

Available for secure reporting of any suspected compliance issues, without fear of retribution.

***“You can’t blame gravity for falling in love.”***

Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist and one of the great minds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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