

Provider Press

News You Can Use

Articles included:

Spring 2021

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We hope you find this publication of Provider Press helpful and insightful. Your network management staff are continuing to enhance communication opportunities and will cover important updates, upcoming trainings and topics of interest to our provider network on a quarterly basis. To ensure we are providing relevant and timely information that is important to you, we welcome your feedback.

Additional detail can be found in the Provider Alerts on our [website](#) should you want more information on any of these topics.



Registration is underway!

Optum's 2021 Annual Conference is coming April 13 and 14, a free virtual statewide event for sharing, learning and collaborating that has been designed specifically for Idaho behavioral health professionals! The first-ever Optum Conference is open to all licensed providers, paraprofessionals, behavioral health care administrative professionals, community stakeholders and mental health advocates, as well as providers who are not part of the Optum Idaho network – all are welcome to register for no cost at www.optumidahoconference.com.

Most sessions include Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Certificates of Completion provided at no charge to Optum Conference participants, and attendees can register for as few or as many sessions as desired. Participants will have the ability to earn CEUs either by attending the livestream or by watching the archived recorded sessions on Relias.

The theme of this debut gathering of local, regional and nationally recognized behavioral health professionals is "A Changing Idaho – Challenges and Opportunities." To set the stage for sessions that will follow, keynote speaker Dr. Katherine Hobbs Knutson, CEO of Optum Behavioral Care and senior vice president at UnitedHealth Group, will recap how the state of Idaho has come a long way in the past few years with the introduction of managed care in behavioral health and preview what is ahead for the industry and its professionals. Dr. Knutson is keenly aware of the successes of the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan, especially the innovation

Optum Conference 2021 (cont'd)

and commitment by Idaho providers shown during the pandemic. Her keynote will deliver a sketch of what's to come, including greater accessibility, measuring quality and insights on national trends, including transitioning to value-based payment systems and improving integration with primary care. Participants in the 9 a.m. MDT livestream April 13 will have the opportunity to ask Dr. Knutson and the Optum Idaho leadership team follow-up questions as we frame up the start of the conference.

Dr. Knutson is an adult and child psychiatrist and adjunct assistant professor at the Duke University School of Medicine. She earned her M.D. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her master's degree in health policy and management at the Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health. As CEO of Optum Behavioral Care, Dr. Knutson is redesigning behavioral health care delivery and creating a scalable model to improve efficiency, quality and access to care.



Other presentation topics include:

- Bridges Across Cultures
- Analyze the Health of Your Business
- Terms and Skills for Counseling LGBTQIA+
- Integrating the CANS into Practice
- Ethics and Law in Mental Health
- Value-based Payments 101
- COVID - Lessons Learned
- Disability and Mental Health
- SAMHSA Evidence-Based Practice Use
- BH Challenges in Tribal Communities
- Vicarious Trauma and Burnout

Please register now using the conference website and check back regularly for additional information and event updates: www.optumidahoconference.com. If you have any questions, please email: optumconference@optum.com. We hope to see you there!

Telehealth

Providers Continue to Innovate with Telehealth

The innovative and caring efforts of Optum Idaho Providers to serve clients during the pandemic were recently highlighted on "Idaho Matters," the weekday noon newsmaker interview program airing on Boise State Public Radio, a National Public Radio station.

Host Gemma Gaudette interviewed Optum Idaho Executive Director Georganne Benjamin and Pathways Community Crisis Center of Southwestern Idaho Clinical Director Susan Martinelli for the program, which looked at how Idaho clients and providers have adapted to telehealth modalities, more than eleven months into the public health emergency declaration that has limited in-person visitations. (You can listen to the program [here](#)).

Telehealth (cont'd)

While telehealth has long been available from many Idaho providers, it was not until the pandemic that usage increased. According to Optum claims data, in April 2019 only 206 Idahoans had received telehealth services under the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan. One year later, the number had skyrocketed to 15,046 people, which is a 7,204% increase.

Martinelli noted that the loss of in-person counseling and the need to switch to virtual or telephonic means was not easy for some clients.

“Most clients switched over to using the telephone or using webcams, but we also had many clients that were hesitant or figured they just wanted to be seen face-to-face and that they would wait until we got back to doing in-person sessions,” she said. “So, it actually took us a few months to convince some of the clients to even try telehealth.”

To help support those individuals who may not have access to the technology to conduct telehealth sessions with their providers, the Pathways Community Crisis Center in Boise has WiFi-enabled computer tablets available for clients.

Other providers are also doing what they can to help clients during this difficult time. Early in the pandemic, staff at Recovery 4 Life in Boise noticed an uptick in clients not attending scheduled assessments. Though this was not a new phenomenon, they worried the increase meant clients' behavioral health needs were not being met due to inability or difficulties to access care. The solution was faster and easier access to both the assessment and enrollment process for clients who are ready and willing to engage.



Same-day access is an idea that Recovery 4 Life had been working on prior to the pandemic shutdown. Client safety remains their number one priority and they had held off on implementing the format due to the risk of exposure to COVID-19. However, as the community need for services remained high, Recovery 4 Life team began same-day access via telehealth with “Zoom In Wednesday” joining “Walk-in-Wednesday” as a popular method of receiving care.

Through this format, a prospective client can call into the office any day of the week and be assessed, enrolled, and engaged in treatment within four business days of their call. Many clients call Wednesday morning and are set up with an appointment that same day and can start treatment as soon as the following day. This one-day dedication to incoming clients has decreased the wait time from inquiry to engagement by 21 days in some cases. Following one month of success, Recovery 4 Life added same-day medication management to their Walk-in-Wednesday offerings, allowing incoming clients with mental health or MAT needs to be assessed by their Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. Recovery 4 Life has seen an increase in client stabilization through their wrap-around approach to care.

For additional information regarding the Recovery 4 Life program, please reach out to Cloeie Hood, Recovery 4 Life Clinical Director, at cloeieh@recovery4lifeidaho.com.

New COVID Help Now Line

The state of Idaho recently launched a new “COVID Help Now Line” that offers statewide support to anyone experiencing stress, anxiety or other behavioral health issues associated with the pandemic. Please consider [printing this one-page flyer](#) and hanging it in your practice office or sharing with clients and community stakeholders.

A joint effort by the Idaho Office of Emergency Management’s “Idaho Strong” campaign and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, the COVID Help Now Line is staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mountain time seven days a week, and can be accessed via phone, text or chat. Callers can also leave a message during off hours and receive a return call the following day.

To use the state of Idaho’s COVID Help Now Line, call or text 986-867-1073, call toll-free 866-947-5186 or use online chat at [COVID Help Now | Office of Emergency Management \(idaho.gov\)](#)



Education and Training

We continue to work to expand the scope, awareness and accessibility to free, easily accessible, and CEU-eligible online education about topics that are of most importance to behavioral health providers across the state.

First, if you haven’t already, be sure to register now for the 2021 Optum Idaho Conference April 13 and 14 by [clicking here](#). There are sessions on topics ranging from small business growth strategies to using Idaho’s Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool to lessons learned during COVID-19. Register for free for as many or as few of these virtual sessions as you’d like, many of which will offer certificates of completion or CEUs.

One conference session will feature an important discussion around self-care and trauma work, understanding how critical it is for providers not to neglect their own wellness and counter-transference of trauma. The pandemic has created additional stressors, such as financial strain, family obligations and increased occupational demands as clients require more care.

As a behavioral health professional, you are prone to unique stressors, and these stressors may lead to physiological, emotional, behavioral and/or spiritual exhaustion as you listen to the effects of traumatic or stressful experiences on one client after another. Working in a trauma-informed way and successfully engaging and attuning with clients requires lots of self-care. Without self-care, the potential distress may impact your ability to remain compassionate, empathetic and present for your clients. It’s no wonder we find so much emphasis on monitoring our personal well-being in many (if not all) of our ethics codes!

We benefit from taking care of ourselves physically, focusing on quality sleep, a balanced diet and exercising regularly. Just as important is managing our resources and setting aside time for what we love to do.

Education and Training (cont'd)

Self-care isn't just a distracted activity to squeeze in between clients. For you to be effective as a provider and to be able to provide the best care you can for your clients, taking care of yourself needs to be a top priority. It is incredibly important that we find outlets to relieve our own personal stress and anxieties, focusing inward to ensure that we stay emotionally, physically and spiritually well. We are offering several courses on Relias that support your self-care:



- ⇒ [Boundaries](#)
- ⇒ [Boundaries and Dual Relationships for Paraprofessionals](#)
- ⇒ [Compassion Fatigue and Caregiver Satisfaction](#)
- ⇒ [Stress Management for Behavioral Health Professionals](#)
- ⇒ [WEBINAR: Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Trauma and the Importance of Self-Care](#)

You can learn more about how to make self-care a top priority [here](#). It's one of several recent Relias Spotlight features available to Optum Idaho providers at no cost. Other recent training spotlights include:

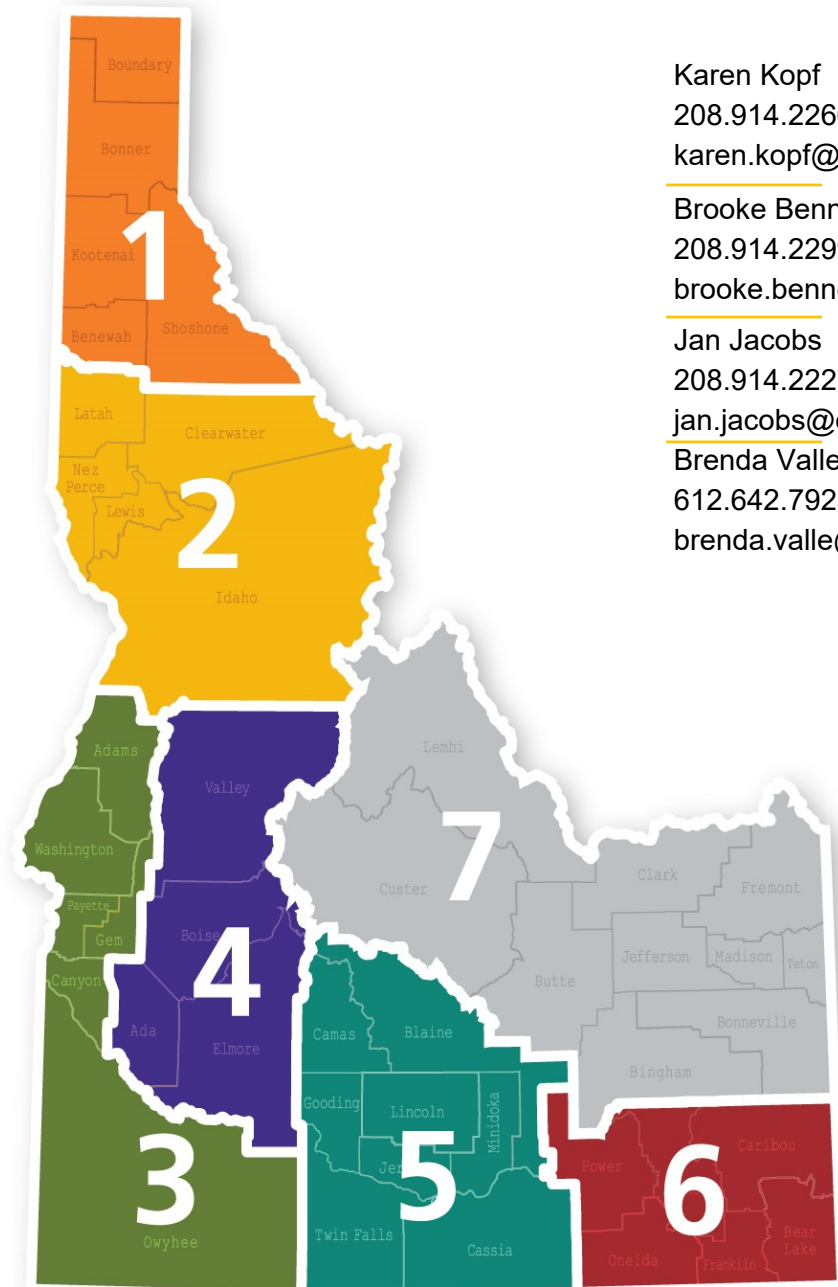
- Expanding your practice to support [mental health in schools](#)
- Assisting children who display [disruptive behavioral disorder \(DBD\) symptoms](#)
- Responding to increasing diagnoses of [posttraumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\)](#)

We hope to see you (virtually!) at the Optum Idaho Conference in April, and until then, make self-care a priority!

Thank you,
The Optum Idaho Education and Training Team

Provider Relations Advocate Team

Below is a list of the Provider Relations Advocates (formerly known as Regional Network Managers) along with their contact information. For your convenience, a complete list of all of our regional contacts can be found on optumidaho.com > [Contact Us](#)



Karen Kopf **1 2**
208.914.2266
karen.kopf@optum.com

Brooke Bennett **4**
208.914.2299
brooke.bennett@optum.com

Jan Jacobs **3 5**
208.914.2227
jan.jacobs@optum.com

Brenda Valle **6 7**
612.642.7925
brenda.valle@optum.com

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