

Idaho Behavioral Health Plan: Executive Summary 2019–2020



Operational excellence and compassionate care during unprecedented change

“They have been very professional and treated me as a human being who suffers from these things and not labeled me. In other words, I am not the disease — I just happen to suffer from these things.”

— Client of an Optum Idaho provider, responding to Medicaid member survey, September 2020.

The Idaho Behavioral Health Plan (IBHP) ends 2020 successfully navigating two profound operational impacts — one planned, the other unexpected. Not since its creation in 2013 has the IBHP experienced changes of this magnitude: The expansion of Idaho member eligibility and the global public health emergency of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As steward of the state’s largest taxpayer-funded managed care effort, Optum® Idaho relied on business expertise only available from the U.S.’ largest health insurance company to prepare for expansion. Thanks to a partnering environment with state government leaders and community stakeholders, thousands of newly eligible individuals and families were smoothly integrated into the IBHP’s results-oriented system of treatment and care.

And when the COVID-19 outbreak triggered disruptions to employment, education, religious practices, food and housing

security, transportation, community resources and personal support networks, Optum Idaho responded instantly to the Governor’s emergency executive order.

Working collaboratively with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW), advocacy groups, providers and stakeholders, Optum implemented emergency policy changes and strategies to ensure uninterrupted care at a time when many Idahoans needed it more than ever.

This operational agility can only come from the experience and insight Optum Idaho has gained from administering and continuously improving the IBHP since inception making it truly an “Idaho solution.” And despite all these changes, Optum Idaho remained committed and focused on supporting Idaho residents’ behavioral health recovery through a statewide network of licensed providers and support professionals.

The following information shows how Optum Idaho works every day to reduce stigma by encouraging open and honest discussions about anxiety, depression, self-harm, substance abuse and other behavioral health challenges. The people served by the IBHP are part of a community of caring individuals deserving of quality services and access to care to which Optum Idaho has proven it can deliver with unmatched value to stakeholders.



About the IBHP and Optum

Optum Idaho is a health services innovation company contracted by the State of Idaho to manage the IBHP, serving Medicaid members who meet the state’s eligibility requirements for the Basic Plan, Enhanced Plan and Youth Empowerment Services (YES).

The IBHP was developed in 2012 by the IDHW in response to 2011 direction in Idaho House Bill 260 to shift administration of state-operated outpatient behavioral health services to managed care. The IDHW selected Optum Idaho in 2013 to operationalize the IBHP, knowing a managed care business model would better serve vulnerable Idahoans through clinically proven, evidence-based practices with expanded mental health and substance use disorder services that result in healthier lives through cost-effective, measurable outcomes.

Optum Idaho is part of U.S.-based UnitedHealth Group, the top-ranking company in Fortune’s 2019 “World’s Most-Admired Companies” for health care insurance and managed care. Optum Idaho employs 80

behavioral health and business professionals statewide, with offices in Boise and a network of field care coordinators, provider quality specialists and provider relations advocates serving all regions of Idaho.

Working collaboratively with the IDHW, state and local policy makers, stakeholder groups and communities, Optum Idaho has worked to continuously improve the IBHP since 2013, following these three primary objectives:

- Access to care
- Quality of services
- Value to stakeholders

This brief report highlights Optum Idaho’s performance in administering the IBHP for the state in 2019 and 2020, a period of dramatic change. Optum Idaho is currently contracted to administer the IBHP through June 2022 and looks forward to continuing this vital partnership in the future. If you have questions or would like more information, **please contact Optum Idaho executive director Georganne Benjamin at georganne.benjamin@optum.com or 1-208-914-2250.**

Access to care

Using experience, planning and technology to break down barriers

“I must say, Optum is always at the top. They are the one that supports us with time, with money, with training, and with people who meet with us, call us and Zoom with us. I will be forever and eternally grateful because of the lives that have been saved.”

– *Sheila Murdock, Idaho Falls, chairperson of Community Suicide Prevention of Eastern Idaho, November, 2020.*

Long before Idahoans even cast votes on Proposition 2 in 2018, Optum began analyzing potential strategies for newly eligible Medicaid members to access care. Aligned with the IDHW, the goals of that plan reflected a shared vision of integrated health care delivery with:

- A continuum of care with a full service array
- Seamless transitions through levels of care
- An expanded statewide network of qualified providers

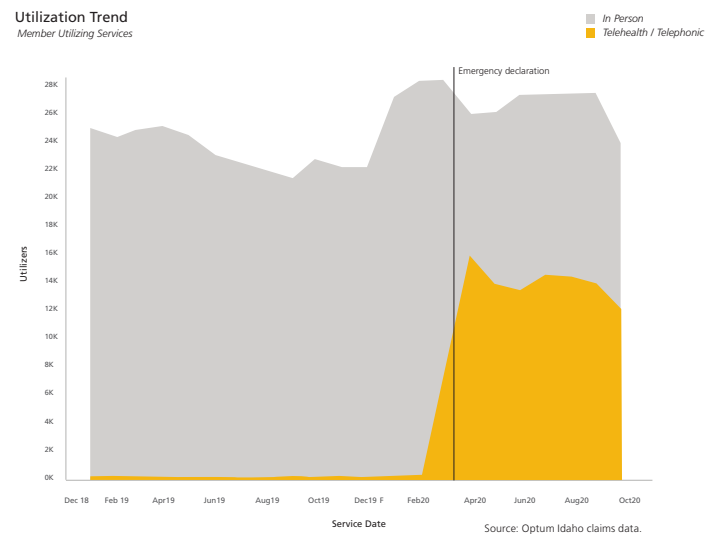
Before, during and after legislative approval of Medicaid expansion in April 2019, Optum worked with the IDHW to refine the architecture of the IBHP to align policy direction with community based service delivery and ensure quality, accountability and availability. In December 2019, more than 130,000 Idahoans indicated they wanted additional information on behavioral health treatment services when responding to a health risk assessment in the IDHW’s Healthy Connections Medicaid enrollment packet, a strong indicator of need.¹

With expansion eligibility go-live in January 2020, Optum provided stakeholders with consistent communication, rapid response to escalated requests and a robust suite of member transition metrics that helped quickly identify operational gaps and ensure a smooth hand-off from several state-operated substance use disorder (SUD) programs to Optum Idaho managed care through the IBHP.

Thanks to this advance planning and careful coordination, more than 95,000 newly eligible Medicaid members now have access to care under the IBHP. Through November 2020, a total of 342,000 Idaho Medicaid members have access to behavioral health services through the IBHP, including 182,000 Idaho children aged 0–17 (See “IBHP Members Served by Region” map on page 7).¹

To support this expanded member base, Optum leveraged experience and resources only available from a company that operates one of the largest behavioral health networks in the U.S. to build out Idaho’s provider network under the IBHP. The Optum Idaho provider network today includes 2,170 licensed providers working in 763 practices statewide.²

Those totals do not include the hundreds of support professionals working with licensed providers, all dedicated to supporting resilience and recovery for Idaho’s most vulnerable families, individuals and children.



Our commitment to finding innovative ways for IBHP service access was challenged in March 2020, when Idaho went into a statewide shutdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak. But again, thanks to planning and a network of providers who do not hesitate to go above and beyond, Optum ensured access to care continued unabated.

Consider telehealth, the use of real-time audio and video-enabled counseling and treatment sessions with an Optum Idaho provider. In April 2019, only 34 Optum Idaho providers reported using these virtual or telephonic sessions. One year later and a month into COVID-19 lockdown, Optum gave providers emergency approval to use secure to readily secure and available applications like, Zoom, Skype, and others, and that number skyrocketed to 1,069 Optum providers using telehealth. And the number of Idahoans receiving those services under the IBHP went from 206 in April 2019 to 15,046 a year later — a stunning 7,204% increase.³

This quick pivot to telehealth as an alternative to in-person was the work of Optum Idaho provider practices large and small. Cassie Peck of Sandpoint is a licensed clinical social worker whose practice serves approximately 20 families, many with children on the autism spectrum or coping with emotional disorders such as depression, anxiety and anger outbursts. Closing her small office for in-person visits due to the shutdown was difficult, but she switched to conducting sessions with families via telehealth, and for those without reliable internet services, over the telephone.

“I work with families who have very limited support. Other than talking to me, they might not really have anyone to talk to,” she says. “We often have snow closures. Some clients live 50 miles from Sandpoint. During the lockdown, that (telehealth) connection was really, really important. Without it, it would have been much harder.”⁴

Quality of services

The right care, at the right time, for the right duration

"The reason I gave Optum a 10 is because the doctors here care about their patients. It's not about the almighty dollar. It's about them taking care of their patients and their overall health is taken care of and that they come first.

— *Client of an Optum Idaho provider, responding to Medicaid member survey, June 2020.*

As a national leader in health services technology and innovation serving government customers in all 50 states, Optum believes managed care is only successful when it is focused on the individual and is family-or person-centered. Since the start, Optum Idaho has worked with frontier-to-urban providers to continuously improve IBHP services that make the whole experience of behavioral health care more compassionate and human for everyone.

In the past two years, Optum Idaho has added 15 new services — a majority serving children and adolescents — so our providers can better help Medicaid members successfully remain in the home, community and school.⁵ When expanded eligibility began on January 1, 2020, Optum was ready with three new services:

Partial Hospitalization — a structured program at credentialed facilities attended by members for 20 or more hours a week without overnight stays, for psychotherapy, substance use monitoring or other services as appropriate.

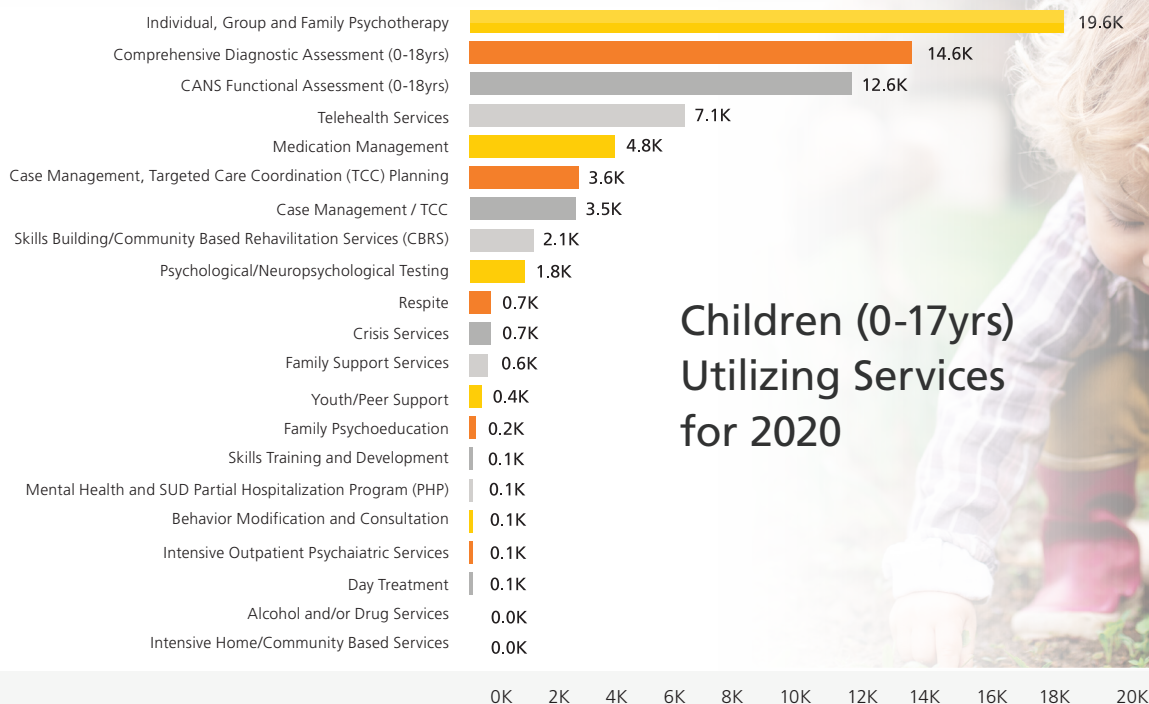
Idaho Regional Crisis Centers — with Optum becoming the first payer to reimburse for in-crisis Medicaid members

served at the network of centers created by the legislature in Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston, Orofino, Moscow, Caldwell, Boise, Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls.

Peer-based Recovery Coaching — the use of trained individuals with a personal recovery experience to be an advocate, guide, leader and mentor, developing individualized recovery and resilience plans that connect members with professional services and the support community.

Optum Idaho's licensed, specialty clinicians are field care coordinators (FCC) located in communities large and small that work with members, stakeholders and providers to identify needs and coordinate care, especially for high-risk members. They serve as a liaison between members, family, providers and other health care specialists, empowering members with knowledge and encouragement to engage in services that support recovery and resilience, while helping navigate a seamless transition between levels of care.

One of the most critical populations the IBHP serves are young people diagnosed with serious emotional disturbance (SED), a diagnosable mental health condition that severely disrupts a child's ability to function emotionally, socially and academically. Optum Idaho has worked with the IDHW to meet the requirements of the 2015 settlement of the Jeff D. lawsuit by implementing additional youth behavioral health services. Filed in 1980 against the state over a 15-year-old whose experience led to identifying the lack of specialized behavioral health services in Idaho, the conclusion of the case resulted in Idaho's Youth Empowerment Services (YES), a model for other states in its commitment to serve children in need using a coordinated system of care.



Children (0-17yrs) Utilizing Services for 2020

Source: Optum Idaho claims data.

Working with families, providers, stakeholder groups and the IDHW, Optum helped create a teaming approach to serve Idaho youth who meet special income eligibility and diagnosis criteria of SED. Providers deliver services in a manner that is strengths-based, culturally competent and responsive to each member's individual psychosocial, developmental, and treatment care needs.

Children outside the Medicaid system access YES services through the Division of Behavioral Health's Children's Mental Health Program.

With a foundation of Community Based Rehabilitation Services, clinicians team with paraprofessionals and those in the child's life who are "natural supports" — coaches, teachers, neighbors, pediatricians, clergy and most importantly, parents, families and caregivers — to design an interdisciplinary service plan and skills building for YES members with a holistic view of the health and well-being of the individual and their family.

Plans include treatment services for mood, anxiety, behavioral and eating disorders to parent counseling and Medicaid-reimbursed respite care, providing much-needed caregiver relief for YES families coping with the additional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Idaho youth age 0–17 represent 54% of all IBHP members and Optum continues to ensure providers deliver high-quality care with in-person and virtual professional training opportunities, along with exploring new, innovative approaches to behavioral health support for youth.¹

With a grant from Optum Idaho, St. Luke's Health System delivered Child and Adolescent Training in Evidence-based Psychotherapies to 91 providers in the state. Optum also sponsored 21 clinicians from six of the state's seven public health district regions for a two-year program to learn services based on a nationally recognized protocol for treating children under the age of five, working with the Zero-To-Three Foundation.²

And, recognizing a need for greater professional behavioral health support for Idaho students, Optum completed a 14-month pilot program in December 2019 helping 180 students at seven public schools by placing clinicians on-site at least one day per week.

"In order for our kids to be successful academically, we knew that we needed to address these issues first," says Parma High School Principal Monique Jensen. "In small-town rural Idaho, this is one of the most powerful tools that you can use in your toolbox."⁶

Value to stakeholders

Engaging all Idahoans in their mental well-being

"No other payer has shown the support that Optum has. Though I am a very small player, I do appreciate the sentiment."

— **Lori Holder, LCSW (licensed clinical social worker), Lewiston, October, 2020.**

Optum believes every Idaho taxpayer is a stakeholder in the shared federal/state funded Medicaid program. Aligned with the strategic goals of the IDHW Divisions of Medicaid and Behavioral Health to emphasize care within a member's home community, Optum Idaho's management of the IBHP achieves better access to patient services while providing effective and lower-cost local care delivery.

Because of experience as Idaho's contracted specialist to implement and continuously refine service delivery under the IBHP, Optum Idaho is prepared, positioned and proven to help the state respond to potentially dramatic increases in behavioral health treatment demand, triggered by the extraordinary disruption of societal and economic norms from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Optum is working to help all Idahoans better cope with mental health challenges ahead, from reducing stigma and spreading awareness through community programs, to operating a toll-free help line for all Idahoans (866) 342-6892, in addition to our 24/7 Member Access & Crisis Hotline, (855) 202-0973. Optum is addressing compounding factors such as food and housing insecurity, all while helping providers with streamlined processes to provide faster and more accessible treatment services for those at highest risk.

Optum Idaho continues to add value to all stakeholders through the following initiatives:

Optum Idaho medical loss ratio savings occurred when actual IBHP benefit spending was less than projected costs. These community health initiative reserve account funds were held in reserve or have been spent in consultation with the Division of Medicaid on programs such as:



Designing the YES system of care and person-centered service plans.



Training to hospitals and other organizations to increase professional behavioral health treatment capabilities statewide, including creating and conducting endorsement training programs for support professionals/paraprofessionals.



Funding to Idaho's Regional Crisis Centers.



Network and other programs designed to improve mental health care services and access

Optum leaders and staff participate in a wide variety of forums and advisory boards, committees and councils that further advance the success of members recovery

These include:

- Regional Behavioral Health Boards and Children's Mental Health Subcommittees
- Idaho Behavioral Health Planning Council
- YES Interagency Governance Team
- Regional Crisis Center Boards
- Organizations focused on underserved populations and tribal welfare
- Community-based outreach programs
- Drug, veterans, mental health and juvenile problem-solving courts



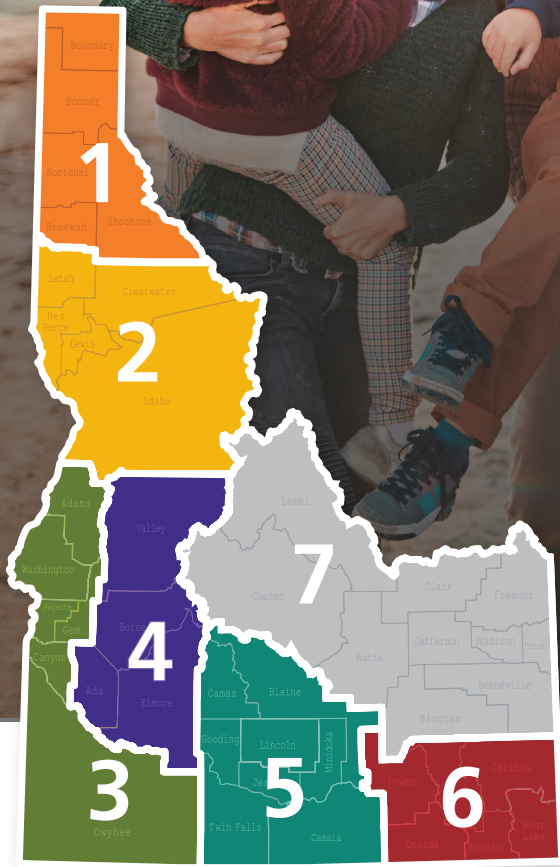
Optum leveraged media and marketing campaigns to reduce isolation, break down stigma, support inclusion and promote resilience to all Idahoans. Since the launch of "Hello Idaho!" in June 2020, more than 20 million impressions have been made and over 36,000 pieces of materials were sent to schools, courts, correctional programs, health care providers, businesses, senior centers, advocacy groups and other organizations to begin the conversation around mental health wellbeing.⁷ In 2019, Optum Idaho was honored by the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce with the chamber's Healthcare Industry Excellence Award, which recognized Optum for healthcare service innovation, staying power, participation in the local business community, charitable giving and support of economic growth.

Optum Idaho has donated monetarily and through employee volunteerism to support and sponsor professional conferences, mental health awareness activities and community service events, projects and programs, ranging from the Idaho Psychological Association's virtual conference to helping purchase a 15-passenger van for the Upriver Youth Leadership Council to transport at-risk youth to the teen center in Kamiah.



Optum Idaho expanded its community giving program, "Give Cold Feet The Boot!" from four schools in 2019 to eight schools in 2020, giving every child a new pair of winter boots and warm socks at elementary schools selected by the State Department of Education in Wilder, Boise, Oldtown, Lewiston, Hansen, Fort Hall, Pocatello and Roberts.

Because housing and food insecurity affects mental health, Optum supported construction of new affordable housing projects, and donated to the Idaho Foodbank's "Backpack Program" to ensure school children have access to food on holidays and weekends.



Optum Idaho shares a spirit of hope in the future with our providers, stakeholders, communities and state government partners as we continue to innovatively and proactively address Idaho’s behavioral health challenges. Thank you for the opportunity to manage the Idaho Behavioral Health Plan with care and compassion in the months and years ahead.

IBHP Numbers Served By Region

		Estimated Total Population (April 2020)	IBHP Eligible Children (0-17)	Medicaid Expansion Members (Oct. 2020)	Total IBHP Eligible Members (All Ages)	Optum Idaho Providers*
REGIONS	1	245,861	22,218	12,389	43,429	109 practices with 260 professionals
	2	109,777	7,542	4,580	16,455	43 practices with 90 professionals
	3	298,223	39,843	16,947	69,828	111 practices with 322 professionals
	4	528,321	37,772	22,537	75,425	329 practices with 858 professionals
	5	201,031	25,851	10,279	44,119	48 practices with 198 professionals
	6	176,584	20,618	9,932	38,020	57 practices with 187 professionals
	7	227,268	28,717	13,845	51,882	66 practices with 255 professionals
		1,787,065	182,561	90,509	339,158	763 practices with 2,170 professionals

*Professionals include only credentialed clinicians but does not include any employees that bill via supervisory protocol or support staff.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (population), Idaho Health and Welfare Medicaid eligibility data, Optum Idaho network data (providers).



**Optum Idaho
Member Access &
Crisis Line 24/7:
1-855-202-0973
TTY: 711**

**Optum Idaho
Public Toll
Free Helpline:
(866) 342-6892**



**Provider clinical
questions and
primary care provider
coordination:
1-855-202-0983**



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**For Hello Idaho!
resources to reduce
stigma, isolation
and encourage open
conversations about
mental health, visit
optum.com/helloidaho.**

Sources:

1. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Medicaid enrollment data, October, 2020.
2. Optum Idaho network data, October, 2020.
3. Optum Idaho claims data, October, 2020.
4. "Connecting Idahoans to care via telehealth," Optum Idaho case study, July 2020.
5. Optum Idaho/Idaho Behavioral Health Plan service portfolio, November 2020.
6. "Enhancing mental health services in Idaho schools," Optum Idaho case study, July 2020.
7. Optum Idaho marketing data, November 2020.



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