

Poehailos, Dupont & Associates , PLC

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

December 2, 2010

Just over ten years ago, Poehailos, Dupont & Associates (PDA) opened our doors with the goal of providing high quality, comprehensive mental health services to the children and families of Charlottesville/Albemarle and the surrounding communities of Central Virginia. That continues to be our mission today. We have prided ourselves in being able to offer a broad array of coordinated, multidisciplinary mental health services under one roof including individual, group, family and marital therapies, psychological/psychoeducational testing, comprehensive psychiatric assessment, medication management, school consultation, amongst others.

When we began our practice we made a commitment to prioritize the needs of children and families in our local community. In this vein, we elected to join the two insurance panels that together served the most lives in our area. This included the QualChoice/Sentara "team" that was the plan administrator of health insurance for the University of Virginia at that time (QualChoice being the general administrator, with Sentara managing the mental health portion of the program). This was a period when many mental health practices in the area were pulling out of managed care contracts with private insurance companies due to struggles with reimbursement. (Professionals in the field were often being reimbursed at rates that were less than half their standard set private rates with no increase in reimbursement in more than 15 years).

Over the past ten years there have been a number of changes in the provision of health insurance benefits at the University. In 2001 QualChoice was purchased by Southern Health; in 2007 Southern Health elected to switch from Sentara to United Behavioral Health for management of the mental health portion of their program. In 2010 a switch was made from United Behavioral Health to MH Net. Through each of these changes, we worked diligently to be able to continue to provide UVA employees and their families ongoing mental health services through their insurance plan/benefits. At each step this meant/cost hours of (unreimbursed) time for both our clinical and administrative staffs in applying to join the various panels, negotiating contracts and working out the transition process with the new company.

Recently, we were informed that UVA had elected to make yet another change, with Aetna set to take over as plan administrator of health insurance for their employees beginning January 1, 2011 (replacing Southern Health). We immediately contacted Human Resources at UVA who put us in touch with Aetna to begin the process of joining their panel. After several weeks of attempted contract negotiation, we deeply regret that we will be unable to join the Aetna network at this time. Unfortunately, the best reimbursement rates that Aetna was able to offer us were far below those of any company that we have a contract with; to accept them would literally put the financial viability of our practice at stake. Please understand that we have made every good faith effort we could to work this out. Many of us feel a strong loyalty to the University- having received training there ourselves, having many cherished colleagues on staff, etc. This has not been an easy decision for us- most especially as many of you have entrusted us with your family's mental health care for quite some time now.

Although we will not be joining the Aetna panel (and thus as of January 1, 2011 services here at PDA will NOT be covered by your new UVA insurance plan) we have been informed by Human Resources at the University that the new plan will include "out of network" benefits for employees that would enable them to be seen at PDA. Features of this option include a deductible which needs to be met, coinsurance, and a maximum on out of pocket expenses; there are apparently both High Premium and Low Premium Policies available. PDA has some information about these benefits and we encourage you to talk with your clinician about your options as soon as possible. We would also encourage you to check on/investigate the details of your particular policy through Human Resources at the University; we will be happy to help facilitate this in any way we can. We do recognize that this option (out of network benefits) will be more directly expensive for you and may not (in some cases) be affordable, particularly in these financially challenging times. Again, we hoped, and very much tried to avoid this situation, but were unable to do so.

It is our goal to make the upcoming transition for you as smooth as possible whether you choose to remain with our practice or seek services within the Aetna network. Your clinician should be talking with you in more detail about this at your next visit. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions in regard to the above and thank you for the trust and confidence you have shown in our practice over the years.

Sincerely,

Anthony Poehailos, M.D.
Medical Director

Philip Dupont, Ph.D.
Clinical Director