

Technical Advisory Interpreting 28 Pa. Code §9.679(d) (Relating to Travel Distance to Participating Providers)

The Pennsylvania Department of Health's (the Department) regulations relating to managed care organizations (28 Pa. Code ch. 9), set out the requirements for access requirements in service areas. (See 28 Pa. Code § 9.679).

Section 9.679(d) of the managed care regulations states that a plan shall provide for at least 90% of its enrollees in each county in its service area, access to covered services that are within 20 miles or 30 minutes travel from an enrollee's residence or work in a county designated as a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and within 45 miles or 60 minutes travel from an enrollee's residence or work in any other county.

In the past, in order to show compliance with this requirement, health plans have submitted software generated maps to the Department showing the radius around a provider without taking into consideration actual driving miles or times. The Department has accepted such maps. Since the passage of the regulations, however, mapping software has become more sophisticated. Therefore, the Department has determined that, in order to demonstrate compliance with these requirements, plans must provide the Department now with access maps that include only actual road mileage. The straight line radius methodology will no longer be acceptable to demonstrate compliance with these requirements. The Department will require the above referenced information for HMO applications, service area expansion requests, or in response to questions of network adequacy submitted to the Department after July 1, 2012.

Comments, suggestions or questions should be directed to the Bureau of Managed Care at phone 717-787-5193 or in writing to the attention of William Wiegmann, Director, Division of Certification, Bureau of Managed Care, 625 Forster Street, Room 912 Health and Welfare Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-0701.