

Information and Resources on Change Healthcare

*Updated 4/5/24**

**Updated content in italics*

What is Change Healthcare?

Change Healthcare, owned by UnitedHealth Group, is a leading healthcare technology company that offers a diverse portfolio of products and services spanning revenue cycle and payment management to multiple sectors within the healthcare industry.

The platform helps healthcare providers, including dentists, process insurance claims, billing, and prescriptions – reportedly handling 15 billion healthcare transactions annually, according to the company's [website](#).

What's happening?

On February 21, Change Healthcare was the target of a cyberattack that has led to widespread outages in systems commonly used for medical, dental, and pharmaceutical billing and insurance claims.

- The attack is preventing affected dentists from sending electronic claims and attachments to insurance companies to receive payment.
- The attack is preventing some pharmacies from processing prescriptions for patients.
- *The patient statement process through some software has also been disrupted.*

UnitedHealth launched a [website](#) with information and multiple resources to ensure provider claims are addressed and people have access to the medications and care they need, *including information regarding a temporary funding assistance program through Optum Financial Services (such as eligibility criteria, and a daily update of which payers providers can reach electronically through direct or third-party clearinghouse connections).*

The [Optum Temporary Funding Assistance Program](#) is designed to help bridge the gap in short-term cash flow needs for providers impacted by the disruption of Change Healthcare's services.

What is the ADA doing to help impacted members?

The ADA has been closely monitoring the situation and is gathering relevant information and updates to keep members informed as new developments unfold.

The ADA has compiled a curated list of resources to help impacted dental practices navigate the aftermath of the cyberattack. These resources are available in a March 6 ADA News [story](#).

ADA News will continue to provide ongoing coverage of significant developments to this issue as they become available. Recent coverage includes:

- An ADA News [story](#) was published on April 4 to notify impacted members of the funding assistance program available to dentists through Optum Financial Services.
- An ADA News [story](#) was published on March 6 to provide impacted members with a curated list of resources.
- An ADA News [story](#) was published on Feb. 27 to alert members of the cyberattack and advise on alternate solutions.

A variety of content focused on digital record security and record-keeping software systems in dental practices is available at [ADA.org/topic/cyber-security](https://ada.org/topic/cyber-security).

What should impacted members do?

The ADA encourages impacted providers to watch for communication from vendors and payers regarding restoration of services.

Providers should seek alternate options until services are restored, such as:

- Using payer portals or provider service lines for eligibility and benefits verification
- Asking vendors for alternative clearinghouse options
- Tracking claims carefully, or consider using paper claim forms

Due to some software issues with the patient statement process, providers may need to generate paper statements and mail them manually. The ADA recommends that offices connect with their software vendor regarding the timeline for replacement or restoration of service.

When will services be restored?

For status updates on the restoration of dental services, please visit this [Change Healthcare dashboard](#).

You can also monitor the [Change Healthcare Incident update website](#) for relevant updates.

According to a March 18 [press release](#):

- On March 18, Change Healthcare began testing its restored medical claims platform and will start to release claims preparation software to thousands of customers over the next several days.
- On March 15, the company restored Change Healthcare's electronic payments platform and is proceeding with payer implementations.
- On March 7, the company restored 99% of Change Healthcare pharmacy network services and continues to work on remaining issues.

Is the federal government providing any assistance to impacted organizations?

The federal government is taking direct action and working to support the needs of the healthcare community.

On March 25, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a [national resource guide](#) with information, resources, and tools from health plans and payers for providers in need of assistance. In this document, providers will find:

- Information to help them connect with payers regarding impacts of the cyberattack
- Links to resources payers have set up (including guides to connect to alternate data clearinghouse services)
- Information on advanced payments, and more

The HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has opened an investigation into the cyberattack, according to a "Dear Colleague" [letter](#) issued on March 13.

- OCR, which enforces the HIPAA privacy and security rule, will probe whether protected health information was breached and compliance by UnitedHealth Group and Change Healthcare with the law's requirements.
- The letter also includes a list of resources to assist dental practices in protecting records systems and patients from cyberattacks, and reminders of the importance of business associate agreements and timely breach notification, as required by the HIPAA rules.

HHS is pressing UnitedHealth Group and other payers to provide financial relief to providers as they continue to feel the financial disruption caused by the cyberattack, as stated in a March 10 [letter](#).

Additionally, HHS [announced steps](#) that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is taking to assist states and health care providers to continue to serve patients and avoid disruptions. Specifically, CMS has...

- Streamlined the process for providers to change clearinghouses to ensure continuity of payments
- Encouraged insurance plans to remove or relax prior authorization requirements in both Medicare and Medicaid
- Directed Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to be prepared to accept paper claims submissions during the course of the outage.

On March 9, 2024, CMS made Change Healthcare/Optum Payment Disruption (CHOPD) accelerated payments available to Part A providers and advance payments available to Part B suppliers impacted by the cyberattack. **Dentists who are enrolled in the Medicare program are eligible.** Eligibility requirements can be found on the CMS [website](#).

CMS is continuing to work with states, encouraging Medicaid managed care plans to make prospective payments to impacted providers as well.