

## Provider Accessibility Initiative Executive Summary

### Introduction

According to a 2017 CMS analysis, Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries with disabilities receive less preventive care than beneficiaries with no disability because health care providers often lack accessible exam rooms and/or diagnostic equipment. On the recommendation of Centene's National Disability Advisory Council, Centene launched the Provider Accessibility Initiative (PAI) to assist those living with disabilities and their companions in accessing quality healthcare. Designed in collaboration with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the program is the first of its kind that aims to transition healthcare delivery into a fully accessible system by removing disability access barriers in healthcare offices.

The goal of the PAI is to increase the percentage of Centene's providers that meet minimum federal and state disability access standards by:

1. Improving the accuracy, completeness, and transparency of provider disability access data in our directories.
2. Partnering with NCIL to offer Centene providers with competitive access to a national Barrier Removal Fund (BRF) that provides funding to remediate priority disability access barriers and technical assistance from NCIL, local CILs, and Centene's local health plans.

### Awards and Outcomes

In 2019, Centene was awarded the 2019 CMS Health Equity Award from the Office of Minority Health for commitment to health equity by reducing disparities among the CMS beneficiaries they serve. Centene was also ranked #7 on FORTUNE's 2019 Change the World List.

Since 2011, over 2,600 onsite Accessibility Site Reviews (ASRs) have been conducted across 7 states (California, Illinois, Texas, Ohio, Kansas, Florida, and New Mexico) by health plan staff and 31 different Centers for Independent Living (CILs), significantly improving the accuracy of provider disability access information in provider directories. In 2018 and 2019, NCIL received 255 Barrier Removal Fund (BRF) applications across 6 states (Illinois, Texas, Ohio, Kansas, Florida, and New Mexico), and provided over 200 hours of technical assistance to applicants and grantees. From these applications, 108 health care providers (140 service locations) received over \$1,000,000 in grants from the Centene Barrier Removal Fund. Grantees ranged in size, location (urban and rural), and specialty (e.g. primary care, OB/GYN, mental health, addiction recovery, dentistry, podiatry, urology) and include both physical and programmatic access improvements. Due to these disability access improvements, 103,000 of Centene's members with disabilities (and their companions with disabilities) now have improved access to health care, along with the countless other people with disabilities seen by those providers who are not Centene members.

### Conclusions

What has made this initiative successful is the increased access to care, not only for Centene's membership, but for the community as a whole. This initiative reflects our responsibility as a provider of healthcare services to the populations most in need. Each component of the PAI, whether removing physical barriers, assessing physical structures, providing programmatic improvements, or updating disability access information in provider directories, demonstrates that commitment.