

Important Update: UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage Referral Requirements (Effective 2026)

Dear Provider,

We're reaching out to ensure you are aware of recent changes implemented by UnitedHealthcare for patients enrolled in Medicare Advantage HMO plans and the impact on specialty care referrals.

Effective January 1, 2026, many UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage HMO plans require a PCP referral prior to specialty visits, including cardiology. These requirements are established by UnitedHealthcare and apply to all cardiology providers, not solely Arkansas Heart Hospital.

What You Need to Do

Submit referrals through the UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal prior to the patient's appointment:

1. Log into the UHC Provider Portal (uhcprovider.com)
2. Enter patient and referral details
3. Submit to generate a referral in UHC's system

Referrals are valid for six months and must be renewed every six months for ongoing specialty care.

Note: Faxing referrals or clinical notes to Arkansas Heart alone do not meet this requirement without submission through the UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal.

If you have any questions, our team is here to help navigate these changes with you. Additional details and guidance are available on our website, or you may contact us via phone.

We appreciate your partnership in helping ensure timely access to care for our patients.

With appreciation,

Arkansas Heart Hospital Clinics