Frequently Asked Questions: UnitedHealthcare and Houston Methodist

When does Houston Methodist’s contract with UnitedHealthcare expire?
If we are unable to reach an agreement, Houston Methodist’s hospitals will be out of network for employer-sponsored, individual and Medicare Advantage plans beginning Jan. 1, 2020 and Methodist’s physicians would be out of network, effective April 1, 2020.

Why haven’t UnitedHealthcare and Houston Methodist reached an agreement?
Maintaining stability in our network of local doctors and hospitals is extremely important to us, but we’re also committed to ensuring our members have access to affordable health care. Unfortunately Houston Methodist is seeking to maintain its position as the most expensive health system in Texas and one of the most expensive in the entire country.

The cost of care at Houston Methodist Hospital is 49% higher than the average cost at the four other Texas hospitals ranked in the top five in the state by U.S. News & World Report and is 36% more expensive on average than four of the top five hospitals in U.S. News & World Report’s 2019-20 rankings of the best hospitals in the United States. All four of those hospitals are highly prestigious and nationally known as the best in the country for people seeking top-quality health care.

The cost of care at Methodist is leading to consumers paying more for their health care and is no longer sustainable for the employer group customers and members we serve. We are asking Methodist to help make health care more affordable for the people we collectively serve throughout Houston.

What happens if an agreement cannot be reached?
On behalf of the employer group customers and members we are proud to serve, we are committed to working hard in an effort to reach a compromise that ensures Houston residents have continued access to care that is both high quality and affordable. If an agreement is not reached, Methodist’s facilities will be out of network for employer-sponsored, individual and Medicare Advantage plans beginning Jan. 1, 2020 and Methodist's physicians will be out of network, effective April 1, 2020.
What will happen if I’m currently receiving care at a Methodist facility or from a Methodist physician and the contract expires?

Our top priority is ensuring our members have access to the care they need and that appropriate accommodations are made to avoid disruption in their care.

UnitedHealthcare members in active treatment at a Methodist facility or with a Methodist physician may be able to continue receiving covered services even after the contract expires. This is called Continuity of Care. Members who are pregnant or undergoing active treatment for a serious medical condition such as cancer may be eligible. UnitedHealthcare members should call the number on the back of their health plan ID card to see if they qualify for Continuity of Care.

What Methodist facilities are affected by these negotiations?

If we are unable to reach an agreement, the following facilities will no longer participate in UnitedHealthcare’s network, effective Jan. 1, 2020:

- Houston Methodist Hospital
- Houston Methodist the Woodlands Hospital
- Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital
- Houston Methodist West Hospital
- Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital
- Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital
- Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital

What other local hospitals and physicians participate in UnitedHealthcare’s network?

We are fortunate to have relationships with more than a dozen other hospitals and thousands of physicians in the Houston area to ensure the families we serve have uninterrupted access to the care they need, including but not limited to:

- CHI St. Luke’s Baylor College of Medicine
- HCA Houston Healthcare Clear Lake
- HCA Houston Healthcare North Cypress
- HCA Houston Healthcare Northwest
- HCA Houston Healthcare Southeast
- HCA Houston Healthcare Tomball
- Memorial Hermann Cypress Hospital
- Memorial Hermann Hospital
- Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital
- Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center
- Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital
- Memorial Hermann Sugar Land Hospital
- Memorial Hermann The Woodlands
- St. Luke’s Lakeside Hospital
- St. Luke’s Sugar Land Hospital
- St. Luke’s The Woodlands

UnitedHealthcare members who need help locating a network hospital can call the toll-free member number listed on their health plan ID card. They can also review our online physician directory on their member website: myuhc.com® for our commercial members and myAARPMedicare.com for our Medicare Advantage members.

1. Logon to myuhc.com or myAARPMedicare.com with your username and password.
2. Click on Find a Doctor.
3. Follow the directions to search by various criteria.
What if I have an emergency and Methodist's facilities are out of network?

UnitedHealthcare members should always go to the nearest hospital in the event of an emergency. Their services will be covered at the in-network benefit level, regardless of whether the hospital participates in UnitedHealthcare’s network.

For more information, visit: https://www.uhc.com/methodist