

Making HEALTHY LIVING Easy

Summer 2009 Member Newsletter

CONTENTS:

SUMMER FUN AND BACK TO SCHOOL	2
VIRGINIA PREMIER PREVENTIVE HEALTH GUIDELINES	2
DISEASE MANAGEMENT NEWS	3
AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT INCENTIVES	3
NEW PHARMACY BENEFITS MANAGER: EXPRESS SCRIPTS, INC. (ESI)	3
QUALITY CORNER.....	4
MEMBER RIGHTS.....	6
APPOINTMENT AND ACCESS STANDARDS.....	7
HERB ROASTED CHICKEN LOW SALT/ SODIUM RECIPE.....	8

Disponible
en español

SUMMER HYDRATION

You may know that 75% of the human body is made up of water, but did you know that 80% of your brain, 78% of your muscles, and 92% of your blood are water? Did you know that lean people have a higher percentage of water? Why? Because muscle holds more water than fat!

What does hydration mean? Hydration means to supply water in order to maintain fluid balance. Not enough water can lead to physical and mental fatigue. Most people don't think much about their hydration until they are thirsty and by that time the water in your body is already low and the side-effects have begun.

What are some health benefits to drinking water?

1. Changes food to energy
2. Controls body temperature
3. Keep joints lubricated
4. Helps prevent constipation

5. Helps us not eat as much
6. Can lessen the severity of colds and flu
7. Can help prevent kidney stones
8. Keeps eyes and skin healthy

Only consume sports drinks when exercising for more than 40 minutes at a time. Sports drinks contain extra calories that the body doesn't need. Beverages with caffeine will actually increase water loss in your body. Remember, decaffeinated drinks such as coffee, teas or soft drinks contain small amounts of caffeine.

It is important to drink 64 ounces of water EVERY day! You can make it more exciting by using fun glasses to drink from, making ice cubes in fun shapes, or adding a slice of lemon or lime for flavor!

SUMMER FUN AND BACK TO SCHOOL

This Theme reminds me of two topics from a medical perspective: Safety in the summer months when school is out and immunizations by the Fall when school starts again.

Safety in the Summer Season is a common topic each year. In one of the previous editions of this Newsletter, I presented a summary of Accidental Drownings in the State of Virginia and strongly recommended swimming lessons and other water safety measures.

Drownings are still problematic for the State and my recommendations still apply this year. Skin protection is another safety problem that people often ignore. When out in the sun during summer months, remember to wear protective clothing and use sunscreen. Check with your physician for the most appropriate strength of sunscreen lotions. At the beach, one needs other protection and also more fluid consumption. Protect your skin from insects, ticks, and mosquitoes.

Wearing protective clothing and using insect repellent will reduce your exposure to these “critters”. Also, remember exposure to poison ivy and poison oak is a common problem in the summer months. Again, protective clothing will provide the safety from exposure. Ask your doctor about all of the ways to identify these offending plants and also about other ways to shield yourself from exposure.

In addition to accidental drownings, there are other simple steps to Accident Protection in the summer. Bicycle riders and skate board riders, should all use protective helmets, arm pads

and knee pads as a protection when falls occur. These can protect against serious head injury and broken bones. Depending on the falls, scrapes and bruises can also be minimized.

Immunizations

Children who have not been immunized will not gain entrance to school. It is a mandate by the State that children receive vaccinations and are totally up-to-date on their “shots”. Please schedule appointments early with your physician or health department for the School physicals and immunizations. Remember, the earlier the better because there are many persons who will be doing this at the “last minute”. The physicians and the local health departments know the ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices) recommendations for “shots” and “catch-up-shots”. If you would like to see these recommendations visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/acip.

Just by using these simple hints, the children will be safe and ready for the next school year!!

Have a great summer and enjoy school.



Melvin T. Pinn, Jr. M.D., M.P.H.
Senior Medical Director

Virginia Premier Preventive Health Guidelines

Virginia Premier uses nationally recognized guidelines to help members understand the levels of care they can expect to receive as a member of the health plan. The following guidelines are available for your review at www.vapremier.com:

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) Guidelines
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Guidelines
- Screening for Depression in Diabetes
- Smoking Cessation Clinical Practice Guideline
- Stable Coronary (Heart) Artery Disease
- Weight Loss Drugs Guidelines
- Asthma guideline
- Depression in Diabetes
- Meningococcal Vaccine Guidelines
- Prenatal-Normal Pregnancy
- Preventive Care Guidelines
- Preventive Prenatal- High Risk

If you would like a copy of any of these guidelines mailed to you, please contact us by phone or mail at:

(800) 727-7536

Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc.
600 East Broad St.
Suite 400
PO Box 5307
Richmond, VA 23220

Si desea una copia en español, por favor llame al 1-800-727-7536 y oprima la opción número 7. Avísele al representante que desea una copia del boletín de noticias en español. Gracias.

Disease Management News

Coming Soon: Behavioral Health Program

The Disease Management Program has nurses that help our members with the following conditions:

- Asthma
- COPD
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Children who are obese (*Childhood Weight and Nutrition*)

Coming Soon: Behavioral Health program

A Focal Disease Management Program:

Childhood Weight and Nutrition was picked as a program because of the big increase in the number of children who are obese. In Virginia, the number of obese children between the ages of 5 and 17 has doubled in the past 30 years. Of note is that the number of obese children tripled between the years of 1990 – 2004. In 2007, Virginia ranked 25th out of the 50 United States for childhood obesity.

Childhood Weight and Nutrition Program Goals:

- Help members improve their health by learning more about obesity risks.
- Prevent or decrease health troubles caused by obesity.
- Improve the overall health care management of obese members.
- Improve the quality of life for members with obesity issues.
- Support the Primary Care Physician's (PCP) plan of care for members with obesity.



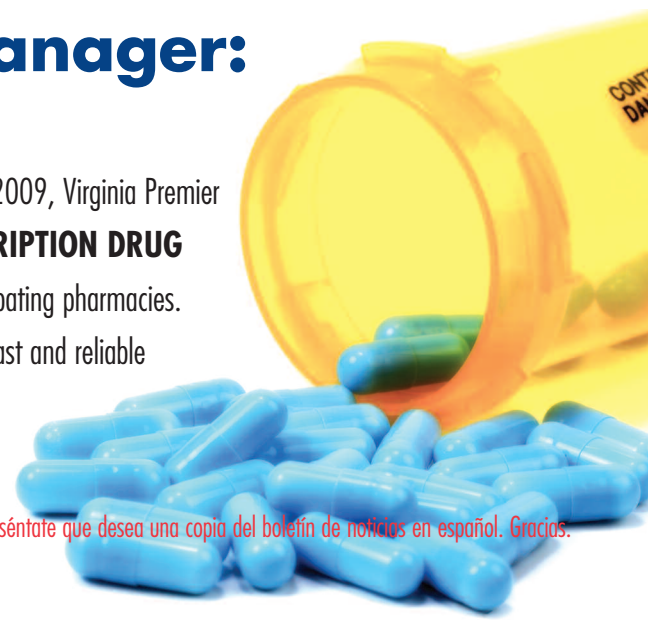
Affirmative Statements About Incentives

Virginia Premier affirms the following about its utilization management (UM) practices:

- UM decision making is based on coverage and appropriate care and service.
- Doctors or other individuals are not rewarded for denying service or care.
- UM decision makers do not receive money or other gifts to encourage decisions that result in under usage.

New Pharmacy Benefits Manager: Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI)

Virginia Premier wants you to get more from your prescription benefits. Beginning July 1, 2009, Virginia Premier began using Express Scripts to administer your prescription drug benefits. **YOUR PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS WILL REMAIN THE SAME.** Express Scripts has a large network of participating pharmacies. They use the most advanced methods to process your prescription benefits, which means fast and reliable service for you.



Si desea una copia en español, por favor llame al 1-800-727-7536 y oprima la opción número 7. Avísele al representante que desea una copia del boletín de noticias en español. Gracias.

2009 Quality Improvement (QI) Program

The 2009 QI Program is available online at www.vapremier.com. Choose Medical Management and then Quality. You can also request a copy of the QI Program by calling Quality at 800-727-7536.

2009 QI Goals and Updates:

1. Goal: Practitioner Data Sharing:

To create reports that detail a specific doctor's care of patients in key quality measures as compared to other doctors.

Update: Survey results show that one of the most common reasons that members went to the emergency room for non-emergencies was that they could not see their own doctor.

2. Goal: Practitioner Quality Incentive Performance Program:

To develop a payment schedule that encourages doctors to give the same or better quality care to their patients as compared to other doctors.

Update: Based on the results of the HEDIS® indicators at doctor's offices, they will be given additional payment to ensure that the VPHP members are receiving the best care, in a timely manner.

3. Goal: To educate and give members and providers patient safety materials.

Update: Patient safety information is in our Member and Provider Newsletters and the Member Handbook.

4. Goal: To continue being a member-friendly company by listening to our members by increasing attendance at the Member Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings.

Update: Members complete a survey at the end of each MAC meeting. We review the members' suggestions made on the survey. Non-English speaking members are encouraged to attend our MAC meetings. Interpretation services are available.

5. Goal: To identify and put improvements in place that will make the HEDIS® outcomes higher and meet the national average for all measures reported to our regulators.

Update: We established the "Save Your Sight and Win" and "Get Your Mammogram and Win" Programs. We have databases for diabetic eye exams and breast cancer screenings which are used to identify and contact members who have not had their exams.

6. Goal: To make sure the information on the VPHP website is correct.

Update: We have regular website committee meetings represented by all departments to ensure correct and timely information is on the website.

7. Goal: To find ways to make sure contracted PCPs open their panels, which will give our members greater access and availability.

Update: VPHP has implemented a payment structure for doctors that will allow us to continue to expand our network.

8. Goal: To improve Childhood Immunizations and Well Child Visit rates across the State of Virginia.

Update: Monthly meetings with our regulatory agency and the other health plans in Virginia are held to come up with ideas that will help improve member outcomes.

9. Goal: To support and work together with the VCUHS to include VPHP quality activities.

Update: Quarterly quality reports with suggestions for improvement are presented at the VCUHS Board Meetings.

10. Goal: To have 25 participating doctors in each region complete the Cultural Competency Course provided by VPHP.

Update: Quality nurses take the cultural competency course information to the doctor's offices when they visit.

Patient Safety: Cultural Competency Course

The purpose of the course is to help your doctors treat and care for members of diverse ethnic backgrounds. As of today, the number of doctors who have completed the Cultural Competency Course is very low. Only 132 Cultural Competency Courses have been completed from January, 2005 through March, 2009. Tell your doctor to take the VPHP Challenge and complete a Cultural Competency Course Today!

Virginia Premier Health Plan Bereavement Program

The loss of a child is one of the most difficult things a person or family can experience. The support you receive during your bereavement is very important to help you cope with your loss. You may receive that support from family, church members, friends and others. Virginia Premier Health Plan (VPHP) recognizes the challenges you may have coping with intense grief, and would like to contribute to your support system.

Upon the death of a child or infant, we will send you a sympathy card, a brochure, a bereavement booklet and a "Living With Loss" magazine to help you during your time of loss.

Additionally, if you or your other children are VPHP members, you will be contacted by a Case Manager to see how you are doing, assess your needs, and assist you with needed services.

Advance Directives

You have the right to choose someone to act on your behalf and make health care decisions for you if you cannot make them for yourself.

Laws have been passed that allow you to make your decision in one of two ways. These decisions are called Advance Directives. They are:

1. **A Living Will** – a written document that tells what medical treatment you do or do not want if you are not able to make your wishes known.
2. **A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care** – a written document that says you have chosen someone to make your decisions for you if you are not able to do so.

If you have an Advance Directive, provide a copy to your doctor and ask to have it placed in your file. Advance Directives are not required if you do not want one. If you decide you want more information or want to know how to make an Advance Directive call our Member Services Department.

Patient Safety – A Must!

Each member should become involved in their own healthcare. You can ask your doctor(s) or call VPHP Member Services for information on the following programs:

- 20 Tips to Prevent Medication Errors*
- Questions to Ask Your Doctor*
- Practitioner Golden Globe (PGA)

*This information can be obtained at www.vapremier.com. Medical Management/Quality/Patient Safety Resources.

Coordination Of Care

Coordination of Care is done by your Primary Care Provider (PCP) and it helps ensure that your needs and preferences for health services and sharing information with your other providers are met over time. Such as:

- Communication between your PCP, Behavioral Health provider, or any specialist
- Ensure that all members of your health care team are aware of tests, procedures and services to avoid unnecessary duplication of services
- Shared decision making between your health care providers

What Does Coordination of Care Mean For You?

- Most important... your safety. Communication between your PCP and all other providers help ensure that medical errors do not occur
- Communication between you and your PCP helps you be more involved in your own health care
- You are more likely to receive the preventive care and services that you need to remain healthy when care is coordinated

Does Everyone Need Coordination of Care?

YES!! Especially the following:

- Children with special needs
- People with disabilities & complex medical conditions
- Behavioral health patients

How Can You Help?

- Ask your behavioral health provider to give your PCP updates on your care and specialists to send reports to your PCP
- Be sure your PCP knows who else you are seeing, and for what reason
- Give your PCP a list of all the medications you are taking
- Call VPHP to have the correct PCP put on your card

Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. is committed to our members' good health. Coordination of Care is a very important part of keeping you healthy. Communicate with your doctor TODAY!

As a Member of Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. you have the right to:

- a. Timely access to your PCP and referrals to specialists when medically necessary and timely access to all covered services, both clinical and non-clinical.
- b. Treatment with quality care, respect, dignity and the right to privacy.
- c. Have healthcare services twenty-four (24) hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five (365) days a year, including urgent, emergency and post stabilization services.
- d. Choose your personal VPHP doctor/Primary Care Physician (PCP).
- e. Change your personal VPHP doctor and choose another one from VPHP's Provider Directory (included in the enrollment/membership packet).
- f. Make your own doctor/PCP appointments to be seen in their private office at your convenience.
- g. Not be treated against your will.
- h. Ask your doctor/PCP questions. Do not be afraid.
- i. Call Member Services to file a complaint/grievance about VPHP or file an appeal if you are not happy with the answer to your inquiry (question), complaint/grievance, or care given.
- j. Have your medical records kept private unless you sign a permission form.
- k. Have timely access to your medical records in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws. You may be required to sign a release form for those records.
- l. Participate with your physician in making decisions about your health care, give your consent for all care, and make decisions to accept or refuse medical care to the extent permitted by law and be made aware of the medical consequences of such action.
- m. Have your doctor tell you about all treatment options and alternatives, presented in a manner that can be easily understood, regardless of the cost or benefit coverage. You can also receive a second opinion from VPHP's network of providers.
- n. Be free from any form of restraint or seclusion used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation, as specified in Federal regulations on the use of restraints and seclusion.
- o. Free exercise of rights regardless of your race, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, creed, age, religion or your national origin, cultural or educational background, economic or health status, English proficiency, reading skills or source of payment for your care.
- p. Receive information about VPHP, its services, providers and Members' Rights and Responsibilities.
- q. To know the names and qualifications of the physicians and health care professionals involved in your medical treatment.
- r. Make suggestions regarding VPHP's Member Rights and Responsibilities statement, which is found in the Member Handbook.
- s. Use Advance Directives (such as a Living Will or a Power of Attorney).

Appointment and Access Standards

Service	VPH Standard
Appointment for health assessment, EPSDT screens, general physical exams, first examinations (preventive care)	Scheduled within 30 days of request.
Initial health screens for new members under EPSDT regulations (preventive care)	Scheduled within 30 days of request and completed within 3 months of enrollment date.
Appointment for Routine primary care & specialty care (non-urgent care for symptomatic conditions)	Scheduled within 14 calendar days of request.
Routine primary care	Scheduled within 30 calendar days of the enrollee's request. Excludes appointments for routine physicals, regularly scheduled visit to monitor a chronic condition if the schedule calls for visits less frequently than once every 30 days, for routine specialty care like dermatology, allergy care, etc.
Average wait time in PCP office	No more than 30 minutes following appointment time.
Specialist appointment (non-urgent referral)	Scheduled within 30 calendar days or sooner of the request.
Initial assessments for pregnant women or persons desiring family planning	Scheduled within 10 days.
Maternity Care – First Trimester	Scheduled within 14 calendar days.
Maternity Care – Second Trimester	Scheduled within 7 calendar days.
Maternity Care – Third Trimester	Scheduled within 3 business days.
High Risk Appointments	Scheduled within 3 business days.
Urgent appointments	Provided within 24 hours of request.
Emergent appointments	Immediately and/or referred to emergency facility.
Access to after hours care	Answering service/machine provides instructions on how to access care.
Appointment for Behavioral Health/Substance Abuse Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Care for non-life threatening emergency within 6 hours. ii. Urgent Care within 48 hours. iii. Routine visits within 10 business days. iv. Follow-up visit after inpatient admission within seven (7) calendar days.
Answering Telephone	Within two (2) to (4) four rings
Hold Time	30 seconds or less

HERB ROASTED CHICKEN LOW SALT/SODIUM RECIPE

When cooking chicken, **removing the skin is much healthier than eating it.** However, leaving the skin on during roasting helps keep the meat moist. Remove the skin when carving or leave it on your plate.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup fresh herbs (such as basil, rosemary, marjoram, or sage) or 4 teaspoons dried mixed herbs, crushed
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
One, 3-pound whole broiler-fryer chicken
2 cups 1/2-inch-long carrot pieces
1 cup pearl onions, peeled
2 teaspoons olive oil
One, 10-ounce package frozen peas, thawed
Fresh rosemary (optional)

Directions:

For **Herb Rub**, combine the herbs, salt, and pepper. Rinse chicken; pat dry with paper towels. Loosen skin on chicken breast. Using your fingers, carefully spread half of the herb rub under the skin. Skewer neck skin to back; tie legs to tail. Twist wings under back. Place chicken, breast side up, on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. If desired, insert a meat thermometer into center of an inside thigh muscle. Roast, uncovered, in a 375 degree oven for 30 minutes, (the meat thermometer, should register 180 degrees)

Toss carrots and onion with the remaining herb rub and the olive oil. Add to same dish as chicken, cover; Roast 45 minutes more or until chicken is no longer pink, juices run clear and vegetables are tender. Add peas to the casserole the last 15 minutes of roasting. If desired, garnish with fresh rosemary. Serves 6

Nutritional facts per serving:

Calories: 293
Total Fat: 14g
Saturated Fat: 4g
Cholesterol: 79mg
Protein: 27g
Total Carbohydrate: 13g
Dietary Fiber: 4g
Sodium: 230mg
Dietary Exchanges: Fruit 1.9, Fat 0.3, Sugar 0.1



Si desea una copia en español, por favor llame al 1-800-727-7536 y oprima la opción numero 7. Avísele al representante que desea una copia del boletín de noticias en español. Gracias.

VA Premier Richmond
P.O. Box 5307
Richmond, Virginia 23220-0307
(804) 819-5151 (800) 289-4970
VA Premier Tidewater
5029 Corporate Woods Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23462
(757) 461-0064 (800) 828-7953
VA Premier Roanoke
4910 Valley View Blvd Suite 202
Roanoke, VA 24012
(540) 344-8838 (888) 338-4579