

SUMMER 2018

Page 2

Opioid Pain Drugs: Lower can be Greater
What is a Formulary?
Do You Take Pills for High Blood Pressure?
What is Diabetic Retinopathy?
Ready, *Sync*, Go!

Page 3

Recipe: French Onion Meatloaf Minis
Well-Child Visits - Infants to Teens
Why Does My Child Need Vaccinations?

Page 4

Protect Your Child from Lead Poisoning
Early Interventions for Developmental Delays in Children Age 0 to 3
When Your Child "Outgrows" their Pediatrician

Page 5

Smoking
PHC Member Services
Lab Services
Do you know PHC offers Interpreter Services?
You are Important to Us. Treating Your Pain Safely Matters

Page 6

New Changes to the CCS Program
Protecting Your Health Information
Your Member Portal is Here!
Some PHC Meetings are Open to the Public
PHC Member Handbook
Do You Have Other Health Coverage?

Annual Disclosure Statement

PHC recognizes that care and services may be under-used and takes steps to screen for this. Decisions made by PHC are based on appropriateness of care and if coverage is present. PHC does not give any sort of payment, incentive, or reward to providers, consultants, or staff to deny medically suitable services to members or to deny coverage.



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Together for your
HEALTH

Partnership HealthPlan is pleased to announce a NEW PALLIATIVE CARE Benefit!

What is palliative care?

Palliative care provides patients with help from the pain and stress of their illness. The Palliative Care Team works with patients to improve their quality of life by helping to treat suffering for both patients and their families.

Who is on the Palliative Care Team?

Doctors, nurses, social workers, and spiritual care advisors make up the Palliative Care Team. This team works with patients on physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

What services will patients receive?

Services include:

- In-home visits with the Palliative Care Team
- Treatment and care goals
- 24/7 telephone support
- Pain and symptom control
- Caregiver support
- Social services like housing, food, transportation, etc.
- Spiritual support services

Who can get the benefit?

Members can get palliative care services if they have been told they have one of these diseases.

- Cancer - stage III or IV
- Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)
- Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease
- End Stage Liver Disease

There are a few other criterias. The goal is to offer these services to members who need more help at the end of life but are not yet ready for hospice care. Members getting the palliative care benefit should be willing to have home-based care and be willing to talk about advance care planning.

Is there a Palliative Care Team in the county where I live?

We work with several companies to provide services in each of the 14 counties we serve.

If you would like to get palliative care services or if you have questions about the benefit, call:

- Member Services Department: (800) 863-4155
- Care Coordination Department: (800) 809-1350 ❖

Opioid Pain Drugs: Lower can be Greater

Drugs have many uses. For example, drugs can lower blood sugar if it's too high. They also fight infections or relieve pain. When taken properly, drugs help you get well. However, drugs also have side effects. They may cause harm if you take too much. Opiate pain drugs, such as morphine or hydrocodone, is a group of drugs where too much can cause serious harm and even death.

The dangers and tragic stories of opioid overdose are constantly in the news. Whether it's in a small rural town or big city, opioid overdose affects us all. This fall, we will make a change to help make opioid drug use safer. We will lower our covered opioid daily morphine equivalent dose (MED) from 120 to 90 milligrams per day. Lowering the MED from 120 to 90 is recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. What this change means is that when the dose for an opioid drug is more than 90 daily MED, the doctor or pharmacist will need to submit a Treatment Authorization Request (TAR). The TAR will explain why a dose more than 90 daily MED is needed for treatment. Opioid drugs can help relieve pain when taken the right way and in the right dose. Taking too much opioids can cause severe harm and even death. Working together with doctors, pharmacists, and nurses, we can all help make taking opioid drug safe and useful. ❖

What is a Formulary?

“What drugs are covered by my insurance?” or “How do I know if my drug is covered?” These are common questions asked in the pharmacy. When a pharmacy technician or pharmacist gets these questions, they will type some words in their computer. In a few seconds, the computer answers if a drug is covered or not. The answer comes from something called a Formulary. A Formulary is a list of drugs that are covered. For PHC, a team of providers and pharmacists meets every three months to go over and make changes to the Formulary. Drugs are looked at and picked for their quality, safety, cost and how well they work.

Doctors and pharmacists can look on our Formulary to see if the drugs you need are covered by PHC. Knowing this, they can give you a prescription for a covered drug that you can get without any blocks. If a drug is not covered, your doctor can ask us for Prior Approval (also called a Treatment Authorization Request or TAR).

Please see the PHC Formulary for the full list of covered drugs and changes made to the Formulary. The PHC Formulary is on our website at www.partnershiphp.org or call us at (800) 863-4155. ❖

Do You Take Pills for High Blood Pressure?

Here is What You Need to Know

Are you taking pills for high blood pressure? If yes, it is very important to see your doctor every year. The dose or strength of blood pressure pills sometimes needs to be changed. Your doctor will also check for side effects by asking about your symptoms and testing your blood each year.

The yearly blood tests will check:

- How well your kidneys are working
- Make sure a blood salt called Potassium is not too high or too low (both are dangerous)



By having your labs done every year, you can avoid feeling things like dizziness, fainting, not being able to pass urine, and kidney damage. Ask your doctor if you need your yearly blood test.

Even if you feel fine, do not stop taking your pills or change your dose without talking to your doctor first. ❖



What is Diabetic Retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is a disease that affects the eyes. This disease causes damage to the blood vessel of the tissue at the back of the eye. This tissue is sensitive to light. It is called the retina. The retina is the nerve coating that covers the back of the eye. It is the part of the eye that takes pictures and sends the images to your brain. This condition can develop in anyone who has Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes.

It can get worse over the years. It can lead to poor vision and even blindness. Sometimes people do not have symptoms until it is too late to treat them. This is why it is vital to have regular eye exams.

Can diabetic retinopathy be prevented? You can lower your chance of hurting small blood vessels in the eye by keeping your blood sugar and blood pressure levels within target limits. If you smoke, you should do your best to quit. Smoking increases the risk of vision loss or blindness.

Take care of your eyes. Talk with your eye doctor about getting an annual eye exam with dilation – even if your vision seems fine.

Visit our website at www.partnershiphp.org for help to quit smoking. ❖

Source: Mayo Clinic

Ready, Sync, Go!

As a rule, a patient visits the pharmacy about 2-3 times a month. If a refill is not ready for any reason, the patient has to make a second trip. Imagine how great it would be if patients just need one trip a month to their pharmacy for their medicines. Many pharmacies now have a program called Medication Synchronization or Med Sync. Med Sync is a tool that helps a patient pick up all their regular medications so they can take them as directed by their doctor. Also, it saves time, energy, and money by combining multiple visits to just one trip.

With Med Sync, the pharmacy makes a monthly appointment for picking up medications. By setting the scheduled pick-up date, the pharmacy fixes any problem that could happen with the prescription before the appointment. This involves calling the doctor for refills, ordering the medication, or just being open for business. Also, by having the appointment for pick-up, the patient can prepare any questions they want to discuss with the pharmacist. For the pharmacist, Med Sync lets them prepare for anything they want to discuss with the patient, as well as provide other health related services such as flu shots.

Talk with your pharmacist today about Med Sync. One stop, once a month. ❖

Healthy Recipe to Try

French Onion Meatloaf Minis



Prep: 20 minutes | **Cook:** 40 minutes | **Serving:** 6

Ingredients

- 1 lb raw extra-lean ground beef
- 2 cups finely chopped brown mushrooms
- ¼ cup French onion soup/dip seasoning mix
- ¼ cup egg whites (about 2 large eggs) or fat-free liquid egg substitute
- 2 tbsp whole-wheat panko breadcrumbs
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 tbsp light whipped butter or light buttery spread
- 3 cups thinly sliced sweet onions
- 1 tbsp chopped garlic
- 3 slices reduced-fat provolone cheese cut into quarters

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with non-stick spray.
2. In a large bowl, thoroughly mix beef, mushrooms, seasoning mix, egg whites/substitute, breadcrumbs, garlic powder and pepper.
3. Evenly transfer to muffin pan, and smooth out the tops. Bake until firm with lightly browned edges, about 35 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, melt butter in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add onions, and cook and stir for 15 minutes.
5. Add chopped garlic, and cook and stir until garlic is fragrant and onions have caramelized, about 3 more minutes.
6. Evenly spoon onions over meatloaves and top with cheese. Bake until melted, about 3 minutes.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Well-Child Visits – Infants to Teens

Even when your child is healthy, check-ups are important. They will help to keep your child healthy. During check-ups you can discuss any concerns that you have. Your child's doctor will review your child's routine health, growth, and progress and will give your child needed health services, such as:

- Health visits (head to toe physicals)
- Vision, hearing and Tuberculosis (TB) skin testing and lab services
- Shots
- Tracking your child's growth
- Sending your child to other doctors, if needed

If you are new to PHC, it is very important for your child to see a doctor soon. This is a time to get to know each other and review your child's health status.

For infants, many well-child visits during the first and second years of life should happen. Children and teens should get a well visit once a year. With the help of on-going well-child visits, your child's doctor can often find and address health problems before they become worse.

Make your child's appointments in advance. Write down questions you want to ask and talk about. A well-child visit is the time to ask and get facts about:

- Health and safety
- Nutrition and diet
- Physical fitness and general health care
- Sleep habits
- How well your child is growing
- Problems such as learning or concerns about teen years

A visit when your child is sick, focuses on a problem and the doctor will not have enough time to do a full exam and cover all important preventive health and education topics. To get your doctor's full attention, your child will need a well-child visit. Please make your child's appointment right away. ❖

Why Does My Child Need Vaccinations?

Parents want their children to be healthy. Vaccines, or shots, are an important part of keeping your children healthy. But many parents have questions about vaccines, like how they work and are they safe. Let's look at some questions parents may have about vaccines.

- Some children have reactions to shots, so are they safe? Shots are tested many years before they are ready to be used on people. All the testing is to make sure the shots will work and will be safe for most people. Some children may feel pain or have redness and swelling from the shot. Sometimes a child will have a mild fever, but bad reactions to shots are very rare. If you are worried about a reaction your child has after getting shots, you should call your child's doctor or the PHC Advice Nurse at (866) 778-8873.
- If childhood diseases are not common like they were 20 or 30 years ago, why do children still need shots? Some diseases like polio and diphtheria are not as common now, but could quickly show up again without shots. Other diseases like measles, whooping cough and chicken pox are still common and

cause many children to get sick each year. Some diseases can cause lasting problems and even death. While a few children who get their shots do get sick from these diseases, most children who do get sick did not get their shots.

- How do vaccines work? Vaccines work the same way that our immune system does. It builds protection against diseases. A vaccine acts like the disease in the body but does not cause the disease. The immune system makes antibodies for the disease so that it is ready to fight the disease if your child comes in contact with the disease. It works like the offensive line that protects the quarterback in a football game.
- Why does my child need so many doses for some vaccines? To build up the protection against some diseases the vaccine needs to be given in more doses over a period of time. Some vaccines are also given as boosters throughout life to keep up defenses against diseases.

Your child's doctor is your partner in keeping your child healthy. They are ready to answer all your questions and concerns about vaccines. If your child has not had a well-child checkup this year, call today for an appointment. Ask which vaccines your child may need. ❖



Protect Your Child from Lead Poisoning

Lead is a very toxic metal especially for young children. It can affect nearly every system in their bodies. Small amounts can cause learning disabilities and major health problems. High levels can cause harm to their brain and even death.

Tips to Protect Your Children from Lead Poisoning

- Tell your doctor if your child lives in, or spends a lot of time in a place built before 1978 that has peeling or chipped paint or that has been remodeled lately.
- Tell your doctor if you have recently immigrated or adopted a child from a country with high levels of environmental lead, such as: Egypt, China, India, Thailand, Mexico and Peru.
- Do not allow your children to put car keys into their mouths.
- If anyone in your house works where lead dust could get on their clothes be sure that the person changes clothes, before hugging your child.
- Keep your children away from peeling paint.
- Be careful when using items from other countries such as clay pots and dishes.
- Some candies, spices, health remedies and cosmetics made outside of the United States can have lead.
- Candies that has tamarind, chili powder, or salt that are from mines in certain parts of the world, may have high lead levels. Be alert. A high level of lead was found in a jar of La Tia Mana skin cream.
- Wash toys, pacifiers, and window sills often.
- Wash your children's hands before eating.

If You are Pregnant

- Do not use imported spices, snack foods, health remedies, cosmetics or clay pots.
- Never eat non-food items such as clay, pottery, soil, or paint chips.
- Get a blood test if you think you may have been exposed to lead. Your unborn baby will have the same lead level as yours.
- Children born to mothers with lead poisoning may have learning and behavioral problems.

Lead has been removed from many household products and supplies in recent years. Still, it is a good plan to get a simple blood test at your doctor's office that can detect lead poisoning. It is recommended that children ages 12 months and 24 months get screened for lead. If testing is not done at these ages, then your child should be screened up to 6 years old. Sometimes older children can be tested as well. If lead is found in the blood, the doctor might do a second test. Other members in your home might need to be tested too.

It is vital to know that high levels of lead need urgent medical treatment. Lead poisoning doesn't end there. You will need to find the source of the lead and get rid of it. Your doctor can help with this.

To learn more, call the National Lead Information Center at **(800) 424-5323**. Also, lead detection kits may be available at your local hardware store. ❖

Source: State of California Department of Public Health

Early Interventions for Developmental Delays in Children Age 0 to 3

I am worried about my child's development. What can I do? If you are worried about your child's development, start by talking to your child's doctor. The doctor can screen for developmental delays or disabilities. If your child is diagnosed with a developmental delay or disability, he or she may qualify for support and services. These services are offered through your local Regional Center. There is no cost to you. Early intervention for children less than 3 years old includes:

- Speech Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Feeding Therapy
- Parent Support
- Skills Training
- Case Management

If you think your child needs these services, call your local Regional Center:

- Yolo County: Alta California Regional Center **(916) 978-6400**
- Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Trinity Counties: Far Northern Regional Center **(530) 222-4791**
- Marin County: Golden Gate Regional Center **(415) 546-9222**
- Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Lake Counties: Redwood Coast Regional Center **(707) 445-0893**
- Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties: NorthBay Regional Center **(707) 256-1100**

What is Behavioral Health Therapy (BHT)?

BHT is care that is intended to help children with developmentally inappropriate behaviors. It involves a therapist working closely with you and your child to address your child's unique behavior needs such as communication, self-injurious behaviors, etc. as well as parental training to improve your child's behavior(s) in specific areas. ❖

When Your Child "Outgrows" their Pediatrician

Children outgrow more than toys and clothes as they get older. As they reach adulthood, their health care is best handled by a Primary Care Provider (PCP) who sees adults. Pediatricians care for children. Family Practice providers see both children and adults. Some Pediatricians stop seeing a child upon his or her eighteenth (18th) birthday. Other Pediatricians are able to care for patients until they turn twenty-one (21).

Below are some Frequently Asked Questions and Answers to help you and your child with this transition.

What should I do if my child is about to turn eighteen (18)?

Speak with your child's Pediatrician about when it is best to change to a provider who sees adults.

How can I change my child's Pediatrician to a provider who sees adults?

If your child has not yet turned eighteen (18), you can call us to make the change. If your child is already eighteen (18), they will need to call us unless they add you as an Authorized Representative on their member record in our system. An Authorized Representative can speak with us for the member. Please call us at **(800) 863-4155**. We are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. TTY users can call the California Relay Service at (800) 735-2929 or call 711.

What if I have more questions about my child's care?

Call your Pediatrician's office for any questions or concerns you have about your child's care. They can help guide you to the next step in your child's health care as an adult. ❖





Smoking

Smoking is the largest preventable cause of illness and early death. It doesn't matter how old you are or how long you've smoked, it is important to quit. Quitting smoking reduces your risk of lung cancer, heart disease, stroke and lung disease. The health benefits start as soon as you quit smoking.

- **After 20 minutes** your blood pressure starts to decrease
- **After 24 hours** your chance of having a heart attack is less
- **After 1 year** your risk of heart disease is decreased
- **After 5 to 15 years** your risk of stroke is reduced

There are many ways to quit smoking. You may even have to try different ways before you succeed, but don't get discouraged. The important thing is that you quit. Keep in mind that it's never too late – especially if you're living with a chronic disease.

TIPS TO HELP YOU QUIT:

- Admit the problem to yourself and those around you.
- Keep track of when and why you smoke.
- Set a quit date.
- Limit the time you spend with people who smoke.
- Write down the list of reasons to quit smoking. Keep the list with you to remind yourself of the reasons you want to quit.
- Talk to your doctor about treatment options.
- Call 1-800-No-Butts for more tips and help with quitting.

To learn more about tobacco and classes, visit our website at www.partnershiphp.org. ❖

PHC Member Services (800) 863-4155

If you have problems or questions about your medical care, you should call us. We are available to help you Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm. We can help you with issues such as:

- General information about medical benefits
- Selecting or changing your doctor or medical group
- Requesting a new PHC ID card
- Problems with medical bills
- Problems or complaints about your medical care
- Problems getting appointments
- Problems getting your prescriptions filled
- Interpreting services

Lab Services

PHC and some PHC medical provider's contract with specific lab vendors for lab services. When your doctor refers you for lab work, make sure you ask your doctor which lab you should use. If your doctor doesn't know, you can always call us at **(800) 863-4155**. ❖

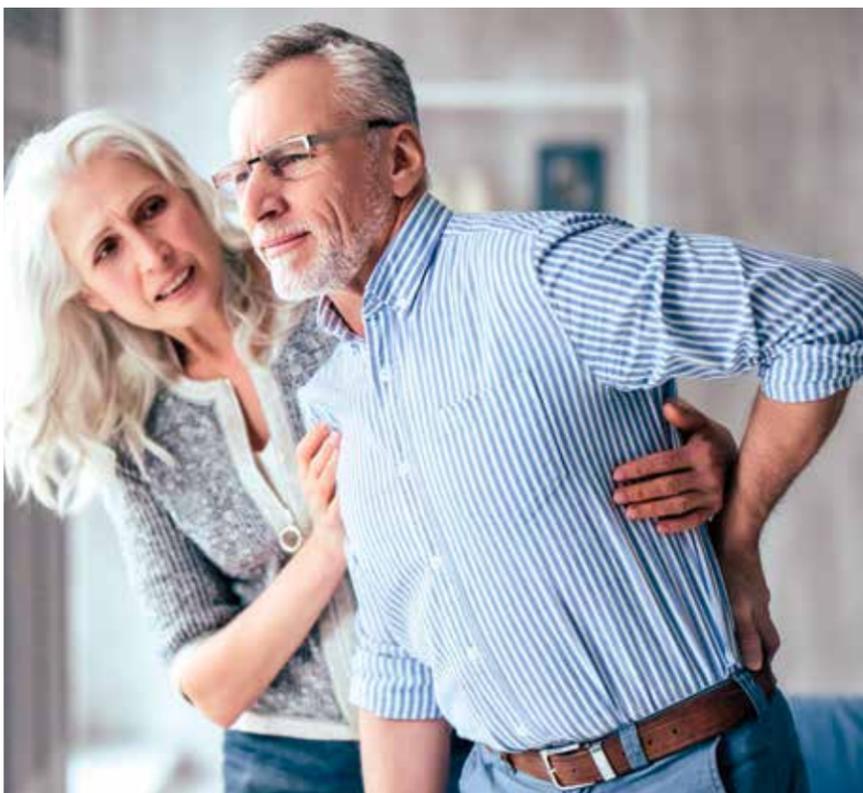
Do you know PHC offers Interpreter Services?

Yes we do. We offer real time interpreting services when calling into Member Services Department. You will be offered the option to select non-English language services each time you call us. If you need an interpreter for your health appointments, one can be made available for you. Just ask your doctor. We also offer face-to-face interpreting services. **It must be approved by PHC in advance.** You do not need children, friends or family members to interpret for you. There is no cost to you or your doctor.

PHC translates all written materials in fifteen threshold languages. If your language needs have not been met, you have the right to file a complaint or an appeal. You can also go to the section on PHC's website titled "File a Member Complaint, Appeal or Hearing information." Call us at **(800) 863-4155** for more information. ❖

You are Important to Us. Treating Your Pain Safely Matters.

Did you know doctors are being more concerned about the problems pain pills can cause? We want your pain to be reduced. We do not want the treatment of your pain to make you sick.



- We work with your doctor to make sure the amount of pain pills you take is safe. We follow federal guides for the amount of pain pills your doctor can give you without a Treatment Authorization Request (TAR). If you are worried about the amount of pills you are taking or have questions about this, please talk with your doctor.
- If you are taking pain pills for some kind of long-term pain problem, your doctor may work with you to slowly reduce your dose. Please understand your doctor is doing this to keep you safe.
- Talk with your doctor now. Make a plan to stop using pain pills once they are no longer needed.

Facts you should know when starting pain medications:

- If you take more than one pain pill a month, you raise the risk of needing pain pills during your life. If you are given a pain pill for the first time because of an injury or surgery, your doctor will want you to stop taking the pain pills in the shortest time possible.
- After only one to two months, pain pills usually stop helping. In some cases it makes you feel more pain.
- Pain pills do not mix well with other medicines.

If you take strong pain medicines and have questions, please talk with your doctor. ❖

New Changes for the CCS Program

The California Children Services (CCS) is a state program for children with certain health problems. Children up to 21 years old can get the health care and services they need through this program. Each county's CCS program varies greatly by geography, size and funding.

The California Department of Health Care Services plans to make CCS services a Medi-Cal Manage Care Plan benefit. This approach is known as the Whole Child Model (WCM).

Under this new model, PHC will manage the care provided to CCS children. The CCS program is not going away. This model will now allow CCS children to get care through one system. This model will make it easier for CCS children to get the care they need and will result in better health outcomes. This change will happen no sooner than January 1, 2019.

PHC will arrange and approve all care for CCS children. Children will have the same covered benefits, which include:

- Primary care
- Pharmacy
- Specialty care
- Ancillary and other services

These services must be medically necessary and prescribed by the child's treating doctor.

Please call us at **(800) 863-4155** if you have additional questions. ❖

Your Member Portal is Here!

What is a Member Portal? It is a tool that can help you manage your health care. Working with our Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC), we designed the Member Portal to be easy to use. And you can use it anytime of the day or night.

What can I do on the Member Portal? The portal has many features to meet your needs. Some of the features are:

- Change your Primary Care Provider (PCP)
- Order a new or temporary Member ID card
- Look at your eligibility
- Change your contact information

How can I get on the Member Portal? The Member Portal is on our website at www.partnershiphp.org. You will need to register to begin using all the great features.

Register today and take advantage of your Member Portal. ❖

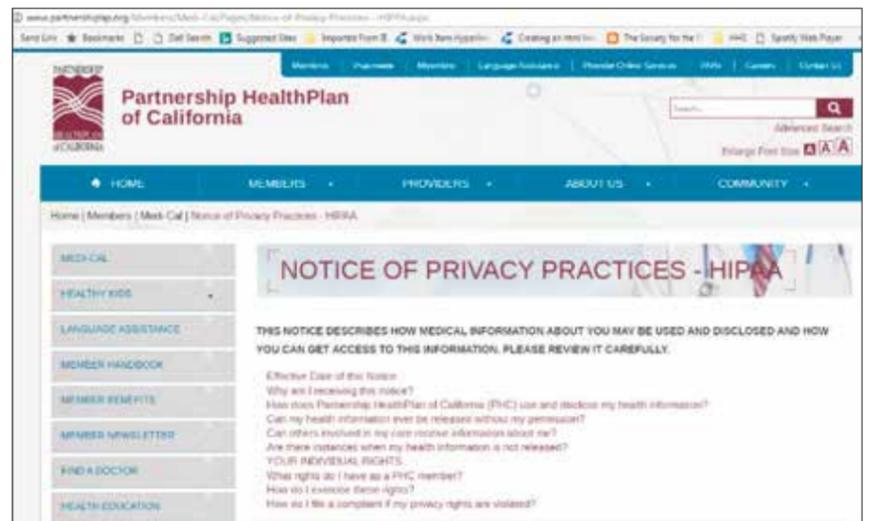
Some PHC Meetings are Open to the Public

We have monthly and bi-monthly meetings with our Board Members, staff, contracted providers and members like you. Some of these meetings are open to the public. If you would like to attend one of these meetings, call us at **(800) 863-4155** for information about meeting times and locations. ❖

PHC Member Handbook

Your Member Handbook is a great source of information. It explains the services and benefits that are available to you as a member. It also has information about your rights and responsibilities. It gives details on how to file complaints and appeals, how to request a second opinion and much more useful information.

All new members receive a copy of the Member Handbook when they are first enrolled with us. If you would like another handbook, call us at **(800) 863-4155** or visit our website at www.partnershiphp.org. ❖



Protecting Your Health Information

Earlier this year, we sent letters to members about the Health Information Exchange (HIE). In the letter, we asked you to sign and return it to let us know if your information can be shared.

Recent news about people stealing personal information may make you worry about how your health information is shared. You may worry if it is safe.

There is a law that deals with how we must keep your information safe. It is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

HIPAA lets you decide who can get or see your health information. The law covers health information in letters, sent by email, or in computer files.

Why We Share Information

We share information so that we do not miss important details about your medical history. We need doctors to share information to make sure you get the right care. This sharing is the HIE. It limits the chances of making mistakes in your care or hurting you with drugs you cannot take.

The information is shared with your doctors and the health insurance plans that pay for your care. Since the state and federal government pay for Medi-Cal, it is shared with them.

How Health Information is Shared

The rules about sharing health information differ. Health information that is nonsensitive can be shared between doctors who take care of the same person. Nonsensitive information are things like notes from doctors and nurses, lab test results, and X-rays.

Sensitive health information has a higher level of protection. Sensitive health information are things about mental health, birth control for teens, and substance abuse. Mental health care notes are not shared with health plans. Drug treatment plans are not shared with other doctors. Sensitive health information can only be shared with your permission.

How You Can Learn More

You can learn more on our website. Look for **Notice of Privacy Practices** on the Members section of our website at www.partnershiphp.org.

If you have any questions about the letter, or if you need a new copy, please call us **(800) 863-4155**. ❖

Do You Have Other Health Coverage?

Call us at **(800) 863-4155** for any changes to your private health insurance plan through your work, private pay or Senior Advantage health plan. Changes that are not reported could cause a delay when filling prescriptions or seeing your doctor. ❖