

healthy communities

FALLON COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN'S QUARTERLY HEALTH GUIDE



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ask our experts



Q: I've heard a lot about glucosamine and chondroitin supplements to relieve osteoarthritis pain. Some of my friends swear by them. Do they work?

A: They just might. Scientific evidence shows that glucosamine and chondroitin supplements can reduce arthritis pain under certain circumstances. The Arthritis Foundation and many doctors say patients should consider using them.

But first, some cautions. Glucosamine and chondroitin are not as well-studied as prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Most studies have looked at using the supplements to reduce osteoarthritis (OA) pain *in the knees only*. And because the studies focus on osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis, we don't know if these supplements are helpful in rheumatoid arthritis or other kinds. We also don't know the best dosage and length of time to take these supplements. More studies are needed to answer these questions.

Two recent studies showed some benefits. One showed that people with moderate to severe knee pain from OA—but not mild pain—had less pain after taking both supplements for 24 weeks. The other showed that glucosamine alone was better than acetaminophen (Tylenol®) in reducing knee pain from OA. Previous studies suggest that chondroitin alone may also reduce pain, and that glucosamine may even slow the progression of OA in the knees.

Ask your doctor about these supplements. They may cause nausea, which will likely go away if you reduce your dose. And, people with diabetes need to work more closely with their doctors because glucosamine may raise blood sugars.

—Eileen Winston, M.D., MetroWest Rheumatology, MetroWest Medical Center ■



Q: Sometimes I can't sleep because my legs feel creepy-crawly. I then need to get up and walk around to make my legs feel better. My wife says it sounds like restless leg syndrome. Could you tell me more?

A: Restless leg syndrome, or RLS, has distinctive symptoms—tingly, jittery or creepy-crawly sensations in the legs—that many people find hard to describe. The sensations come with a strong urge to move the legs—that's the "restless" part. Doing so usually calms the symptoms.

RLS is more likely to appear in people over 50, but can affect anyone. About 10% to 15% of Americans have it, but most of them are undiagnosed and untreated.

The symptoms are generally worse in the evening. They commonly occur when one is in bed, trying to sleep—making RLS

a leading cause of sleep loss. However, symptoms can happen after any period of inactivity, such as sitting on a plane or at a desk. The symptoms may come and go, but tend to get worse over time, and can range from bothersome to nearly disabling.

In addition, many people with RLS also flex and extend their legs while sleeping. These movements can make it even harder for you—and your wife—to get restful sleep. Your doctor may recommend seeing a sleep specialist for an exam, especially if you are sleepy during the day.

The cause of RLS is still unknown, but it may be related to low levels of iron and the brain chemical dopamine. It doesn't lead to other health problems, but sometimes an underlying health issue can contribute to it. Kidney failure, iron deficiency or nerve damage from alcoholism or diabetes can all cause RLS. Some prescription medications, as well as caffeine, alcohol and tobacco, can worsen RLS.

Besides walking around, you can alleviate RLS symptoms by taking a bath, using hot or cold packs, or massaging the legs. Reducing or eliminating the use of caffeine, alcohol and tobacco can help, as can exercising during the day. If these tips aren't sufficient, there are also several different types of medications that can be used. You may have to work with your doctor to find the best drug or drug combination for you. He or she may also adjust or change medicines you already take.

—Stephen Buchanan, M.D., family practice, Nashoba Valley Medical Center ■

do you have a health-related question?

Write to us at:
Fallon Community Health Plan
Ask Our Experts
Marketing Communications Department
10 Chestnut St., Worcester, MA 01608

health care history in the making

This promises to be a memorable year for Massachusetts. Our state has become the first in the nation to implement legislation to provide nearly universal health care coverage for its citizens. The "historic" health care reform bill has caught the attention of the entire nation. And no wonder. Its goal is to have 90% to 95% of Massachusetts residents who are now without health care insurance covered by mid 2007. This will be accomplished by introducing more-affordable products, expanding eligibility for MassHealth and expanding health care coverage for dependents.



With Fallon Community Health Plan's mission of *making our communities healthy*, it is easy for us to support the ideals of the law. Overall, the state's health care initiative encourages—and supports—you to be responsible for securing health care insurance. It also continues to build in a safety net for individuals who need assistance to do so. The approach reinforces FCHP's position that consumers like you need better information about physician and hospital costs and performance in order to make informed personal decisions about their care.

As the law becomes reality, Fallon Community Health Plan is developing a variety of affordable, high-quality health plan options. For example, we will be able to offer specially designed, lower-cost plans for young adults ages 19 to 26. We'll also have plans available that allow individuals and businesses to buy health insurance with pre-tax dollars. And, we expect to be in a unique position to offer comprehensive plans for people who qualify to have a portion of their premium paid by the Commonwealth.

As with any reform of this magnitude, there will be many details to work out—and quickly—that will require real collaboration among government, businesses, health care providers and individuals. FCHP will work closely with everyone involved to put the words on paper into action. Will it be a challenge? Undoubtedly. But we're ready to roll up our sleeves and make history.

Eric H. Schultz

Eric H. Schultz
President and CEO
Fallon Community Health Plan

Fallon Community Health Plan's quarterly health guide for members is produced by the health plan's Marketing Communications Department. The content of this magazine has been reviewed by our physicians and administrators. This publication does not advance any particular medical treatment, nor does it endorse the management of medical problems without the advice and care of health care professionals. We are not responsible for the content of Web sites referenced in this publication. Please note that some of the articles included in this magazine may describe services and/or procedures that are not covered benefits. Also, benefits described may vary by employer and plan.

For clarification of your covered benefits, please contact Fallon Community Health Plan's Customer Service Department at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), or contactcustomerservice@fchp.org.

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cuddles and courage

helping your child through a hospital stay



On the June day in 2001 that FCHP member Mary Jones gave birth to her daughter Molly, she knew something was wrong. Last March, Brianna Thibeault's mom and grandmother experienced the same devastating emotions when they learned that Brianna had a critical complication at birth.

Like all parents with little ones, both Molly's and Brianna's parents were overjoyed to have their new children. Unfortunately, the excitement was mixed with concern over how to handle the unexpected health conditions and hospitalizations of their newborns.

Molly and Brianna are just two of the 6 million children who are hospitalized in America every year. Although many are hospitalized for flu-like symptoms or minor procedures, the reason doesn't seem to matter. All that does matter to parents is getting their child—and themselves—through the illness and hospital stay.

actions and reactions

When doctors first examined newborn Molly Jones, they found that she had bilateral clubbed feet (the feet are abnormally twisted) and told her parents that Molly needed to see a specialist right away. "For the first six months, they put casts on her from toe to mid-leg, and then after her first surgery, she was in a cast, from toe to hip, for six weeks," recalls Mary, her mother. Molly also will require additional surgeries to correct this condition over the next several years.

Little Molly, now nearly 5 years old, also has dyspraxia, which is a lifelong disorder affecting the development of her motor skills. The condition requires that she attend speech, physical and

continued on page 6

occupational therapy several times a week to better develop her skills.

Brianna Thibeault's experience began just as early in her life. Only 30 hours after her birth, Brianna's doctors discovered a congenital heart defect called hypoplastic left-heart syndrome. The left side of Brianna's heart had failed to develop. Quickly, she was undergoing the first of three lifesaving surgeries.

"You're worried about the baby having 10 fingers and 10 toes, so to find out that Brianna has this defect

"To avoid misconceptions, explain what's going to happen to them and why, in terms that they can understand. If they need to have a procedure done, be honest if something is going to hurt. Let them know how long the procedure will last and give them ideas on how to cope, such as counting or blowing away the pain during a blood draw."

was shocking," admitted grandmother Anne Marie Perham, an FCHP member. "You think that older people who don't eat well or exercise have heart problems, but not newborns," she added while watching now-1-year-old Brianna practice standing up.

seek support

Having a strong support system is how the Jones and Perham families got through the tough times. For Mary

Jones, having a friend who is a nurse helped when it came to talking to doctors. "She goes to the hospital with us to ask the doctor questions that we might not even think to ask," says Mary. She is also actively involved in the Family Ties of New England Parent to Parent Line, where she connects with other families who are going through similar experiences.

For Anne Marie Perham and her daughter Kristina, Brianna's mom, support was close at hand from others they met and befriended at the hospital. "There were other parents in the waiting room who were going through the same thing, and it made us realize that we weren't alone in this," Anne Marie explains.

Molly's parents also found support through the FCHP Care Services Department. Bonnie Marrone, R.N., an FCHP nurse care specialist, gave them the information and resources they needed to get things done and make sure Molly had the best care.

what if it's your child?

Spending time in a hospital may be like second nature for both girls, but for children who are not familiar with hospitals, the experience can be frightening and stressful. Rob Wing, M.A., C.C.L.S., director of Child Life Services at the UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center, says it's important for parents to communicate honestly and openly with their child.

"Kids have very creative imaginations, so it's important to prepare them for what they're going to see and experience," he advises. "To avoid misconceptions, explain what's going to happen to them and why, in terms that they can understand. If they need to have a procedure done, be honest if something is going to hurt. Let them know how long the procedure will last and give them ideas on how to cope, such as counting or blowing away the pain during a blood draw."



Brianna Thibeault and her mother, Kristina Perham, are all smiles while Brianna's favorite songs from The Wiggles® can be heard throughout their home in Millbury.

For older children, Rob reminds parents to actively involve their kids in their own medical care by encouraging them to ask questions. "It gives children more control by asking their doctor the questions that are on their minds," says Rob. And, even making simple decisions—like which arm to have blood taken from—is a great way to give your child control over his or her situation, too. Just remember that being honest with your child, making eye contact and providing simple explanations can go a long way!

Although it's hard to believe, sometimes children think their visit to the hospital is punishment for being bad. This is certainly not true, so remember to reassure your child that he or she is not being punished and that you'll be there every step of the way.

And, being there for your child while he or she is having a test or procedure is a decision that is not to be taken lightly. "Parents need to be honest with themselves about whether they can handle being with their child during a procedure," Rob says with caution. "If you're anxious, your child will pick up on it, which only makes things worse. Just know that once it's over, you'll be

there afterwards to comfort your child, and that's just as important, too."

pretend it's like home

Before leaving for the hospital or even for doctor office visits, both Molly and Brianna's families pack items to remind the children of home. Doing so, Rob Wing notes, is important for any child, no matter how old they are or how long they will be at the hospital. Since Brianna is a baby, Anne Marie said that bringing a pacifier was most helpful, as well as Brianna's favorite The Wiggles® book.

During one of Molly's hospital stays, she was given a stuffed animal that resembled her golden retriever. "Molly brought the dog to the hospital and everything that Molly did, the dog did, too, like having a patient ID bracelet," says Mary.

For older children, consider adding a bathrobe, slippers and a blanket. If you're planning on staying at the hospital with your child, don't forget a change of clothes for yourself, a good book and toiletries that you use every day.

Based on years of experience in the field, Rob mentions that it's also a good idea to follow your child's daily routine as closely as possible, like brushing his or her teeth and reading a book with Mom or Dad before bed. "Hospitals can often be time warps that can make hours and days go by without notice," he says. "Since children are creatures of habit, parents should really try to make their child's routine as normal as they possibly can."

be an advocate

After all the preparations have been made—from putting together a support system to packing up favorite belongings—a parent's role during a child's hospital stay is just beginning. As Anne Marie and Mary have learned, the best advice they can give to parents of a sick child is to be your son or daughter's advocate.

Mary emphasizes, "Don't be the parent who's afraid to ask questions." Anne Marie adds, "It's important to never stop learning. Always make sure you're checking out every resource that's available for your child or grandchild so you can get the best services."

And, just like Mary did, call Fallon Community Health Plan to ask for help in navigating the health care system. "We've been fortunate enough to have FCHP there when we needed them." Mom smiles wider as she catches Molly, once again, showing off her prized new sneakers. ■

learn more

Curious about Molly and Brianna's conditions? To learn more or to find out how you can support research for dyspraxia or hypoplastic left-heart syndrome, visit www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk and www.americanheart.org, respectively.

a parent's checklist

- Ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask anyone for anything, and be your child's advocate.
- Make sure that anyone caring for your child has proper hospital identification. Learn the names of the doctors and the nurses who are treating your child and the shifts they work.
- Ask about visiting hours for friends and family if you don't see them posted in your child's room. And, when your child has visitors, don't forget to be courteous to other patients if your child is sharing a room.
- Staying overnight with your child is a personal decision. If you want to stay with your child, let your nurse know and find out if a cot or chair will be provided.
- Learn about any food restrictions or diets your child might have. Ask why these restrictions have been ordered.
- Find out if the hospital has a playroom for children. If it does, ask if your child can visit. Sometimes a child may not be able to go to the playroom due to the nature of the illness, so ask if you can bring a toy, game or book to your child's room.
- Ask a nurse how to use the telephone and what, if any, fees apply to usage. Bring a pre-paid calling card with you for any long-distance telephone calls.
- Get copies of medical records, X-rays and other tests. If your child has surgery, ask for a copy of any surgical notes, as they may be helpful to you in the future.
- Keep a notebook or journal, especially if your child is in the hospital for a longer time or may have repeat visits. This will help you keep track of vital information in one place, measure any progress and safely express emotions.
- If your child is in school, contact his or her school and teachers, and let them know what's going on. Ask the school about tutoring for longer absences. ■



does your child have a “do-not-eat” list?

Food allergies are on the rise, and no one's sure why. Peanut allergy, for instance, doubled between 1997 and 2002. True food allergy, however, still isn't as common as the headlines imply. Although about 5% of American children have food allergies, many more actually have a less-serious kind of food reaction called food intolerance. What's the difference?

Food intolerance is a broad term describing many different reactions with various causes. These reactions can seem like allergies, but they aren't caused by the immune system, like true allergies.

Lactose intolerance, for example, is caused by not having enough of—or missing—a digestive enzyme. It leads to cramps, gas and diarrhea when dairy products are eaten. Food additives can also be culprits; MSG can sometimes cause headaches, flushing, sweating and other symptoms, while sulfites can aggravate asthma. Food poisoning—being sickened by bacterial toxins—is another kind of food intolerance.

A child with an intolerance may only react once to a particular food, or react only occasionally. He or she may even be able to eat small amounts of it without reacting at all. However, reactions that worsen each time the food is eaten or that are triggered by minute traces of the food are more likely to be true food allergies.

Allergic reactions occur when the immune system mistakenly attacks harmless food proteins and releases a number of chemicals, including histamine. These chemicals cause symptoms that can appear immediately or up to two hours after eating or even touching the food. Dairy products, peanuts, tree nuts, seafood, wheat and soy cause 90% of all



allergic food reactions.

Allergic food reactions range from mild to extreme. Mild reactions often cause runny nose, sneezing, itchy rash or tingling of the lips. Stronger reactions may include wheezing, dizziness and vomiting. However, an extreme, sudden, life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis can occur, causing shock and severe swelling of the throat—making it very difficult to breathe. It requires immediate medical attention.

The main treatment for both food allergy and intolerance is to have your child avoid foods that cause reactions. But, since kids can outgrow some milder reactions, you don't want to restrict your child's diet unnecessarily. Ask your child's doctor about whether a “food challenge”—trying a food again to see if your child still reacts—is worth exploring.

For more information, go to the Healthwise® Knowledgebase via www.fchp.org, and type “food allergies” in the search box. And be sure to contact your pediatrician if you're concerned about any food reactions your child is having.

—Lynda Young, M.D., Chandler Pediatrics, UMass Memorial Health Care, University Campus ■

negotiate a teen driving contract

Many of us have felt our nerves jangle as we've watched our teenager drive off to school, the big game or the latest social event. And with good reason!

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers. That takes an enormous emotional toll. And, every year, Americans spend billions of dollars to treat injuries sustained in teen crashes, which impacts the overall costs of health care.

Most accidents in this age group are the result of reckless driving, speeding and/or alcohol abuse. And teens are reluctant to wear seat belts. (According to the latest available data, out of a total of 49 teens killed in motor vehicle accidents in Massachusetts in 2002, only six were definitely wearing seat belts.)

What's a parent to do? Here's a popular idea you can try with your child. Consider drawing up a driving contract with your son or daughter that establishes mutual understanding and agreement—and has consequences if broken. Among other points, the contract should discuss curfews and geographic boundaries, no drinking or drug use, obeying traffic laws, wearing seat belts and passenger limitations.

Sample contracts may be found at these and other Web sites:

- www.kidscontracts.com/drive.html
- www.parentingteendrivers.com
- www.teendriving.com/drivingcontract2.htm. ■

fchp update



our community outreach

At Fallon Community Health Plan, our mission is *making our communities healthy*. That's why we promote a variety of activities and programs for caring, sharing and helping one another.

Be sure to look for our upcoming fun events:

- Once again, FCHP is the presenting sponsor of Worcester's **Independence Day Celebration** on Monday, July 3 (rain date July 5) at Cristoforo Colombo Park (also known as East Park). In addition to many kids' activities and the rousing music of the Worcester Symphony Orchestra, residents will be treated to a spectacular fireworks display. It'll be another memorable party.
- Watch for details about our annual *Movies in the Park* series held in Worcester during August. We'll be featuring:
 - **Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope**
 - **Madagascar** (an animated comedy about Central Park Zoo animals who escape and end up on the exotic island of Madagascar)
 - **Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban**
- On September 25, Fallon Community Health Plan will host its first **Golf FORE a Goal** tournament at Worcester Country Club. The event will benefit Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Massachusetts. If you or your business would like to be a sponsor, please call Sandy Wreschinsky at 508-368-9591. ■



taking care of you every day

Have you heard about FCHP's *Every Day Health* program? We've put the tools and resources you need at your fingertips, whether you want to reinforce your healthy lifestyle or just need extra support. Read about some of our *Every Day Health* programs below. For more information, visit www.fchp.org or call our Customer Service Department at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

- **Nurse Connect** gives FCHP members free, around-the-clock access to health coaches by phone and online. Call Nurse Connect at 800-609-6175 to talk with a nurse or other health care professional who can respond to medical questions, provide education and support, guide you with questions to ask your doctor and more. And for additional resources, you can log in to Nurse Connect's Dialog CenterSM, through the "My FCHP" section of our Web site.
- **It Fits!** reimburses families up to \$200 for membership at a fitness center or in Weight Watchers[®], or for aerobics,

Pilates and yoga classes taught by certified instructors. Now sports programs and lessons for all ages are reimbursable, too!

- **The SilverSneakers[®] Fitness Program** helps thousands of our Fallon Senior Plan[™] members maintain their fitness.
- If you're having a baby, check out **Oh Baby!**, which gives participants prenatal vitamins, a child care book, a convertible car seat and more—all at no additional cost.
- Our **Tobacco Treatment Program** helps members develop a stop-smoking plan that's right for them and gives them the tools they need to succeed. Group sessions are free (you don't have to be an FCHP member to join us), and patches are sold at a greatly discounted rate. Phone counseling is an option for those who cannot attend our group sessions. Call us at 508-368-9540 or 888-807-2908 to find out more.
- Our **Naturally Well** program offers discounts on acupuncture, chiropractic care and massage therapy from participating providers, and Healthyroads.com is a portal to complementary health information and interactive programs, as well as discounted products.
- **Healthwise[®] Knowledgebase**—one of the nation's leading online health resources, including prescription drug information—is accessed free by clicking on the link on our home page, www.fchp.org.

Benefits and features may vary by employer and plan. Weight Watchers[®] is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers, International, Inc. SilverSneakers[®] is a registered trademark of HealthCare Dimensions Incorporated. ■

do you have fallon preferred care?

Fallon Preferred Care* is our PPO product, short for “preferred provider organization.” If you are a member of one of our Fallon Preferred Care plans, you may receive care from anyone in our PPO network, which is the **Private Healthcare Systems Network**, also known as PHCS. This gives you access to nearly 450,000 providers and over 4,000 health care facilities nationwide. You are not required to designate a primary care physician or obtain referrals.

Providers in this network may be different than those in other Fallon Community Health Plan networks. So, when you see a provider, be sure to specify that you are a Fallon Preferred Care member who uses the PHCS Network. You also may choose to see any provider outside of the Private Healthcare Systems Network, but you will pay a higher portion of the cost of services.

All Fallon Preferred Care plan options include copayments, coinsurance and deductibles. Some services require that you first notify us or obtain precertification.

If you are a Fallon Preferred Care member and would like additional information, please call our Fallon Preferred Care customer team at 888-468-1541. Visit www.fchp.org for the most up-to-date *Provider Network* directory. ■

* Fallon Preferred Care may not be offered by all employers.

attention masshealth members

MassHealth once again offers dental coverage for women who are age 21 or older who are pregnant or have children under age 3. This applies to visits to a dentist on or after January 15, 2006. For more information about dental services that will be paid, contact:

- Your dentist
- MassHealth Customer Service at 800-841-2900
- FCHP Customer Service at 800-868-5200 ■

link to information about your care

What should you do in an emergency? How do you find an interpreter? What are your rights and responsibilities as an FCHP member? What should you know about preventive care? For answers to these questions and additional information related to your care, please go to our Web site, www.fchp.org/members/resources/important.aspx. You also can request this information by calling our Customer Service Department at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

You also can get an overview of our Quality Services Program on our Web site at www.fchp.org/about/quality.aspx. This program is a comprehensive approach that Fallon Community Health Plan takes to ensure the quality and safety of clinical care and the quality of service provided to our members. You also may call our Quality and Health Services Department at 508-368-9101 for this information. ■

popular elder program expands to charlton

Summit ElderCareSM is now open to participants at its new Charlton site on the beautiful campus of the Masonic Home.

Summit ElderCare helps frail elders to live independently in a home environment and provides extensive

support for their caregivers. This is the first expansion of the program, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2005. The original facility remains on East Mountain Street in Worcester.

“We have an excellent staff in place at both sites, and believe elders and their caregivers will be impressed with the care we offer,” adds Valerie Mancini, Ed.D., R.N., the Charlton site director. Jeffrey B. Burl, M.D., an experienced clinician in geriatric medicine, is the site physician.

Summit ElderCare, sponsored by FCHP, is an insurance, medical care and social services program in one convenient package. The program includes adult day care, home care, personal care and prescription drugs. Summit ElderCare is a Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)—the only program of its kind in central Massachusetts.

For more information, call 800-698-7566 (TDD/TTY: 800-439-2370) or visit www.summiteldercare.org. ■

we can help with medicare and more

Do you have a parent whom you’re helping to understand Medicare coverage or Fallon Senior Plan™ benefits? Perhaps you’ll soon be eligible for Medicare yourself.

Fallon Community Health Plan can help! See our list of important phone numbers on page 15 in our Seniority section—and give us a call! ■

fchp recognized for behavioral health initiative

Fallon Community Health Plan's case study on enhancing care for older adults was selected for inclusion this May in the National Committee for Quality Assurance's *Quality Profiles™*, the *Leadership Series*. Through these publications, NQQA provides information about programs at leading health plans that can serve as models of clinical and service excellence.

The study was done with Beacon Health Strategies, FCHP's behavioral health partner. It was cited as an excellent example of interventions that successfully address care for Medicare members. These are seen as important measures in the face of statewide decreases in behavioral health programs for Medicare participants, resulting in their increased hospitalization and readmission. ■

fchp sponsors national research conference

FCHP was a major sponsor of the 12th annual HMO Research Network Conference held May 1 to May 3, at the Hyatt Hotel in Cambridge, Mass. Over 200 researchers from the network, which is a consortium of 14 leading U.S. health organizations, were in attendance. The conference was hosted by the Meyers Primary Care Institute.

The conference provides a forum for national researchers who are working to identify new approaches for improving the health of people and their communities.

The Meyers Primary Care Institute seeks to promote primary care medicine by developing and putting into practice innovative programs in research and education. The institute has awarded nearly \$300,000 to fund numerous research projects, and is proud to host this event. ■

important fchp phone numbers

Need to contact us, but aren't sure how? Below is a handy list of important Fallon Community Health Plan phone numbers. Please cut out this list and keep it nearby for easy reference.

FCHP and Fallon Senior Plan™ Customer Service	800-868-5200 TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677
Prospective Fallon Senior Plan™ members	888-377-1980
Fallon Preferred Care Customer Service.	888-468-1541
Customer Service for Commonwealth of Massachusetts members	866-344-4442
Beacon Health Strategies. (behavioral health services)	888-421-8861 TDD/TTY: 781-994-7660
FCHP administrative business lines	508-799-2100 800-333-2535
PharmaCare Direct (pharmacy mail-order)	800-346-9113
Tobacco Treatment Program	508-368-9540 888-807-2908
Summit ElderCare™	800-698-7566 TDD/TTY: 800-439-2370
Nurse Connect	800-609-6175

Note: FCHP is a health insurance organization. We cannot offer medical advice or treatment. If you have a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest medical facility. If your condition is not an emergency, call your doctor's office directly. You will not be able to reach your doctor through us. ■

student recertification simplified

Do you have a son or daughter who has reached age 19 and is going to school full time? Fallon Community Health Plan provides health insurance coverage for unmarried dependents who are enrolled as full-time students at accredited institutions. Once a year, FCHP certifies that a dependent is still eligible as a student for medical coverage. We recently simplified this recertification process.

- You no longer need to send the student recertification form to the college's registrar for a seal or signature. You, as the FCHP subscriber, now complete the form. (When you receive the recertification form, please return it promptly to ensure ongoing medical coverage.)

- We have moved the recertification process from January to August to be more in line with the school year.

Please remember that it is your responsibility to notify us any time there is a change in your dependent's student status, including dropping to less than a full-time course load, withdrawing from school or graduating.

Eligibility for student dependents varies by employer group. Some employers have their own student certification process that will not change. If you have questions regarding student eligibility for coverage, please call FCHP Customer Service at 800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 877-608-7677), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

health, fitness and you!



mind exercise: good for the body and soul

There's a lot to say for the power of silence—especially when it may be good for your health. Lately, more is being said about the benefits of the silent practice of meditation.

"We've seen improvements in health as a 'side effect' of meditation," says Melissa Blacker, M.A., Co-Director of Professional Education and Training at the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester.

Meditation has become more mainstream with many research studies showing its positive effects on the health



of the mind and body. Research done through UMass Medical School has shown significant positive results for meditation, including reduced symptoms for many

types of chronic pain conditions, anxiety and depression, psoriasis and cancer—improving quality of life.

There are many different forms of meditation, but most practices are performed in a quiet location with attention focused on either an image, a sound or one's breath. Mindfulness meditation, the form of meditation that the UMass center teaches, is the practice of "paying attention to what's happening right now—in the mind, in the body and in our environment—without passing judgment," says Melissa.

Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways, including lying down, sitting in a chair, walking and through gentle yoga.

The center has seen amazing results with its participants. "When people practice mindfulness, their perspectives on life change. They learn to recognize what's in their control and what's not, and how to respond to situations in less of a 'fight or flight' response," says Melissa.

Thinking of giving it a try? Decide what type of meditation might best suit you. Start slowly—perhaps five minutes before bedtime—and make it a daily habit. Seek out a teacher or group to learn from. And, don't worry if you have trouble easing your mind. Our minds are naturally active. In meditation, imagine your thoughts like monkeys, swinging from branch to branch. As long as you aren't settling on any one thought, you are meditating. ■

check your asthma daily

Asthma is increasingly prevalent, doubling over the past two decades. Government figures show it affects more than 20 million people nationwide and accounts for nearly 5,000 deaths each year.

If you have asthma and use an inhaled medication, you know how important it is to check your condition each day, and to work closely with your doctor.

So, how are you doing? Chances are when your asthma is in control, you enjoy being symptom-free, and you can also be physically active with no asthma symptoms most of the time.

But, if you're wondering whether your asthma is under control, these questions may help:

- Do you need to take your quick-relief inhaler more than two times a week?
- Are you waking up at night with asthma-related problems more than twice a month?
- Do you have to refill your quick-relief inhaler more than two times per year?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, please call your doctor to discuss your asthma plan. It may be time to re-evaluate your treatment.

FCHP's comprehensive care services, part of our *Every Day Health* program for members, also includes an asthma program for adults and children who may need help. Together, with these resources, you can develop a daily asthma self-management plan that works for you! ■

how to find a behavioral health therapist

Beacon Health Strategies, in partnership with Fallon Community Health Plan, can put you in touch with behavioral health specialists who are highly qualified to meet your needs. These specialists may be licensed psychologists, psychiatrists, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, nurses or social workers. They have experience with many types of behavioral health problems and life situations. And you don't need a referral!

how to find one?

There are two ways to find a Beacon therapist:

1. You may visit the Beacon Web site, www.beaconhealthstrategies.com. Click on "Members," then select "FCHP" from the drop-down menu.

Click on "Locate a provider," then "Find a specialist for mental health or substance abuse services." You can follow the instructions from there.

2. You may call Beacon's Member Service Department at 888-421-8861. Tell us you're looking for a behavioral health provider.

help us help you

When you make the call to Beacon, we'll ask you some questions. What towns are convenient to you? Do you prefer to see a male or a female therapist? Are you in need of "talking therapy," or someone to prescribe medication, such as an antidepressant? Are you looking for a provider who has a special focus, such as ADHD, anxiety or postpartum depression? Your answers will help us match you with appropriate specialists in your area.

having trouble?

If you are not able to get an appointment that works for you, **let us know**. Beacon's Aftercare Specialist can help you get an appointment that's a good fit.

the bottom line

Beacon, on behalf of FCHP, works hard to help ensure that there are quality behavioral health specialists that are in-network and near to you. And if you have trouble finding the right provider on your own, Beacon can help! Call Beacon's Member Service Department at 888-421-8861.

—Robin Sawyer, L.I.C.S.W., Beacon Health Strategies ■

adcare and fchp team up for wellness

Getting support is an important part of making healthy lifestyle changes. Just ask Phyllis Leonard.

Phyllis, a Medical Technologist at AdCare Hospital in Worcester, participated in the hospital's onsite Weight Watchers® meetings last year and made some big changes in her life.

"I lost 35 pounds," she says proudly. "And, thanks to my weight loss, I'm only on one of the three hypertension medications that I've been taking for 12 years."

But she says she couldn't have done it without the support of her coworkers who also went through the program.

"My coworkers were so supportive of me and each other as we went through the Weight Watchers program together. Everybody was so willing to help each other out—to exchange recipes and stories, and to give words of encouragement," she says.

"It's great to have Weight Watchers meetings right at the workplace," continues Phyllis. "I knew everyone in the meetings, so I appreciated not having to admit to losing—or gaining—weight each week in front of strangers."

AdCare Hospital, a substance abuse treatment facility in Worcester, was recently recognized by the New England Employee Benefits Council for its worksite wellness program, which was designed with Fallon Community Health Plan. In addition to onsite Weight Watchers meetings, AdCare offered a variety of events, including many types of health screenings (from blood pressure to blood sugar), massages, a "brown-bag lunch" seminar on stress, a facilitated discussion on exercise and pedometers, and even a trip to Six Flags!

FCHP brings health education to the workplace through its *Wellness Works* program, which helps employers to offer on-site classes, seminars and other tools that target the health concerns of their employees.

"It's wonderful for the hospital to offer this program. I think people enjoy it because it gets them away from their desks for a little while and they know they're doing something good for themselves," Phyllis explains. ■



Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc.

seniority



showing your grandkids a great time

In today's world where both parents are working and trying to juggle family activities, it's your opportunity to spend quality time with your grandchildren!

Maybe share some stories about your childhood, and consider showing old family photos. Explain to them with your real-life examples what the world was like without cell phones and the Internet.

Arts and crafts are always fun, so have some crayons, markers, stickers and even Play-Doh® on hand.

Make the time you spend with your grandchild last forever by creating a scrapbook using pictures, tickets and other items that will bring back fond memories as they age.

Teach your grandchildren "old-fashioned" games or hobbies that don't go out of style, such as:

- Jacks or how to shoot marbles
- Making paper boats to float in a pool
- Age-appropriate card games, like Go Fish or Old Maid
- Fishing and how to dig for worms
- Flying a kite

When it's raining outside, consider:

- Cuddling together on the couch to read a book out loud
- Making special cookies or a simple dessert
- Creating an engraved sign with a wood-burning kit

Try to schedule a special outing with your grandchildren, like to a



museum or a movie. For a special treat, take them to your favorite ice cream shop for a sundae or milkshake!

No matter what you do, you're giving your grandchildren a great gift—your time! ■

how you are covered for a clinical trial

As a member of Fallon Senior Plan™, which is known as a Medicare Advantage plan, you are entitled to participate in a clinical trial and receive the same coverage as a person with Original Medicare.

Clinical trials are one of the final stages of a research process to find better ways to prevent, diagnose or treat diseases. The trials help doctors and researchers see if a new medication or approach works and if it is safe.

There are certain requirements for Medicare coverage of clinical trials. If you participate as a patient in a clinical trial that meets Medicare requirements, Original Medicare—not

Fallon Senior Plan—pays the clinical trial doctors and other providers for the related covered services you receive. You will have to pay the Original Medicare coinsurance for the clinical trial services.

To join a clinical trial, you don't need a referral, and the clinical trial providers don't need to be Fallon Senior Plan providers. However, please be sure to **tell us before you start a clinical trial**. This will help us keep track of your health care services and ensure that Medicare is properly billed. We also can let you know what services you will get from clinical trial providers. Please call our Customer Service Department Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677).

When you are in a clinical trial, you remain enrolled in Fallon Senior Plan and continue to get the rest of your care that is unrelated to the clinical trial through Fallon Senior Plan. Please consult your Fallon Senior Plan *Member Handbook/Evidence of Coverage* for more information.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has a brochure, called *Medicare and Clinical Trials*. To get a copy, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or visit www.medicare.gov, then click on "find a Medicare publication" under the Search Tools section and type in the keywords "clinical trial." ■

call us for answers

It has been more than six months since the new Medicare prescription drug coverage, known as Part D, went into effect.

As it was introduced, Fallon Community Health Plan reached out not only to our Medicare Advantage members, but also to all our senior referral and educational partners as well as employers who offer retiree group plans. In addition to making several hundred outreach phone calls, we held more than 100 educational meetings at senior centers, senior housing complexes and other venues, as well as in-home appointments. We received very positive feedback for the education and practical assistance we provided.

If you still have any questions about the Medicare prescription drug program, remember that FCHP is here to help. Please call our Customer Service Department, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677).

You also may call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) (TTY: 1-877-486-2048) 24 hours a day, seven days a week for more information about Medicare benefits and services, including general information about health or prescription drug benefits. ■

FCHP Customer Service

1-800-868-5200
TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

If you have family or friends who are thinking about joining Fallon Senior Plan, they may call us at:

Fallon Senior Plan

1-888-377-1980
TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
(see also www.fchp.org.)

Here are additional resources that may be helpful:

Medicare

www.medicare.gov
1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-663-4227)
TTY: 1-877-486-2048
24 hours a day, seven days a week

Social Security Administration

www.socialsecurity.gov
1-800-772-1213
TTY: 1-800-325-0778
Monday through Friday
7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders)

www.800ageinfo.com
1-800-882-2003
TDD/TTY: 1-800-872-0166

Prescription Advantage

If you have questions about Prescription Advantage benefits, please call Prescription Advantage at 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636) TTY: 1-877-610-0241

MassHealth (Medicaid) Customer Service Center

1-800-841-2900
TTY: 1-800-497-4648
For information about eligibility, benefits, enrollment into a health plan and how to get an application for MassHealth. ■

silversneakers® fitness program at new locations

Fallon Community Health Plan is pleased to let you know that several new facilities are offering the SilverSneakers® Fitness Program to Fallon Senior Plan™ members:

- Auburn Yoga and Pilates Center, 59 Auburn St., Suite 102, Auburn
- Clark Memorial Community Center, 155 Central St., Winchendon
- Tri-Community YMCA, 43 Everett St., Southbridge
- Gold's Gym, 420 Maple St., Marlborough
- Fitness Concepts Health Club, 696 West Broadway, Gardner
- Greater Lowell YMCA, 35 YMCA Drive, Lowell

FCHP is the only health plan in Massachusetts to offer the nationally recognized SilverSneakers Fitness Program as a benefit to our Fallon Senior Plan members. We do so at no

additional cost beyond the member's monthly plan premium. For a list of all facilities that offer SilverSneakers, see www.fchp.org/SeniorPortal/overview/silversneakers.aspx or call our Customer Service Department Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677).

SilverSneakers® is a registered trademark of HealthCare Dimensions Incorporated. ■

stay in touch

At Fallon Community Health Plan, we encourage our members to understand their health insurance coverage. The more you know, the more you can take advantage of all your benefits and stay as well as possible.

If you would like to attend one of our member education meetings, or have any questions about your Fallon Senior Plan™ benefits, please call us at:

network grows in nashoba and merrimack valleys

FCHP Select Care members now have access to Nashoba Valley Medical Center in Ayer, Mass., and its more than 78 physicians and specialists. NVMC and its physicians reached an agreement with Fallon Community Health Plan, effective January 1, 2006.

Nashoba Valley Medical Center is a state-of-the-art hospital that serves 11 communities throughout north-central Massachusetts. Founded in 1964, Nashoba Valley Medical Center is known for many clinical strengths, including emergency medicine, cardiology, gastroenterology, oncology, orthopedics and surgery. The hospital also offers a diverse array of outpatient services in its Ambulatory Care Center.

Fallon Community Health Plan also has signed a contract with Merrimack Valley Hospital to provide health care services to FCHP Select Care members. Merrimack Valley Hospital maintains 108 acute care beds, 16 transitional beds and 17 adult behavioral medicine beds. MVH serves the residents of Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire.

Both Merrimack Valley Hospital and Nashoba Valley Medical Center are affiliates of Essent Healthcare, Inc.

"We are pleased to partner with these hospitals and physicians in their communities," notes Daniel M. Concaugh, Esq., FCHP Vice President of Network Development and Management. "FCHP members now have more choice than ever before. We will continue to expand our network and work with local hospitals and doctors to ensure that our members receive first-class care in their communities." ■

on our cover ...

Molly Jones was born with a condition that has had her hospitalized too often during her brief five years. As a result, being busy is a way of life for her parents, FCHP members Mary and Ted Jones. Whether Mary is driving to and from Molly's frequent therapy sessions, or Ted is taking their son Robert to swimming lessons, the Joneses are one family that balances life's twists and turns. Every day—often with the support of Fallon Community Health Plan—they focus on helping Molly to be as happy and healthy as possible.

Some days are definitely more challenging—like when Molly needs to be hospitalized. Then the family bands together to make sure everyone's needs are met. Ted stays overnight at the hospital with Molly and her favorite stuffed dog, while Mary spends the evenings at home with Robert. Once the hospital stay is over, Molly is able to recuperate in her Dora the Explorer™-themed bedroom not only with the help of her brother and parents, but also with the love of the family's menagerie: bunnies, guinea pigs and their real-life golden retriever, Jordan.

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