

PrimePartners

for Case Managers

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In this issue:

- ▶ Energy Assistance Program: Applications Due September 1
- ▶ August Is National Immunization Awareness Month
- ▶ Suicide Prevention Information
- ▶ Sepsis Awareness
- ▶ Helping Seniors and Those with Disabilities Have Successful Dental Visits
- ▶ Important Dates

Health Awareness Months

- **August** – National Immunization Awareness Month
- **September** – Sepsis Awareness Month
- **October** – Health Literacy Month



Energy Assistance Program: Applications Due September 1

Elizabeth Warfield, RN, BSN, PHN, SNP Manager

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a Federally funded program that can help people from income-qualified households with the following:

- Payment of energy bills
- Utility disconnections or fuel deliveries
- Education about efficient and safe use of energy
- Advocacy with energy suppliers and human service providers
- Repair or replacement of broken heating systems

The application deadline for this program is September 1, 2021, which is fast approaching! If you work with members who could benefit from this assistance, please make sure they know about the EAP and direct them to the Minnesota Commerce Department's [Energy Assistance Program web page](#). This page provides information about the program and the specific income guidelines to qualify. It also includes step-by-step instructions on how to apply and submit the online application. 

August Is National Immunization Awareness Month

Andra Anderson, RN, Care Coordinator

National Immunization Awareness Month is recognized each August as a way to highlight the importance of vaccinations. While we often associate vaccines with kids, they are important for people of all ages! Remind members that up-to-date vaccinations protect them from a variety of diseases. A chart of recommended vaccinations for adults over age 18 is included at the [end of this issue](#), and it can also be found in the [Winter 2020/ New Member 2021 issue of PrimeLines](#). Please encourage members to get any vaccines they may be missing.

You can also emphasize the importance of being vaccinated against COVID-19 and stress the importance of getting both doses if the member receives a two-dose vaccine. (As of August 2021, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses.) Reassure members that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continue to monitor vaccine safety. Millions of people in the United States have been vaccinated and serious side effects have been rare. Vaccines continue to provide the best protection available against COVID-19.

For adults age 50 and over, you may want to mention Shingrix, which is a newer vaccine for protection against shingles. The vaccine has been found to be 90 percent effective at preventing shingles and is given in a two-dose series, two to six months apart. This vaccine can be given regardless of whether a person has had shingles in the past (CDC 2018).

Finally, don't forget that flu season is almost here! The CDC recommends that everyone age 6 months and over get a flu vaccine every year with very few exceptions (CDC 2021). Help members stay healthy this year by encouraging them to get vaccinated.

Sources:

- CDC, "Who Needs a Flu Vaccine and When," June 11, 2021, www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinations.htm.
- CDC, "Shingles Vaccination," January 25, 2018, www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/shingles/public/shingrix. 

Suicide Prevention Information

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Suicide can affect anyone, no matter their age, gender, race, or ethnicity. Suicide is the eighth most common cause of death in Minnesota overall, and the second-leading cause of death for Minnesotans ages 10 – 34. This makes it critical that all members have the information they need if they find themselves or a loved one in a mental health crisis situation.

Help is available and no one should struggle alone. Minnesota has many great resources for suicide prevention. Please share the following resources with members and encourage them to reach out if they need help. All services listed are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mobile crisis units

Minnesota has regional mobile crisis units across the state. When called, trained crisis responders will come to a member's home or another meeting location. Members can find the numbers for the mobile mental health crisis unit in their region on the following Minnesota Department of Human Services web pages:

- [Adult mental health crisis response phone numbers](#)
- [Children's mental health crisis response phone numbers](#)

Phone and text help

The following resources are available for those who prefer to talk or text with a counselor:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call **1-800-273-8255**. TTY users call **1-800-799-4889**. These calls are free.
- Crisis Text Line: Text "MN" to **741741**.

Source:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "Suicide Facts & Figures: Minnesota 2020," accessed July 27, 2021, <https://aws-fetch.s3.amazonaws.com/state-fact-sheets/2020/2020-state-fact-sheets-minnesota.pdf>. 

Sepsis Awareness

Elizabeth Warfield, RN, BSN, PHN, SNP Manager

September is Sepsis Awareness Month. Each year, at least 1.7 million adults in the United States develop sepsis and nearly 270,000 die from it. Making members aware of this life-threatening condition can help save a life.

What is sepsis?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. It is a life-threatening medical emergency. Sepsis happens when an infection you already have triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. Without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

Almost any type of infection can lead to sepsis. Infections that lead to sepsis most often start in the lung, urinary tract, skin, or gastrointestinal tract.

Who is at risk for sepsis?

Anyone who has an infection can get sepsis. Those at higher risk for sepsis include people with weakened immune systems or chronic medical conditions, people who have previously survived sepsis, children under age 1, and adults over age 65.

What are the symptoms?

Sepsis progresses very rapidly, so early recognition of symptoms is critical. It is important for members who are at high risk to learn about the symptoms of sepsis and what to do if they think they may have it. The following symptoms are associated with sepsis:

- Increased heart rate
- Low blood pressure
- Confusion or disorientation
- Fever, shivering, or chills
- Shortness of breath
- Clammy or sweaty skin
- Extreme discomfort

What should someone do if they think they have sepsis?

Members should seek medical care *immediately* if they have an infection that isn't getting better or that is getting worse, especially if they have any of the symptoms listed above.

Resources

The following fact sheets from the CDC may be helpful for educating at-risk members about sepsis:

- [Protect Yourself and Your Family from Sepsis](#)
- [It's Time to Talk about Sepsis](#)
- [Start the Conversation Today](#)

Source:

- CDC, "Sepsis," accessed July 26, 2021, www.cdc.gov/sepsis/index.html. 

Helping Seniors and Those with Disabilities Have Successful Dental Visits

Leah Anderson, Dental Services Coordinator

People age 65 and over and those with disabilities are a medically complex group. They often have chronic health conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, elevated cholesterol, and seizures, as well as mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety. Not only can these conditions contribute to oral health problems, many of the medications used to treat these conditions are known to have complications that cause increased dental decay and pain. All of this makes successful dental visits especially important for these groups. County case managers can play an active role in helping members get the most out of their dental visits by doing the following.

- Remind members to bring a list of all their medications to their dental appointments. You can help them make this list if needed. Members should also be prepared to provide pertinent information about their medical history.
- Encourage members to discuss any special needs or special accommodations they may require when they schedule their dental appointment.
- Educate members about the way oral health is linked to overall health. A member may not realize that if they have diabetes, they are generally more susceptible to bacterial infections, such as gum disease. They may not realize that inflammation of the gums associated with gum disease can lead to inflammation in the blood vessels and cause systemic diseases such as heart disease and stroke. Helping them make these connections can be a good motivational tool to promote routine dental care.

- Let members with dentures know that they still need dental care! Dental providers can perform an oral cancer exam and can check dentures for wear and fit so that adjustments can be made as necessary. Remind members to bring their dentures with them to their dental visit.
- Work with members to increase their dental health literacy. You can use the resources available in the [Dental Program section](#) of PrimeWest Health's *County Case Management Manual*, which includes information on accessing the *Ask Me 3* brochure produced by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). This brochure is a good resource to help members master the skills necessary for successful dental visits. You can download a copy of this brochure to share with members.

In addition to providing the assistance outlined above, PrimeWest Health encourages county case managers to become familiar with social determinants of health that pose additional risks and barriers for members. Low income levels and lack of access to education, oral health care, transportation, fluoridated water, and healthy food can all lead to disparities in oral health. For example, adults age 65 and over with low incomes and less than a high school education are more than three times as likely to have lost all their teeth when compared to those with higher incomes or more education (CDC). Knowing the effects that things like income and education can have on oral health can help you work with members in a more comprehensive manner to achieve better outcomes. You can find more [information on disparities in oral health from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

Source:

- CDC, "Disparities in Oral Health," February 5, 2021, www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/oral_health_disparities/index.htm. 

Important Dates

✓ County supervisor meetings

Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month, and will take place remotely until further notice. Watch your emails for additional information.

- September 16, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

✓ New county case manager training

Participants will attend both days; training will be held via webinar

- August 17, 1 – 4 p.m. and August 18, 9 a.m. – noon

✓ Building Health Equity Web Series

A virtual speaker series hosted by PrimeWest Health and focusing on health equity. More information will be coming soon, but for now, mark this webinar series on your calendars and bookmark the [web page](#)!

- September 15 – November 3
- Wednesdays at 1 p.m.; most sessions will run 1 hour

You can find current and past issues of *PrimePartners* at www.primewest.org/primepartners.

Recommended Vaccines for All Adults over Age 18

VACCINE	AGE		
	18 – 49 years	50 – 64 years	65+ years
Influenza (flu)	✓ Recommended every year for all adults		
Pneumococcal (PCV13, PPSV23)	✓ 1 – 2 doses if you have certain chronic medical conditions ¹		✓ 1 dose
Tetanus, diphtheria (Td) Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap)	✓ 1 dose of Tdap, and then a Td or Tdap booster every 10 years		
Haemophilus influenzae, type B (Hib)	✓ You may need 1 or 3 doses. Talk to your health care provider.		
Hepatitis B (Hep B)	✓ You need 2 – 3 doses, depending on vaccine. Talk to your health care provider.		
Hepatitis A (Hep A)	✓ You need 2 – 3 doses, depending on vaccine. Talk to your health care provider.		
Human papillomavirus (HPV) – this series protects against genital warts and cervical, throat, penile, and anal cancers	✓ This vaccine is covered for men and women up to age 45. Talk to your health care provider.		
Varicella (chickenpox)	✓ If you've never had chickenpox or received only 1 dose of the vaccine, talk to your health care provider about whether you need this vaccine		
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	✓ You may need to get 1 – 2 doses of this vaccine. Talk to your health care provider.		
Meningococcal (MenACWY, MenB)	✓ 1 – 3 doses depending on your level of risk ¹		
Zoster recombinant (shingles)		✓ If you are age 50 or over, you should have 2 doses of this vaccine	

¹Talk with **your** health care provider about your level of risk for infection and your need for this vaccine.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). “Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule for Ages 19 Years or Older, United States, 2020” (Feb 2020). www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-combined-schedule.pdf.

