

PrimePartners

for Case Managers

Volume 18, Issue 2
Spring 2024

In this issue:

- ▶ Welcome to Our New Care & Population Health Management Staff Members
- ▶ Dental Benefit Updates
- ▶ Supplemental Over-the-Counter (OTC) Benefit for PrimeWest Senior Health Complete Members
- ▶ Designation of an Authorized Representative
- ▶ MnCHOICES: Phased Launch Schedule
- ▶ Resource Review: Where to Find the Information You Need
- ▶ Stress Management: Building Resilience
- ▶ Reporting Suspected Maltreatment of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- ▶ Lunch & Learn Topic Ideas and Speaker Requests
- ▶ Member Incentives for Preventive Services
- ▶ Important Dates
- ▶ Contact Information

Welcome to Our New Care & Population Health Management Staff Members

Aja Mayer, RN, Quality Improvement Coordinator

We are excited to introduce you to two new staff members! Amanda and Gretchen both joined our team in January—get to know a little about each of them below.



Amanda Lambertson, Care & Population Health Management Specialist

Originally from New York Mills, Amanda and her husband have lived in Alexandria for 10 years with their three children. (They also have a long-haired cat named Fluffy.) Amanda likes to read in her free time and can usually be found with a good suspense novel. In the summer, Amanda and her family enjoy spending time at their camper stationed at the lake.



Gretchen Petterson, LSW, Behavioral Health Care Coordinator

Gretchen lives on a farm in Lafayette township with her husband and youngest son. Her large, blended family includes seven children and three grandsons (with another grandchild on the way in July!). She is a foster mom and adopted her two youngest children out of the foster care system. She loves all things farm-related including gardening, canning, and raising chickens. She is also a beekeeper! 🐝

Dental Benefit Updates

Amanda Englund, Dental Services Coordinator

As a result of the 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session, the comprehensive dental benefit set for non-pregnant adults with Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare was reinstated effective January 1, 2024. This means all PrimeWest Health members have the same dental benefit in 2024; it is the first time since 2009 that non-pregnant adults have dental benefits beyond the limited benefit set.

2024 dental benefit changes of note

- The following are now covered for all members:
 - Root canals; any tooth, once per tooth per lifetime
 - Root canal retreatments; any tooth, once per tooth per lifetime
 - General anesthesia
- Full denture replacement is now covered once every 3 years (previously covered every 6 years)

Complete information on dental benefits can be found in each program's *Member Handbook*. To access a specific *Handbook*, click on the member's program name on our [Programs page](#), and then click *Member Handbook* in the orange box on the left titled "Member Materials."

Questions

If you have questions, contact:

Amanda Englund, Dental Services Coordinator

1-320-335-5262

amanda.englund@primewest.org 

Supplemental Over-the Counter (OTC) Benefit for PrimeWest Senior Health Complete Members

Ann Ehlert, PharmD, Director of Pharmacy Management

PrimeWest Health covers up to \$60 per month for supplemental over-the-counter (OTC) products for PrimeWest Senior Health Complete (HMO SNP) members. This is the only member group eligible for this benefit, and eligible members can only access the benefit by using their OTC Network supplemental benefits card onto which \$60 is loaded each month.

With summer coming, we want you to be aware that sunscreen is covered for PrimeWest Senior Health Complete members under the supplemental OTC benefit. This includes face lotion, body lotion, lip protection, and after-sun care. Another covered item that may be of interest this summer is itch treatment. This includes products for "botanical exposure treatment," which means itch from things like poison ivy. OTC pain creams and incontinence products are also covered.

In accordance with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), PrimeWest Health *cannot* cover the following categories of supplemental OTC items.

Non-Covered OTC Category	Examples of Items/Drugs Included in this Category
Alternative medicines	Homeopathic and alternative medicines including botanicals, herbals, probiotics, nutraceuticals
Baby items	Diapers, formula
Contraceptives	Birth control pills, spermicide, prophylactics
Convenience and comfort	Scales, fans, magnifying glasses, ear plugs, insoles, arch supports, gloves
Cosmetics	Mouthwashes, bad breath remedies, deodorants, lip soothers, grooming devices, skin moisturizers, teeth-whiteners
Food products or supplements	Sugar/salt supplements, energy bars, liquid energizers, protein bars, power drinks
Replacement items, attachments, peripherals	Hearing aid batteries, contact lens containers, etc., when not factory packaged with the original item

If there are any products you would like covered, let us know. And, as always, we love questions: send them to primewestpharmacy@primewest.org. 

Designation of an Authorized Representative

Dana Frovarp, MSN, RN, CARN, Population Health Coordinator

PrimeWest Health is required by law to keep our members' health information private. Members can appoint an Authorized Representative who is able to act on their behalf for reasons such as Appealing denied claims. PrimeWest Health is able to release information such as claim status and benefit eligibility to this person. If you work with a member who would benefit from having an Authorized Representative, they can fill out the [Designation of an Authorized Representative/HIPAA Authorization to Release Information form](#) found on our website. Members can also call PrimeWest Health Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** (toll free) to request a form be mailed to them.

Completed forms should be mailed to:

Attn: HIPAA Privacy Officer
PrimeWest Health
3905 Dakota St
Alexandria, MN 56308

The following are some helpful instructions for members who are filling out the form.

Page 1 – Designation of an Authorized Representative

- The member or member's legal representative, *if applicable*, must do the following:
 - Complete the *Member Information* section with the required member information, including the member's PrimeWest Health PMI number.
 - Enter the name of the person being authorized to act on the member's behalf and that person's relationship to the member.
 - Enter the address and telephone number of the Authorized Representative.
 - Check one of the boxes to tell us what the Authorized Representative can help with when filing claims or making Appeals.
 - Sign and date the form.
 - If the form is being signed by someone other than the member, include legal documentation authorizing the individual to sign on behalf of the member.
 - If the member is signing, leave the "Print name of member's legal representative" and "Describe relation of member to legal representative" fields blank.
 - The Authorized Representative must sign and date the form.

Page 2 – HIPAA Authorization to Release Information

- The member or member's legal representative, *if applicable*, must do the following:
 - Enter the name of the appointed Authorized Representative.
 - Enter the date of the Authorized Representative designation.
 - Sign and date the form.
 - If the form is being signed by someone other than the member, include legal documentation authorizing the individual to sign on behalf of the member.
 - If the member is signing, leave the "Print name of member's legal representative" and "Describe relation of member to legal representative" fields blank. 📄

MnCHOICES: Phased Launch Schedule

Skyler VonWahlde, RN, BSN, PHN, Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator

On April 1, 2024, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) moved to Phase 3 of their MnCHOICES launch plan, a phase that is scheduled to run to June 28, 2024. According to DHS, during Phase 3, lead agencies should do the following:

- Continue to assign staff members to practice in the MnCHOICES Training Zone.
- Have **100%** of staff members complete health risk assessments (HRAs), assessments and support plans in the production environment.
- Complete county-of-location assessments in the MnCHOICES revision,
- Start all new assessments (including HRAs) in the MnCHOICES revision.

Phase 4 is the final transition phase, which is scheduled to run from July 1 to September 30, 2024. According to DHS, during this phase, lead agencies should do the following:

- Have **100%** of staff members conduct **all work** in the MnCHOICES revision.
- Finish all existing assessments and support plans in legacy systems by Sept. 30, 2024. MnCHOICES 1.0 assessments and support plans not completed by Sept. 30, 2024, will not migrate to the MnCHOICES revision.

Effective Oct. 1, 2024, legacy systems, including MnCHOICES 1.0, will no longer be available.

As a reminder, DHS would like only mentors to put in MnCHOICES help desk tickets. If you have MnCHOICES questions, please reach out to your county mentor and/or the PrimeWest Health MnCHOICES lead, Skyler VonWahlde, at skyler.vonwahlde@primewest.org.

More information and access

To find out more about the phased launch schedule, please read the March 8, 2024, AASD and DSD eList announcement, "[Phase 3 of the MnCHOICES Revision Launch Will Begin on April 1, 2024](#)," on the DHS website.

If you do not have access to MnCHOICES and need access to conduct work on behalf of PrimeWest Health, please complete the [County Staff Change Notification](#) form, making sure to include your certified assessor credentials. Completed forms can be emailed to caremanagement@primewest.org.

Source: DHS, AASD and DSD eList Announcement, "Phase 3 of the MnCHOICES Revision Launch Will Begin on April 1, 2024," Community-Based Services Manual (CBSM), March 8, 2024, www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=mndhs-065772. 

Resource Review: Where to Find the Information You Need

Tasha Jevnager, RN, Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator

PrimeWest Health offers many resources and tools to help you do your best for our members. The following are some of the tools available and what you can use them for.

- **Member Handbooks and Program Pages:** These are both great sources of information! *Member Handbooks* include the health care services, behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder) services, prescription drug coverage, and long-term services and supports covered under each plan. They also indicate when a Service Authorization may be needed. Dedicated Program pages on our website include links to each *Member Handbook* as well as additional program information and helpful links.
 - Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC): [Member Handbook](#) and [Program page](#)
 - Prime Health Complete (HMO SNP): [Member Handbook](#) and [Program page](#)
 - Minnesota Senior Care Plus (MSC+): [Member Handbook](#) and [Program page](#)
 - PrimeWest Senior Health Complete (HMO SNP): [Member Handbook](#) and [Program page](#)
- **[Provider Search Tool](#):** This tool can be used to help members find a primary care provider or specialist.
 - The Provider Search Tool can be accessed on its [dedicated web page](#). Links to the tool are also available on the [Home page](#) of our website as well as the [Members page](#).
- **[County Case Manager Resources Page](#):** This page includes documents and presentations for county case managers, best practice guidelines to follow when working with members with special needs, member care

strategies for specific conditions, and more.

- [County Case Management Manual](#): This manual contains tons of helpful links and resources including our Models of Care, Care Management team contact list, care management procedures and workflows, letters/forms, and on-demand trainings. 📖

Stress Management: Building Resilience

Tasha Jevnager, RN, Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator

Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause (a “stressor”), such as a heavy workload, financial challenges, health concerns, or life changes. A stressor may be a one-time occurrence, or it can occur repeatedly over time. People experience stress no matter who they are or what stage of life they are in. Because it can interfere with daily life and lead to health problems, learning to actively manage stress is key (NIMH).

An important part of managing stress is learning to recognize and understand how stress affects you personally. Signs of stress may include changes in energy level, sleep, appetite, and sex drive, as well as fatigue, headaches, digestive issues, rapid heart rate, sweating, and frequent illnesses (Lamothe). Once you are aware of how stress affects you, you can begin to address it.

Just as stress affects everyone differently, different coping mechanisms will work for different people. “Recognizing individual signals of a body’s stress responses and learning to respond to those signals in new ways can help build the emotional, intellectual and physical strength that comprise resilience, which can help you tackle future stressors” (NIH).

Try not to get discouraged if the things you try don’t immediately help. There are many options out there—you may have to try a few until you find what works for you! Try to be patient and open-minded.

Tips for handling stress

Identify your stressors. Writing can help you understand what your stressors are. Write down what happened, who was involved, how you felt, and how you responded. Writing can also help you release and evaluate your feelings.	Take care of yourself. Self-care is not an indulgence—it’s a necessity. Prioritize getting enough quality sleep, exercising, eating well, staying hydrated—and having some fun, too!	Stay in touch. Keep in contact with friends and family. Connecting with others can be a great way to ease built-up tension. Remember it’s okay to ask for help when you need it. There will be a time when you can return the kindness.
Take time for yourself. Even a few minutes of personal time during the day can lower stress. Set reminders to take breaks throughout the day and fit in something you enjoy. When you can, take longer breaks to fully recharge.	Strive for balance. Try to maintain balance between work and your personal life. Creating clear boundaries between work and home is essential: Being available around the clock is a path to burnout.	Evaluate negative thoughts. Try to see a situation for what it is, instead of jumping to conclusions or reading into something that isn’t there. Taking a step back can help you avoid negative thoughts and judgements.
Get organized. Having a plan can make things seem less overwhelming. Try writing out your task list and ranking each item in order of importance to see what needs to be done now and what can wait.	Learn relaxation techniques. Meditation, breathing exercises, and mindfulness practices can help relieve stress. There are many free apps and videos you can use to get started. The main thing is to focus on being present and not thinking about work or other concerns.	Give yourself credit. We are often very good at beating ourselves up and not good at recognizing what we have done well. Recognize the hard work you are doing and celebrate your wins daily. Even if they seem little, you are making a big difference every day!

(Lamothe)

Seeking professional help

If stress is affecting your daily life and well-being, it may be time to ask for professional help.

You don't need to have a mental health condition to try therapy. Feeling overwhelmed at work is a valid reason to seek additional help and support. Working with a mental health professional may help you better identify the sources of your work stress and find ways to navigate them. A therapist may also help you develop strategies for decompressing and caring for yourself so you avoid burnout (Lamothe).

Sources:

- Lamothe, Cindy, "How to Keep Work Stress from Taking Over Your Life," Healthline, January 30, 2024, www.healthline.com/health/work-stress.
- National Institutes of Health, Office of Research on Women's Health, "7 Steps to Manage Stress and Build Resilience," August 6, 2020, <https://orwh.od.nih.gov/in-the-spotlight/all-articles/7-steps-manage-stress-and-build-resilience>.
- National Institute of Mental Health, "I'm So Stressed Out! Fact Sheet," accessed April 16, 2024, www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet. 

Reporting Suspected Maltreatment of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Christi Matt, RN, CCP, Manager of Families and Children Care Management

County case managers are considered mandated reporters and are required by Minnesota Statute to report all instances of suspected maltreatment of children and vulnerable adults. Below is information on reporting as well as links to helpful resources and required training.

Children

MN Stat. sec 260E.06, subd.1 states that a mandatory reporter:

...who knows or has reason to believe a child is being maltreated...shall immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, police department, county sheriff, tribal social services agency, or tribal police department.

You can find the following resources on the Minnesota Department of Human Services' (DHS) website:

- [Mandated reporter resources](#)
- [Overview of Minnesota's child protection system](#)
- A link to free, web-based training for mandated reporters through the [Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy \(MNCWTA\)](#)

Vulnerable adults

MN Stat. sec. 626.557, subd. 3 states that:

A mandated reporter who has reason to believe that a vulnerable adult is being or has been maltreated, or who has knowledge that a vulnerable adult has sustained a physical injury which is not reasonably explained shall immediately report the information to the common entry point.

The Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) has been designated by DHS to be the single, statewide common entry point (CEP) for accepting reports of suspected maltreatment of vulnerable adults.

The DHS [Vulnerable Adult Protection and Elder Abuse web page](#) provides information about how to report abuse (including the contact information for MAARC), who is considered a mandated reporter, and definitions of "vulnerable adult" and "maltreatment." Mandated reporters can also take a [free, web-based training on reporting maltreatment of vulnerable](#) adults through DHS. 

Lunch & Learn Topic Ideas and Speaker Requests

Skyler VonWahlde, RN, BSN, PHN, Special Needs Plan Care Coordinator

The Care Management team is looking to schedule Lunch & Learn sessions in the near future. Let Skyler VonWahlde know if your county would like to be a host location or if you have suggestions for dates, topics, or speakers. You can reach Skyler at skyler.vonwahlde@primewest.org.

We look forward to seeing you at a Lunch & Learn soon! 

Member Incentives for Preventive Services

Dana Frovarp, MSN, RN, CARN, Population Health Coordinator

PrimeWest Health wants our members to be healthy. Because preventive services are an important part of staying healthy, PrimeWest Health offers incentive gift cards to members for having these services completed.

To receive the incentive, the member must complete the service, have their health care provider sign the voucher, and return the voucher to PrimeWest Health. Some incentives have eligibility limitations. PrimeWest Health must be the member's primary insurer on the date of service to qualify.

The following incentives are available to eligible members:

- **Colorectal Cancer Screening** – Members ages 45 – 75
- **Mammogram** – Female members ages 50 – 74
- **Annual Dental Visit** – Families and Children and MinnesotaCare members ages 1 – 20
- **Annual Retinal/Dilated Eye Exam** – Members with diabetes ages 18 – 75
- **Childhood Immunizations** – Members up-to-date on all vaccines before age 2
- **Well-Child Visits** – Members ages birth – 15 months
- **Well-Child Visits** – Members ages 15 – 30 months
- **Well-Child Visits** – Members ages 3 – 11 years
- **Well-Child Visits** – Members ages 12 – 17 years
- **Wellness Visits for Young Adults** – Members ages 18 – 21 years

You can find [more information about incentives and print vouchers for members](#) on our website.

Questions

If you have questions about our incentive program, please call the Provider Contact Center at **1-866-431-0802** (toll free). Members can call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** (toll free). 

Important Dates

✓ County case management supervisor meetings

Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month, from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at PrimeWest Health in Alexandria, unless otherwise noted. Lunch is provided.

- May 16
- June 20
- July 18
- August 15

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

Contact Information

Care Management is here to support you! Have a question? Please email us at CareManagement@primewest.org.

Spring 2024

page 7 of 7

[Back to page 1](#)



PrimeWest
HEALTH™

Your greater Minnesota health plan



3905 Dakota St
Alexandria, MN 56308



primewest.org