

PrimePartners

for Case Managers

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In this issue:

- ▶ Seeking Care and Staying Healthy During COVID-19
- ▶ Changes at the Dental Clinic Due to COVID-19
- ▶ Staying Safe from Summer Bites and Burns
- ▶ Gratitude Journaling
- ▶ Take Leap Year into Consideration when Scheduling Annual HRAs
- ▶ Housing Stabilization Services (HSS): A New Medical Assistance (Medicaid) Benefit Effective July 20, 2020
- ▶ Important Dates
- ▶ Contact Information

Seeking Care and Staying Healthy During COVID-19

Andra Anderson, RN, Care Coordinator

As Minnesota “reopens” amid COVID-19, members may have questions about seeking health care, as well as staying healthy. PrimeWest Health encourages county case managers to talk with members about these questions and concerns.

Seeking care

- Encourage members to keep their regularly scheduled appointments. Members should also keep in contact with their providers to determine if appointments (preventive or sick visits) should be conducted face-to-face or via telehealth.
- Tell members to call the clinic prior to any appointments to learn about any new restrictions or protocols. This will help ensure visits go as smoothly as possible.
- Reinforce that if members have a serious health crisis, they should seek urgent or emergent care.
- See “**Changes at the Dental Clinic Due to COVID-19**” in this issue for information specifically about dental care.

Staying healthy

- Reinforce the following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with members:
 - Wash hands often or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol
 - Practice social distancing by maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other people
 - Wear a cloth face cover when out in public

More information

More information is available on the [PrimeWest Health website](#) as well as the websites of the [CDC](#) and the [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\)](#).

Source:

- CDC, “How to Protect Yourself and Others,” April 24, 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html. 

Changes at the Dental Clinic Due to COVID-19

Leah Anderson, Dental Services Coordinator

COVID-19 has dramatically affected day-to-day processes for dental offices. Following a period where only emergency dental care was recommended, dental clinics were allowed to reopen beginning May 11, 2020.

COVID-19 is known to spread through respiratory droplets. This, coupled with the close contact between provider and patient in dental clinics, has led the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Minnesota Board of Dentistry to provide very specific guidance on reopening procedures for dental offices. This guidance is meant to ensure the safety of both patients and staff. For members, this means a visit to the dental office will be different now and for the foreseeable future. We are asking county case managers to help members prepare by advising them about what they can expect.

Scheduling

Each dental clinic will be reopening at different times, and the dental services and procedures available at each site will depend on the clinic, staff availability, the ability to obtain necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), and other circumstances that may arise during this fluid situation. Please encourage members to be understanding during this time. Some dental clinics were forced to cancel thousands of appointments over the past few months, creating a backlog of appointments that need to be rescheduled. Members may not be able to get a non-emergency appointment for several months, and possibly not until the end of 2020. PrimeWest Health is working with our dental clinics to make scheduling and rescheduling go as smoothly as possible, and we will do our best to work with members and case managers on new dental access concerns that may arise. Due to setting restrictions, certain mobile dental outreach services may not resume for some time.

Changes at the dental clinic

While each individual dental clinic will have a slightly different process, some general guidelines for what patients may experience are listed below. These changes are all part of the effort to keep patients and staff healthy.

- Patients should expect a pre-appointment screening and some changes during check-in
 - Patients will be advised that no non-essential people can accompany them to the appointment; one parent or guardian is allowed per minor child.
 - Screening may include a temperature check.
 - Some clinics may have patients check in from and wait in their car prior to their appointment. Medical and dental history may all be collected telephonically prior to the patient entering the office.
- Patients may be required to wear a face mask at all times except during the dental procedure
- Patients may be required to use an antiseptic mouth rinse prior to treatment
- Patients should expect to see all dental office staff wearing a mask. The dentist and other dental professionals will likely be wearing gowns, shoe covers, goggles, face shields, and hair covers. Please be sure to share this information with members who have dental anxiety (ADA).

Members may also be interested to know about the “behind-the-scenes” infection control procedures that have been implemented in dental offices to keep members and staff safe. These include daily screening of dental staff; additional sanitization of all areas of the clinic, especially in operatory areas; and the removal of items in the waiting room including books, magazines, and toys (CDC).

Questions

If you have questions or would like more information, contact **Leah Anderson**.

Sources:

- ADA, “Return to Work Interim Guidance Toolkit,” June 9, 2020, https://pages.ada.org/return-to-work-toolkit-american-dental-association?utm_campaign=covid-19-Return-to-Work-Toolkit&utm_source=cpsorg-practice-resources-fb&utm_medium=covid-resources-lp-pm&utm_content=covid-19-interim-return-to-work.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Guidance for Dental Settings,” June 17, 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html#SterilizationDisinfection. 

Staying Safe from Summer Bites and Burns

Ann Ehlert, PharmD, Pharmacy Manager

Kayla Briggs, 2021 PharmD Candidate

The warmer weather brings a lot of opportunities for outdoor fun. Unfortunately, it also brings a lot of opportunities for insect bites and sunburns. We hope you'll share the following tips for avoiding these pitfalls with members—and we hope you'll find them useful, too!

Insect bites

Summer brings warm weather...and bugs. Mosquitos, ticks, and chiggers are all more active during the summer months. The following are some ways to keep them from biting:

- Use insect repellent that has DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 as the active ingredient.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- Keep windows and doors shut or use window and door screens.
- Once a week, empty or throw out any items that hold water—like vases and flowerpot saucers—indoors and outdoors.
- Use outdoor insect spray in dark humid areas where insects rest, like under patio furniture (CDC “Protect”).

Despite the best efforts at prevention, bugs can still bite. If you do get a bite, keep the following in mind:

- If you are bitten by a spider or develop symptoms of scabies (rash and intense itching that gets worse at night, CDC “Parasites”), you should see a health care provider.
- If you find a tick on your body, remove it with tweezers, disinfect the area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water, and dispose of the tick. If you develop a rash or fever, call your provider (CDC “Tick”).
- Most of the itching and swelling caused by insect bites can usually be treated with non-pharmacological and over-the-counter options. The following can help:
 - Apply an ice pack to the bite area.
 - Use topical antihistamines like diphenhydramine.
 - Use hydrocortisone cream unless there are signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, and pain. If you have these symptoms, see your provider.
 - Use counter-irritants like menthol or camphor.

Sunburns

Being outside in the sun puts you at risk for sunburns, which in turn puts you at an increased risk for developing skin cancer. That means taking steps to prevent sunburn will not only save you painful inflammation, but will also guard against future cancer.

When used correctly, sunscreen is a very effective way to prevent burns. The following are best practices for using sunscreen:

- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. This provides 97 percent protection against UV radiation. (Products with an SPF greater than 50 provide a very small increase in protection compared to SPF-30.)
- Apply sunscreen 15 – 30 minutes before sun exposure.
- Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours.
- If you are in the water, reapply every hour, even if using water-resistant sunscreen (Wu).

Sources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Parasites: Scabies,” November 2, 2010, www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/disease.html.
- CDC, “Protect Yourself and Your Family from Mosquito Bites,” December 4, 2019, www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/prevent-mosquito-bites.html.
- CDC, “Tick Removal,” April 22, 2019, www.cdc.gov/lyme/removal/index.html.
- Wu, Dominic, “Sun Protection: Appropriate Sunscreen Use,” Harvard Health Publishing, June 21, 2018, www.health.harvard.edu/blog/sun-protection-appropriate-sunscreen-use-2018062114114. 

Gratitude Journaling

Danielle Turner, Behavioral Health Care Coordinator

It can be easy to focus on the negative aspects of life instead of the positive ones. This may be especially true during this time of change and uncertainty. As county case managers, you are not only working through your own challenges, but also working tirelessly to help members with challenges and difficulties. Taking time to refocus your thoughts is essential. Gratitude journaling is a practice that can help you focus more on the positive aspects of life than the negative ones.

What is gratitude journaling?

Gratitude journaling is taking time to reflect and write down the things, people, and experiences you are grateful for. Gratitude journaling can help you sleep better, feel better mentally and physically, and focus on what matters to you and why.

Tips

1. Write regularly, but you don't need to write every day. Journaling should not be an activity you dread or something you need to force yourself to do. Write however often you feel like it!
2. More doesn't necessarily mean better. Instead of writing a laundry list, elaborate on the details of each thing, person, or experience you are grateful for.
3. Reflect on what you have included in your journal. As an example, imagine your life without this thing, person, or experience.

Gratitude

Keeping a gratitude journal can help you focus on what's important to you and give you reminders of the good in life when things get hard. Tools that help you remember and see the ups amid life's downs can be invaluable.

Source:

- Marsh, Jason, "Tips for Keeping a Gratitude Journal," *Greater Good Magazine*, Greater Good Science Center at University of California Berkley, November 11, 2011, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips_for_keeping_a_gratitude_journal. 

Take Leap Year into Consideration when Scheduling Annual HRAs

Leah Roell, RN, Care Coordinator

As a friendly reminder, 2020 is a leap year, which means it has 366 days this year instead of the usual 365. This means you need to pay extra attention when scheduling annual Health Risk Assessment (HRA) visits that occur between now and February 28, 2021, to ensure they are completed within 365 days of the member's previous HRA (rather than within one year), assuming the member is enrolled in the same program consecutively for 12 or more months.

If you have questions, please get in touch with your designated PrimeWest Health care coordination contact or send an email to caremanagement@primewest.org. 

Housing Stabilization Services (HSS): A New Medical Assistance (Medicaid) Benefit Effective July 20, 2020

Elizabeth Warfield, RN, BSN, PHN, SNP Care Coordination Manager

Overview and eligibility

Housing Stabilization Services (HSS) are a set of services designed to support seniors and people with disabilities who need assistance finding and maintaining safe, stable housing. Services are provided by trained professionals who help members overcome the challenges and barriers that make it difficult for some to find safe, affordable housing; understand their roles and responsibilities as tenant; understand the rules of a lease; and communicate

effectively with landlords and neighbors. HSS are Medical Assistance (Medicaid) “state plan” services and are available to seniors and members with disabilities who meet all of the following eligibility criteria:

1. Are age 18 or over
2. Have Medical Assistance (Medicaid)
3. Have a documented disability or disabling condition or are age 65 or over
4. Have an assessed need for assistance with communication, mobility, decision-making, or managing challenging behaviors that is a result of a documented disability or age
5. Are experiencing housing instability in one of the following forms:
 - a. Homeless (or risk of)
 - b. Institutionalized (or risk of)
 - c. Currently transitioning or have recently transitioned from a more restrictive to a less restrictive setting

Required documentation and care plans

HSS providers are required to gather documentation showing the member meets the above criteria and provide it to the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) when services are requested and annually thereafter. DHS makes member eligibility determinations and is responsible for communicating the outcome to providers, members, and the health plan responsible for covering HSS services. The following are examples of documentation that may be provided to show the member meets eligibility requirements:

1. Assessment information showing housing instability and needs
 - MNChoices/Long-Term Care Consultation (LTCC)
 - Professional Statement of Need (PSN)
 - Coordinated entry assessment
2. Proof of disability
 - PSN
 - Medical opinion form
 - Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) documentation
3. Person-centered care plan or [DHS-7307: Housing Focused Person-Centered Plan](#)

HSS are state plan Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). This means HSS must meet all HCBS Federal requirements, one of which is that all recipients have a person-centered service plan, which can be completed by the county case manager who completes the PrimeWest Health care plan. If an eligible member does not have a county case manager who can complete the PrimeWest Health care plan but does have a targeted case manager (TCM), the TCM provides the person-centered plan by completing [DHS-7307: Housing Focused Person-Centered Plan](#). If an eligible member does not have a CCM or a TCM, he/she will work with a Housing Consultation Provider who will complete DHS-7307 and assist the member with additional steps to access HSS.

Provider types and roles

HSS services are provided by the following three provider types:

1. Housing consultation – Provides person-centered planning for people without Medical Assistance (Medicaid) case management services
2. Housing transition – Assists with planning, finding housing, and organizing moves
3. Housing sustaining – Helps the member maintain housing

In order to prevent a conflict of interest, the provider of the assessment and person-centered plan cannot also be the housing transition/sustaining provider. DHS is actively enrolling HSS providers. As is common when implementing a new service, helping members access HSS may be challenging until sufficient providers are enrolled with DHS and contracted with PrimeWest Health. Qualified providers who have completed the DHS enrollment process and are interested in contracting with PrimeWest Health for HSS should complete the [Participation Request – Contracted Facility](#) form to start the contracting process. County case managers are encouraged to share this information with providers that may be interested in providing HSS services.

Role of the county case manager

County case managers are expected to assess and plan for services just as they always have. HSS are an additional service that may be appropriate to plan for based on the needs and preferences of the member.

Planning includes providing members with information about the service; helping members obtain a PSN or helping them identify who can provide them with a PSN; creating a person-centered care plan that includes HSS as an offered service (including how HSS addresses the HSS eligibility-related needs noted above), if applicable; and connecting members with HSS providers (and providing them with a copy of the member's PrimeWest Health care plan to be submitted to DHS). PrimeWest Health Care Management is actively working on additional training materials and will alert counties to any new trainings announced by DHS.

More information to come

As with any new service implementation, there continue to be questions and discussions about the exact details and roles of those involved. This article is based on the current information and guidance PrimeWest Health has about HSS from DHS. As the service is implemented, guidance may change. PrimeWest Health will communicate any changes when they occur. Additional information is available in the [DHS Provider Manual](#) and in the DHS-produced document [FAQs: Housing Stabilization Services](#). Questions for PrimeWest Health Care Management can be submitted to caremanagement@primewest.org. 

Important Dates

✓ County supervisor meetings

Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Meetings will take place remotely until further notice. Watch your email for additional information.**

- July 16
- August 20
- September 17
- October 15
- November 19
- December 17

Contact Information

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