



# Provider Connection

A Provider Newsletter from Unison Administrative Services | Volume 4 • Number 2 • Fall 2005

*Si desea recibir una copia de esta informacion en espanol, por favor llame al numero 800-414-9025.*

## Flu Season

The flu season is fast approaching. The CDC recommends that anyone over the age of 50, anyone between 6 and 23 months of age, and any individual considered to be at high-risk receive an annual flu vaccine.

Physicians also may want to consider immunizing for pneumonia. (Pneumonia is one of the highest admitting diagnoses.)

Our Members will receive an invitation to contact you regarding getting their vaccines. Additionally, as part of our Health Management Programs, we send educational information to Members with diabetes and persistent asthma inviting them to contact you to receive a flu shot and /or pneumococcal vaccine.

Did you know that by accessing The Center for Disease Control (CDC) website, you can download and print educational materials on the influenza vaccine? You can find the site at [www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/). In addition, the latest

recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) can be located at:

[www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr54e713a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr54e713a1.htm).



The following excerpts are some of the ACIP recommendations for 2005:

- ACIP recommends that persons with any condition (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders) that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk for aspiration be vaccinated against influenza.
- ACIP emphasizes that all health care workers should be vaccinated against influenza

annually, and that facilities that employ health-care workers be strongly encouraged to provide vaccine to workers by using approaches that maximize immunization rates.

## IVR: How Valuable is Your Time?

Unison Health Plan is pleased to announce an additional service created just for you, our valued providers. An IVR option for the verification of member eligibility is now available for your use.

- No waiting
- The system updates hourly so you always receive the most up-to-date information
- Verify for one member or multiple members in the same call
- Receive PCP, COB and co-payment information
- Receive information for the current date of service or historical dates

- Call anytime! The system is available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Confirmation number given at the end of each call.
- Fast, easy, and efficient

**Just call 1-888-586-4766.**

Do you have comments or suggestions? We would like to hear your opinion about this new service. If you would like to share your thoughts, please contact the Provider Services Team at 1-800-600-9007.

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## Effective Coordination of Care Under HIPAA

Chronic conditions often require care involving a number of practitioners and facilities. Effective care coordination depends on access to complete patient health information by everyone involved in delivering care. Specialty care providers often work on dedicated disease management issues and therefore information about patients' other conditions and treatments is not always readily available.

The effectiveness of care coordination depends upon complete access to health information by the patient's primary care practitioner. The value of sharing information cannot be understated. The PCP's assembly of information from all care providers and facilities enables him/her to help ensure patient safety and assess the patient's progress against established criteria. A number of our PCPs recently noted, in the annual Practitioner Survey, their impression that Specialists do not always supply timely feedback regarding their patients. The PCPs acknowledged that information might not be as readily available due to concerns about the HIPAA privacy regulations.



The privacy rules limit the disclosure of certain health information. However, those rules are not a barrier to coordinated care. The HIPAA regulations, at 42 CFR § 164.50(c)(2), permit a provider to disclose health information, without the individual's authorization, to another health care provider for the provider's treatment of the individual. The regulations also define treatment, at 42 CFR § 164.501 to include the "provision, coordination, or management of health care and related services..." Read together, the regulations permit the disclosure of protected health information to a patient's PCP because the PCP is intimately involved in coordinating care for the patient.

In order to improve care management outcomes, it is important that PCPs have timely access to complete medical information. We request that you remind your staff that patient information can and should be sent to the PCP in a timely manner and that the HIPAA regulations do not require the patient's consent or authorization when information is shared with the PCP for treatment purposes.

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## Toolkit for Healthcare Professionals: Prescription Drug Coverage

CMS has released the Toolkit for Healthcare Professionals: Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. To access the toolkit and other educational resources, visit the drug coverage information webpage (Medlearn) for physicians and other healthcare professionals at [www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/drugcoverage.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/drugcoverage.asp).

The Toolkit for Healthcare Professionals: Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage includes downloadable educational materials specifically for physicians and other healthcare professionals and their staff to learn the basics about Medicare Prescription

Drug Coverage. It also includes materials to distribute to their Medicare patients. The kit contains reproducible artwork, a letter from the CMS Administrator, a fact sheet (English and Spanish), a brochure, an article, and a list of other resources.

Physicians and other healthcare professionals and their staff, partner organizations, social workers, financial counselors, and discharge planners will find this toolkit to be a valuable resource to get information to people with Medicare. You may add your logo and business information to these materials and copy freely, if you wish.

## Member Safety

We want our members to receive safe and effective health care. During the year, we monitor safety practices in a number of ways.

We review your doctor's offices to see if the appointment area is safe. We also make sure all medicines are kept safely out of reach. In 2004, we reviewed many offices. We noted high marks for the safety practices found in our provider offices. Here are some of the results.

Accessible Airway bag	96.07%
Oxygen tank available	95.48%
Current CPR certification	98.04%
Tracking of blood work and X-rays	76.09%
Drugs are inaccessible	99.61%
Checking/disposing of medicine that has expired	98.42%
Emergency drugs	89.57%
Prescription pads are controlled	99.41%
Refrigerated area for medications	98.77%

We also do an annual hospital safety survey. We look for safe medication use practices. We ask if the hospital employs an intensivist and hospitalist. We want to know if the hospital has a fall prevention program. We also ask them if they have employee safety training.

More hospitals indicated that they use the special doctors called intensivists or hospitalists for patients. All the hospitals that returned their survey to us have a program to reduce patient falls. All of these hospitals also have a safety officer to check on hospital-wide safety issues. These results show a strong commitment to safe patient practices!

Some other results of the survey include:

Automated order entry	26.92%
Pharmacists checking orders for possible errors	85.71%
Pharmacist seeing patients in the ICU	45.10%
Program focusing on look-alike or sound-alike drugs	90.38%
Drugs that are individually packaged for each patient (Unit-dosing system)	98.04%
Limit floor stock for concentrated medications	100.00%
Training programs for patient safety	98.08%
Intensivist	28.85%
Intensivist management for ICU patients	57.14%
Intensivist 24/7 Coverage	93.33%
Hospitalist service	30.77%
Restraint reduction program	96.15%
Falls reduction program	100.00%
Surgical site identification policy	100.00%
Safety officer	100.00%

Behind the scenes, we also work to ensure member safety with prescription drugs. Our pharmacies help to find drug-to-drug interactions before members pick up the medicine at the pharmacy.

We also share information with the members and doctors by printing safety articles in the newsletters. This year some of the topics were safe hospital admissions, safe use of car seats, and home safety practices. We will continue to do our part in maintaining a safe patient care environment.

## We're On-Line!

At [www.threerivershealth.com](http://www.threerivershealth.com), you can review our latest clinical and preventive health guidelines, health management programs, medical record requirements, quality improvement activities, and formulary; as well as search for a specialist in your area, locate information in our online provider manual, and find the phone number of your Unison representative.



## MedPLUS+/MedPLUS+ CHIP 2nd Quarter 2005 Formulary Update

### Formulary Additions – Effective July 18, 2005

Brand Name	Generic Name	Comments
Zoloft 25mg	sertraline	25mg tabs covered at one-a-day dosing
Canasa 1000mg	mesalamine suppositories	
Rebif 8.8-22	interferon beta-1a	Specialty pharmaceutical - Requires prior authorization
Luvox*	fluvoxamine	EMD (efficient medication dosing) will apply. 25mg & 50mg tablets are restricted to one-tablet-daily dosing.
Psorcon*	difluorasonone diacetate	Cream & ointment covered
Benzamycin*	Epythromycin - benzoyl peroxide 3-5% gel	
Zanaflex*	tizanidine tablets	EMD (efficient medication dosing) will apply - consolidate tablets
Hytrin*	terazosin capsules	
Mellaril*	thioridazine tablets	
Ceftin*	cefuroxime	Covered for all ages (previously restricted to ≤ 12 years old)
Prevacid Solu Tabs	lansoprazole	Covered for children 12 and younger
Suprax	cefixime suspension	Covered for children 12 and younger

*\*Only generic products are formulary*

### Formulary Status Changes

Brand Name	Generic Name	Comments
Copegus	ribavirin tablets	Will no longer be covered. Formulary agent is Ribasphere (cribavirin) capsules.
Serzone	nefazodone tablets	Will no longer be covered. Current members will continue to receive therapy.
Maxalt/Maxalt MLT	rizatriptan tablets	Quantity limit increased to 9 tablets per month.

## Smoking Cessation Programs

To find smoking cessation programs in your area for all your patients that smoke, log onto <http://webserver.health.state.pa.us/health/custom/tobacco/cessationmap.asp>. Here you will find local counseling programs to help them quit. Your patients can also get help

by calling the Pennsylvania Quit Line toll free at 1-877-724-1090. If you need more information, call Provider Services at 1-800-600-9007.



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# Privacy Rules & Member Rights

## Privacy Rules

**This notice describes how medical information about our members may be used and disclosed and how members can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.**

The law says we must help protect the privacy of our MedPLUS+ members. This page explains the rules that Three Rivers Health Plans and its affiliates use to do that job. We must follow these rules. We make sure that the providers and everyone else who works with us agree to help protect members' privacy and use these rules. We can change our privacy rules. Any changes will apply to all the information we have about our members. If we make changes, we will send a new flyer.

## Financial Information

When a member joins one of our health plans, we get information about who they are, where they live and their income. We share that information with the Department of Public Welfare. We also use it to run our business. **We will not share members' information with anyone else unless the member says we can or the law says we must.**

## Health Information

We get information about our members' health from providers. When a member joins one of our health plans, they allow us to use that kind of information. We use it when we pay for and help arrange members' health care. We also use it to run our health plans. **We will not use members' health information to do other things unless the member says we can.**

## How We Use Members' Information

**We use health information for treatment, payment and healthcare operations.**

We use members' information to help arrange members' care. We may send appointment reminders for the member or their children. We also help with care for members who are hurt, sick or pregnant.

We share members' information with doctors, hospitals, drugstores and other providers when we pay them for members' care. We share information with other companies that also pay for members' care. We share members' information with the government so they can help with any payment problems.

We tell the Department of Public Welfare about MedPLUS+ members' health.

We can use members' information to check how our health plans are doing. We also use it to check on the doctors, hospitals and other providers that work with us.

We share members' information when we send reports to the government.

We will not share members' information with their employer unless they say we can.

If the member cannot give their OK, we can get the OK from someone who takes care of the member or their family.

We may use members' health information if the law says we must or we can.

We may have to share members' information if they are in a lawsuit.

We may share members' information if there is a serious threat to the health or safety of the member or anyone else. member Handbook

## Member Rights

When a member joins one of our health plans, they agree that we can use their health information. We use it the way we explained.

Members can look at and get copies of their health information that we hold.

Members can give us more information to complete or correct their records. Members need to give this information in writing and tell why they want to change the records.

Members can ask us to change how we use their health information. Members need to ask us in writing. Members do not have to agree.

We will tell members how and when we shared their health information if a member asks. Members need to ask for this in writing.

Members can ask that their health information be sent privately.

We can only use members' information to do other things if the member says we can. Members can take back that permission at any time.

We will not do anything to punish members if they use their rights, file a complaint or ask us for help with their privacy.

Members can ask for a paper copy of these pages and we will send them one.

## Complaints

Member Services can answer members' questions about their privacy. They also take complaints. Members can reach them at 1-800-414-9025. The Department of Health and Human Services also takes complaints.

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## New Names, Same Great Company

MedPLUS+ and MedPLUS+ CHIP will be changing their name before the end of the year. MedPLUS+ will change its name to Unison Health Plan and MedPLUS+ CHIP will be changing its name to Unison Kids. Our products are being positioned for growth on a national scale. MedPLUS+ and MedPLUS+ CHIP haven't changed. In fact, we're the same great company as before. We continue to work hard to help our health plan members receive quality health care that's so important to them and their families. So why change? We feel the new name tells our story better. Because we continue to

work so closely with our doctors, members and community members to deliver the best health care services possible.



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## Profile Winners!

MedPLUS+ / MedPLUS+ CHIP takes great pleasure in recognizing the following physicians who care for MedPLUS+ / MedPLUS+ CHIP members with asthma and diabetes. These physicians have received outstanding scores based on a calculation of profile points given for various aspects of care.

### 4th Quarter 2004

Joseph Aracri DO of Pittsburgh, PA with an asthma score of 100%

Vincent Petraglia DO of McMurray, PA with a diabetes score of 76%

### 1st Quarter 2005

David Pater MD of Manchester, PA with an asthma score of 100%  
John Brennan MD of Somerset, PA with a diabetes score of 73%



Unison Administrative Services

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