Breaking Down Barriers When Communicating With Your Doctor

It is important to remember that you play a very important part in your care when visiting your doctor. Here are some things that can help make your visit more pleasant:

- Have your questions already written down before your visit
- Listen carefully to the advice your doctor is giving you
- Make sure you follow doctor’s orders and get the labs or other tests that your doctor asks you to get
- Make certain that your blood pressure is taken at every doctor visit regardless of whether it is with your primary care doctor or a specialist
- If you had a hospital admission or an Emergency Room visit, tell your doctor as he/she may not be aware. All doctors involved in your care needs to know this information.
- Your primary care doctor should receive a copy of your hospital stay known as a discharge summary which provides detailed information of your care in the hospital. It is very important that you schedule a follow up visit with your doctor regarding any inpatient hospital stay
- Ask your primary care doctor if he/she has received a copy. If not, suggest that your primary care doctor request a copy from the hospital as it is very important in managing your healthcare.
- If you visit a specialist such as a cardiologist or other specialty, a report of your visit should be sent to your primary care doctor. Ask your doctor if a report has been received, if not, give the name of the specialist that you visited and make a request to your primary care doctor that he/she obtain a report

However challenging, often there can communication barriers related to culture. The same words mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they talk the same language. When languages are different and translation has to be used to communicate, MedStar Family Choice offers Interpreter Services at no cost to you to eliminate the possibility of a misunderstanding.

Remember, your doctor is available to provide you with the quality care you deserve and will give you the best advice for your health. If you have any concerns, don’t hesitate to contact Member Services, toll free at 888-404-3549.
**Controlling Your Asthma**

Did you know that if you use your rescue inhaler more than two times a week or if your symptoms are getting worse, you need to ask your doctor if a controller medicine would help you?

A controller medicine you take every day. A rescue medicine you only use when you are having asthma signs like coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath.

Controller medicines help to stop swelling and irritation in the lungs. They keep your lungs healthier by sending a dose of protection to your lungs every day.

If you are taking controller medicines, you must use them every day. This will help keep you out of the Emergency Room and out of the hospital. If you are the parent of a child with asthma, they need your help to make sure they take their medicine every day.

As the weather gets colder, it is also important to be careful not to get sick. Catching a cold, the flu or other illness can make your asthma worse. So be careful around others who are sick, wash your hands, get a flu shot, and see your doctor.

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**Your Health is Important to Us!**

We offer free health education classes on a variety of subjects. Please visit MedStarFamilyChoice.com to check out the schedule of educational classes.

If you are unable to connect to the website, please contact us at **410-933-2200** or **800-905-1722** to obtain a list of classes in your area.

Your Links to Good Health: MedStarHealth.org • MedStarFamilyChoice.com

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**MedStar Health has Expanded it’s Services in Your Area!**

You can Join MedStar Family Choice if you live in Prince George’s, Montgomery and St Mary’s Counties. You can now select your Primary Care Provider (Doctor) for you and your family. You can visit the website for a list of providers and additional information about MedStar Family Choice.

MedStarFamilyChoice.com

Look for the MedStar Health logo in your area.
Your PCP is here to guide you regarding your health Care needs

Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) can manage much of your healthcare needs and a specialty referral may not be needed in many cases. Your PCP has the best relationship with you or your child and knows your health history. Therefore, he or she should be the first person to discuss any health concerns with you prior to giving you a referral.

It is important to follow up on all appointments that you have scheduled with your PCP. This way, if there are any problems noted, your PCP can take care of it right away.

If you feel like you want a second opinion, you have the right to get one from another in-network provider or a specialist. Always talk openly, and voice your opinion with your PCP, so you can make a decision together regarding the need to see a specialist, or the choice of letting your PCP handle your health concern.

It’s Easy to Find-A-Provider on the MedStar Family Choice Website

MedStar Family Choice has made it convenient for you to find a provider on the website. Did you know you could search the website and narrow your search by specific categories to help you? If you want to select a doctor by the name/group, hospital he/she goes to, gender, language, specialty, city, or the number of miles from your home or ZIP code, it can be done. In addition, our website contains detailed provider information, such as office hours, education and board certification information.

If you do not have access to the Internet and would like this additional information for a specific provider, you may contact Member Services. In addition, you should always call the office to make sure they are a participating provider. Remember, if you have any questions about selecting your primary care provider, please call Member Services at 888-404-3549. You can also review our website at MedStarFamilyChoice.com for more information.

Member Satisfaction Survey Reminder

MedStar Family Choice is always looking for ways to improve the quality of care you and your family receive. A random survey is conducted on an annual basis. If you receive a HEDIS®/CAHPS® 2014 satisfaction survey, don’t forget to complete it.

The CAHPS® surveys collect data from health plan members that measure the experience of care for children with chronic conditions.

Visit MedStarFamilyChoice.com to find additional information about the CAHPS® satisfaction survey.

Please Join Our Consumer Advisory Board

Help us:

• Improve the quality of your healthcare.
• Understand and resolve member questions and issues.
• Make a difference in our members’ healthcare.

Meetings are held six times a year. Refreshments are provided. Transportation is provided, if needed.

To find out more, call our Outreach staff at 800-905-1722.
MedStar Family Choice continues to improve the HealthCare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) scores in many areas. We report many different quality measures for HEDIS each year. The measures include how care is provided to children, pregnant women and adults. The scores look at how all managed care organizations provide preventive care and ongoing care for long-term conditions.

Overall, MedStar Family Choice scored above the Maryland average for HEDIS 2014 in many of the areas.

**Proposed Focus for HEDIS 2015, Calendar Year 2014**

Areas targeted for concern for the next HEDIS cycle are those areas where MedStar Family Choice feels there is an opportunity to improve and provide better care to our members.

For 2014, MedStar Family Choice will focus on:

- Pap tests
- Diabetes testing, especially for members getting HbA1C blood tests
- Getting medications to control asthma
- Well-child visits
- Prenatal and postpartum care for pregnant members
- Controlling high blood pressure

If you would like additional information about the HEDIS report, you can contact the Quality Department at 800-905-1722 or visit the website at MedStarFamilyChoice.com and enter “HEDIS” in the search bar in the top right corner.

**HEDIS is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).**

**Contact Us Anytime You Need Help!**

Please contact MedStar Family Choice if you have any questions or concerns about the services we provide. The MedStar Family Choice staff is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also call our Member Services Center at 888-404-3549 toll free, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Please call during normal business hours to have your issues addressed. You may leave us a nonurgent message after hours. Calls received after normal business hours will be returned the next business day.

**Important Numbers to Know:**

- Care management phone: 800-905-1722 or 410-933-2200
- Case management fax: 855-829-2209 or 410-933-2209
- Utilization management fax: 888-243-1790 or 410-933-2274
- Outreach fax: 888-991-2232 or 410-933-2232
- Member services phone: 888-404-3549
- Nurse Advice Line phone: 855-210-6204
Patient Safety Issues

Patient safety is one of the nation’s most pressing healthcare challenges. There are things you can do to help yourself get safer health care. Some are as simple as making sure that when you are in the hospital, your wristband has the right name on it.

You have probably seen your chart at your doctor’s office. In fact, you may have charts at several doctors’ offices. If you’ve been in the hospital, you have a chart there too. To keep track of all this information, it is a good idea to keep your own records.

What kind of information would you put in a personal health record? You could start with …

• Your name, birth date, blood type, and emergency contact
• Date of your last physical
• Dates and results of tests and screenings
• Major illnesses and surgeries, and the dates they took place
• A list of your medicines, dosages and how long you have taken them
• Any allergies
• Any chronic diseases
• Any history of illnesses in your family

Also be sure to:

1. Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns, and make sure you understand the answers. Choose a doctor you feel comfortable talking to. Take a relative or friend with you to help you ask questions and understand the answers.

2. Give your doctor and pharmacist a list of all the medicines that you take, including nonprescription medicines. Tell them about any drug allergies you have. Ask about side effects and what to avoid while taking the medicine. Read the label when you get your medicine, including all warnings.

Did you Know a Formulary (List of Medications) is on the Web?

The MedStar Family Choice Formulary is the list of approved prescription drugs covered by MedStar Family Choice. The 2015 Formulary will be available on the MedStar Family Choice website in January 2015. Any changes made to the formulary will be included in the updated issue. If you don’t have access to our website and you have questions about whether or not a specific drug is on the formulary, we can send the information you are requesting. Please call Member Services at 888-404-3549.
Fraud and Abuse Update

Fraud is when someone knowingly does something wrong or dishonest in order to benefit himself or herself or someone else. Abuse consists of behaviors or actions that are unnecessary and create waste and could be dangerous in a healthcare setting. You must report fraud and abuse when you think it might be occurring. Some examples of healthcare fraud are:

• Not reporting all of your financial information or giving false information when you apply for benefits
• Allowing someone else to use your health insurance card
• Permanently living in another state while still receiving health benefits from Maryland
• Selling medicines or supplies given to you by your doctor
• Changing or forging prescriptions given to you by your doctor

Some examples of how providers might commit fraud and abuse are:

• Performing services that are not needed
• Billing for services that were never performed
• Billing numerous times for the same service

When someone is reported for possible fraud and abuse, MedStar Family Choice will perform an investigation. The results are reported to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). DHMH may perform its own investigation too. People who perform these activities or any other dishonest activity on purpose may lose their health benefits, be fined or jailed. While MedStar Family Choice looks for possible fraud and abuse activities, we need your help to stop fraud and abuse.

MedStar Family Choice has a strict nonretaliation policy. You do not need to give your name. However, if you choose to give us your name, you don’t have to worry about anyone denying you service, removing you from the managed care organization or treating you in any way that would cause you or a family member to feel that you did something wrong for reporting any incident.

If you know of a situation that may involve fraud and abuse, please report it immediately by calling our compliance director at 410-933-2283, or you may call Member Services at 888-404-3549. Your report will remain confidential.

You may also call the HealthChoice Fraud hotline at 800-455-4521. Again, you do not have to give your name. You may also send something in writing to the DHMH program Integrity Unit, 201 West Preston St., Baltimore, MD 21201.
Protecting the Privacy of Your Health Information

MedStar Family Choice is committed to protecting the confidentiality of your protected health information. For your protection, MedStar Family Choice has policies to make sure that your protected health information is safe. These policies explain how we protect oral (verbal), written, or electronic protected health information. Before talking about your protected health information with anyone over the phone, we verify the identity of the caller and make sure the caller has the authority to know this information. Within our company, we make sure that any discussions about our members’ protected health information occur in a way that only those individuals who need to be involved in the discussions will hear them. MedStar Family Choice also makes certain that we secure all written (paper) or electronic protected health information. Paper documents are kept in secure locations. Electronic information is protected with a password and encryption, including information on portable devices. Only staff members who must have access to your information to perform their jobs have access. When using your information, only the minimum amount needed is used. In addition, all our employees receive training on how to protect our members’ health information.

With your enrollment packet, you received a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices. This important document describes how MedStar Family Choice may use and disclose your medical information, how you can access this information and how to report a complaint if you feel your privacy has been violated.

You may call to request a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices by calling Member Services at 888-404-3549.

Out of Network Services

In some instances, if MedStar Family Choice is unable to provide a necessary and covered service to a member within our network, MedStar Family Choice may allow the service to be provided outside of the network. In order for this to happen, the provider must contact MedStar Family Choice for approval. MedStar Family Choice requires two business days to process a request once all necessary information has been received. However, the final decision cannot take longer than seven days even if all of the information has not been received. The decision may be shorter, depending on the urgency of the request. MedStar Family Choice will review all requests on an individual basis. In cases where out-of-network services have been approved, you are not responsible for the cost of these services.

Value-Based Purchasing 2014
(Based on Calendar Year 2013 Findings)

Value-based Purchasing is a program developed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to ensure that managed care organizations (MCOs) in the HealthChoice program provide members with high-quality, effective and efficient care. There are 10 quality measures in this program. Some of the measures are based on HEDIS results (as described on the cover of this newsletter). Other results are based on encounter data submissions. More information will be available in a future newsletter.
MedStar Family Choice continues to update the website with valuable information, and we’ve made it easier to use the information most important to you.

You Can Find it On the Web The MedStar Family Choice website, MedStarFamilyChoice.com, contains valuable information, including:

- Appeals process
- Benefit information
- Covered services
- Added services under MedStar Family Choice
- Copay information
- What to do if you are billed for a covered service
- Case and disease management services
- Contact information for MedStar Family Choice
- Find-A-Provider (searchable provider directory)
- List of medications (formulary)
- Health encyclopedia
- Hours of operation and after-hours instructions
- Interpreter services
- Member handbook
- Member newsletter
- Member rights and responsibilities
- Fraud and abuse Information
- New technology policies
- Notice of privacy practices
- Outreach program
- Preventive care programs
- Pharmacy protocols and procedures
- Pharmacy quick reference guide
- Quality improvement programs
- Schedule of health education classes
- Transportation guidelines
- Utilization management decision-making
- Utilization affirmative statement
- Utilization external appeal rights

If you do not have access to the Internet, all of these materials are available in print by contacting our Member Services department, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 888-404-3549.