

A photograph of a woven basket filled with purple lilacs and green leaves, set against a rustic wooden background. The basket is made of light-colored straw or wicker. The lilacs are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The wooden background consists of vertical planks with visible grain and knots.

My Health Matters[®]

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MHQP Releases 6th Annual Report on Quality

This February, Massachusetts Health Quality Partners released its sixth annual report on clinical quality in primary care, comparing the performance of more than 150 medical groups across the state. MHQP offers easy online tools to help people access this information and compare how well medical groups provide preventive care services such as cancer screening and well-child care, and how well they help their patients manage chronic diseases such as diabetes and asthma. Healthcare consumers can look up and compare objective quality information for over 150 medical groups with more than 5,000 adult and pediatric primary care physicians by entering a physician's name, a medical group's name, or a zip code at www.mhqp.org.

This year's report finds that, overall, Massachusetts physicians performed

better than the national average on 28 of 29 adult and pediatric quality-of-care measures reported, and above the national 90th percentile on 15 of these measures.



MHQP is a nonprofit independent organization dedicated to improving the quality of care in the Commonwealth by publicly reporting quality information on Massachusetts primary care providers. To learn more about MHQP, go to www.mhqp.org.

Coordination of Benefits (COB)

HNE coordinates benefits with another insurer when members have other health or medical payment coverage in addition to their HNE coverage. HNE works with the other insurance company to decide who should pay for the claim first. The company who should pay the claim first is the primary payer. The other company is the secondary payer. When HNE is the secondary payer, HNE informs the provider to bill the other insurance company.

HNE coordinates benefits when a member is:

- Covered under HNE and other group health coverage
- Involved in an automobile accident
- Involved in a workers' compensation accident
- Injured and another party is legally responsible for his or her medical expenses
- Covered by Medicare

Please give us a call so that we may assist you in coordinating your benefits.

10 Ways to Prepare for Your New Doctor

Get a copy of your medical records.

Call the office of your new primary care provider (PCP) and ask how the office would like to obtain your medical records. They may be able to contact your previous PCP directly, or may ask that you bring a copy with you. You can obtain your own copy at any time by calling your previous PCP's office.

Prepare a list of all your current medications and supplements.

Include all of your prescription medication, over-the-counter (OTC) medications, vitamins, and supplements. Your new doctor also will need to know about any allergic or negative reactions you've experienced with medications. During your appointment, ask if there is a generic equivalent for your brand-name drugs because that can save money on your co-pay at the pharmacy.

Gather your family's health history.

Take the time to ask your family members about chronic illnesses, diseases, and other health conditions. This can help your doctor decide which diagnostic tests and preventive screenings are right for you.

Discuss tests and screenings

before and after. When booking your appointment, ask about any blood tests, urine tests, or other lab work that might be ordered. You should be

prepared to share the date and results of your last mammogram, pap smear, blood work, cholesterol levels, and other regular tests you have undergone. Your PCP will determine what, if any, tests are necessary to provide a good overview of your current health condition.

Know your immunization history.

You should know the dates or approximately how long ago you received immunizations for tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Ask your physician if a Tdap booster is necessary.

Request a Wellness Evaluation (or "physical").

Ask your PCP if you need a physical. Many PCPs recommend having a physical every one or two years. This can help your PCP understand your current health conditions and assess how often to see you to keep you healthy.

Prepare and bring a copy of your health concerns.

Before the appointment, take a few minutes to write down your health concerns, symptoms, and questions. Bring a copy with you to share with your PCP. This will help you to discuss all of your concerns.

Ask about online

communications. Your PCP may be able to communicate with you online. This is an easy and

efficient way to request refills, schedule appointments, and find lab results. Ask your PCP if he or she has this capability. If so, and if you want to be able to do this, find out how to register.

Ask about after-hours and weekend appointments.

Find out how to reach the PCP after hours and if the office offers weekend appointments.

Ask your PCP when you need to schedule your next visit.

Be proactive! Ask your PCP when you should return. He or she can recommend the right intervals to keep you healthy.



Quality Improvement Program Benefits You

Health New England (HNE) has a Quality Improvement (QI) Program to monitor and evaluate the healthcare services used by our members. We monitor services to see that they:

- Meet clinical and quality guidelines
- Are appropriate
- Are efficient
- Are effective
- Are safe

The Quality Management Committee oversees the entire program. The Clinical Care Assessment Committee (CCAC) oversees the clinical parts of the program. The CCAC is made up of HNE's healthcare professionals, associates, and local healthcare providers. Every year, the QI Program sets goals to improve member health outcomes and services, and conducts activities to meet those goals.

The overall goal of the program is to provide safe, high-quality clinical care and services to all members. To meet this goal, we manage and analyze data and take action to manage risks.

Every year, HNE evaluates the program to see how well it's meeting its goals. We look at all parts of the program, including clinical and service activities. We suggest changes to improve the program and goals for the next year. We also identify the resources needed to meet the goals and objectives.

Major Accomplishments for 2009 Program

Maintained NCQA Excellent Accreditation Status

Achieved the highest rating among Massachusetts commercial HMO/POS health plans in Customer Service, Claims Processing, and Plan Information on Cost

(Source: National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Quality Compass 2009 - Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) Composite Measures)

Ranked # 8 in the country out of 239 commercial health plans

(Source: U.S. News & World Report/NCQA 2009 "America's Best Health Plans")

Achieved 90th percentile ranking in the following Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set HEDIS® measures (Source: NCQA Quality Compass 2009)

- Adolescent well care
- Adult access to preventive care (ages 20-40 and 65+)
- Children and adolescent access to PCP (all age groups)
- Postpartum care
- Comprehensive diabetes care (HbA1c screening, LDL screening, BP control <140/90, retinal eye exam, medical attention for nephropathy)
- Appropriate treatment for children with upper respiratory illness
- Appropriate treatment for children with pharyngitis
- Breast cancer screening
- Chlamydia screening
- Childhood immunization (combo 3)
- Follow-up care for children prescribed ADHD medication

Some of the Program Goals for 2010

Maintain NCQA Excellent Accreditation Status

Continue to improve HEDIS measures by identifying gaps in care and expanding the distribution to practitioners and service operations

Develop and implement changes to improve culturally and linguistically appropriate care and services and decrease differences in healthcare

If you would like additional information about, or a printed copy of, the program or our annual evaluation, please call Member Services at 413-787-4004.

Medical Errors:

Tips to Help Prevent Them

Medical errors are one of the nation's leading causes of death and injury. A report by the Institute of Medicine estimates that as many as 98,000 people die in U.S. hospitals each year as the result of medical errors.

Government agencies, purchasers of group healthcare, physicians, and other healthcare providers are working together to make the U.S. healthcare system safer.

How can I help protect myself against medical errors?

The single most important way you can help to prevent errors is to be an active member of your healthcare team. That means taking part in every decision about your healthcare. Research shows that patients who are more involved with their care tend to get better results.

Keep your healthcare team informed.

Make sure that all of your doctors know about everything you are taking. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs. At least once a year, bring all of your medicines and supplements with you to your doctor.

Make sure your doctor knows about any allergies and adverse reactions you have had to medicines. This can help you avoid getting a medicine that can harm you.

Make sure that all health professionals involved in your care have important health information about you. Do not assume that everyone knows everything they need to.

Ask for information about your medicines in terms you can understand.

Ask for this information both when your medicines are prescribed and when you receive them. See the next section for a list of questions you should ask about your prescription.

Ask for written information about the side effects your medicine could cause. If you know what might happen, you will be better prepared if it does. You can report the problem right away and get help before it gets worse.

When your doctor writes you a prescription, make sure you can read it. If you can't read your doctor's handwriting, your pharmacist might not be able to either.



Questions to ask about your medicines.

- What is the medicine for?
- How am I supposed to take it, and for how long?
- What side effects are likely? What do I do if they occur?
- Is this medicine safe to take with other medicines (both prescription and over-the-counter) or dietary supplements I am taking?
- What food, drink, or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?

Talk to your pharmacist.

When you pick up your medicine from the pharmacy, ask whether it is the medicine that your doctor prescribed. A study by the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences found that 88 percent of medicine errors involved the wrong drug or the wrong dose.

(Continued on next page)

Medical Errors: Tips on How to Prevent Them*(Continued from page 5)*

If you have any questions about the directions on your medicine labels, ask. Medicine labels can be hard to understand. For example, ask if “four doses daily” means taking a dose every 6 hours around the clock or just during regular waking hours.

Ask your pharmacist for the best device to measure your liquid medicine. Also, ask questions if you’re not sure how to use it. Research shows that many people do not understand the right way to measure liquid medicines. For example, many use household teaspoons, which often do not hold a true teaspoon of liquid.

In the hospital.

If you have a choice, choose a hospital at which many patients have the procedure or surgery you need. Research shows that patients tend to have better results when they are treated in hospitals that have a great deal of experience with their condition.

If you are in a hospital, consider asking all healthcare workers who have direct contact with you whether they have washed their hands. Hand washing is an important way to prevent the spread of infections in hospitals.

When you are being discharged from the hospital, ask your doctor to explain the treatment plan you will use at home. This includes learning about your medicines and finding out when you can get back to your regular activities. Research shows that

at discharge time, doctors think their patients understand more than they really do about what they should or should not do when they return home.

Before surgery.

If you are having surgery, make sure that you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree and are clear on exactly what will be done. Doing surgery at the wrong site (for example, operating on the left knee instead of the right) is rare. But even once is too often. The good news is that wrong-site surgery is 100 percent preventable. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons urges surgeons to sign their initials directly on the site to be operated on before the surgery.

Take responsibility for your healthcare.

Speak up if you have questions or concerns. You have a right to question anyone who is involved with your care.

Make sure that someone, such as your personal doctor, is in charge of your care. This is especially important if you have many health problems or are in a hospital.

Ask a family member or friend to be there with you and to be your advocate (someone who can help get things done and speak up for you if you can’t). Even if you think you don’t need help now, you might need it later.

Learn more about your condition and the tests and treatments recommended by your doctor.

Know that “more” is not always better. It is a good idea to find out why a test or treatment is needed and how it can help you. You could be better off without it.

If you have a test, don’t assume that no news is good news. Ask about the results.

Ask your doctor and nurse and use other reliable sources to get more information about your condition and treatments. For example, treatment recommendations based on the latest scientific evidence are available from the National Guidelines Clearinghouse.

Ask your doctor if your treatment is based on the latest evidence.



Are You Forgetting to See Your PCP?

Several years ago, an HNE-sponsored focus group found that breast cancer survivors who scheduled follow-up appointments with their cancer care doctors often stopped visiting their primary care physicians (PCPs). As a result, most missed preventive screenings for conditions such as cervical and colorectal cancer, while

others were left without proper diabetes care.

A recent study uncovered a similar trend nationwide. In addition, patients who don't let their PCPs know that they have been in the emergency room (ER) or the hospital, or that they had surgery, are far more likely to return to the ER or hospital.

Your PCP should be your first point of medical contact. He or she can treat common health problems. If necessary, your PCP can refer you to a specialist for consultations, treatments, surgery, or care for more complicated conditions. Too often, however, patients continue to see specialists instead of their PCPs for checkups after their condition is resolved. This can result in missed screenings for other health conditions and less cost-effective care.

Remember to schedule regular PCP visits, even if you see a specialist for a particular health issue. It's one of the best ways to address health issues before they become serious.

Try This Healthy Recipe!



Beef Stroganoff

1 lb lean beef (top round), cubed	1/4 tsp nutmeg
2 tsp vegetable oil	1/2 tsp dried basil
3/4 Tbsp onion, finely chopped	1/4 C white wine
1 lb mushrooms, sliced	1 C plain lowfat yogurt
1/4 tsp salt	6 C macaroni, cooked in unsalted water
Pepper to taste	

1. Cut beef into 1-inch cubes.
2. Heat 1 teaspoon oil in nonstick skillet. Sauté onion for 2 minutes.
3. Add beef and sauté for 5 minutes more. Turn to brown evenly. Remove from pan and keep hot.
4. Add remaining oil to pan and sauté mushrooms.
5. Add beef and onions to pan with seasonings.
6. Add wine and yogurt, and gently stir in. Heat, but do not boil.
7. Serve with macaroni.

Calories: 499 • Total fat: 10 g Saturated fat: 3 g
Cholesterol: 80 mg • Sodium: 200 mg

This recipe courtesy of "Keep the Beat Heart Healthy Recipes," National Institute of Health. NIM Pub.No. 03-2921.

Photo by: Lisa Ubersax Tefft



Department Profile

HNE Member Services Department

HNE Member Services is the face of HNE and very often the first point of contact for members, providers, and employer groups. Member Services staff is trained to answer customer questions and address concerns in a way that is both personal and accountable. Member Services representatives are evaluated on a number of different measures, including accuracy, friendliness, and attitude.

One of HNE's commitments is ensuring that all our customers receive the best possible service. As part of this commitment, HNE developed its Quality Program based on monitoring calls. We monitor calls for quality, speed to answer, and

call logging, among other measures. We use evaluations for individual coaching and to identify trends that may signal a need for general department training.

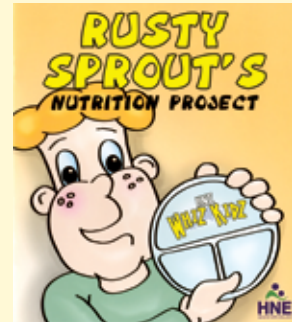
As a measure of the hard work and dedication of the Member Services team, HNE consistently receives high national ratings for the service we provide. In 2009, for the second straight year, according to the NCQA Quality Compass® Report, HNE achieved the highest ratings of any Massachusetts commercial HMO/POS plan in the "Customer Service" composite measure. NCQA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving healthcare quality.



Representing Member Services are, from left, front row: Donna Robillard and Lynn Sullivan; second row: Shantelle O'Connor, Matthew Principe and Sharon Kelly.

HNE Introduces Rusty Sprout

Health New England has just published "Rusty Sprout's Nutrition Project," the fifth book in the HNE



Whiz Kidz series. So far, each of the books in the series has been well received, earning national awards and recognition.

The company created the series to fill a void in health education information for elementary school children.

According to Lynn Ostrowski, HNE Director of Brand and Community Relations, "We began to research what materials were out there to help kids between the ages of 5 and 12 deal with chronic health problems, and discovered that little, if anything, was available. So we developed our own."

"Although we didn't plan it that way," Ms. Ostrowski added, "Rusty's timing is perfect!" She was referring to First Lady Michelle Obama's launch of a national campaign against childhood obesity.

HNE Introduces Rusty Sprout*(Continued from page 8)*

A previous HNE Whiz Kidz book, “Seymour’s Weight Loss Challenge,” addressed this issue head-on.

Now, in the latest book, “Rusty Sprout’s Nutrition Project,” Rusty, an average elementary school-aged boy, learns about the importance of healthy eating.

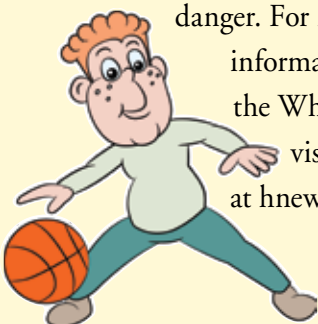
Each Whiz Kidz book addresses a specific health topic. Previous titles include “How ACE Became an Asthma Control Expert,” “Seymour’s Weight Loss Challenge,” “Danny Dice, Diabetes Insulin Control Expert,” and “Sammie Sportz.”

All of the books are targeted to children between the ages of 5 and 12 and have been reviewed by panels of physicians and topic experts, as well as a group of junior editors, children between the ages of 5 and 12.

Ms. Ostrowski added, “Our goal is to provide important health information in a way that engages children and their parents. The feedback from families is telling us we are on the right track.”

Topics scheduled for future Whiz Kidz books include self-esteem and stranger

danger. For more information on the Whiz Kidz, visit their website at hnewhizkidz.com.



HNE’s ID Cards Have a New Look!

HNE’s member ID cards have a new look. Until this year, the ID cards included the name of your primary care provider (PCP). Beginning in January, the ID cards were redesigned, and now do not include the PCP name. We did this for several reasons:



- Having the PCP name on HNE ID cards meant that every PCP change required a new ID card. Each year, HNE reissued over 10,000 ID cards because members changed primary care providers. Changing the ID card design helps us to reduce waste and keep administrative costs down.
- Each ID card contains a lot of important information in a very small space. Removing the PCP name creates room for new, useful information on the card, such as additional benefit information or important phone numbers.
- Finally, we confirmed that our providers don’t require this information on the ID cards.

Even though the PCP name is no longer on the card, choosing a PCP is still important! Most HNE plans require each member to have a PCP. If you haven’t selected a PCP, please call HNE and we can help you find one in our network.

HNE Night at Springfield Falcons



HNE members Hailey Fernandes, 8, and Ryan Fernandes, 5, drop the puck at a Springfield Falcons game.

Baystate Health's Senior Class Program

[The Senior Class program is a free health and wellness program for people 55 and older. Anyone can join, even if you are not a patient or employee of Baystate Health or a member of Health New England. The program is a part of the charitable mission of Baystate to improve the health of the local community.]

Susan M. Fontaine, the Loyalty Programs senior coordinator at Baystate, heads the Senior Class program. In a recent interview she provided an overview of the program, some history, and a glimpse into the future. Ed.]

Senior Class, started 22 years ago by Cathy Buckley in the marketing department at Baystate, is known for its great parties: the Holiday Ball, dinners, galas, luncheons, picnics, and other glamorous events. Local performer Dane Kane entertains annually at the Holiday Ball. Richie Mitnick performs at the Spring Luncheon, playing music popular with the Senior Class: merengues, cha chas, and line dances. The Spring Luncheon is held at Chez Josef and regularly draws 500-600 attendees. The summer picnic has grown so large it is held over two days in Stanley Park.

Members of Senior Class receive a quarterly newsletter packed with information and announcements of upcoming events. The membership now stands at 23,000. According

to Susan Fontaine, a key benefit of membership is access to well-known physicians who come to give talks, stay for question-and-answer periods, and make themselves available for one-on-one chats with attendees.

For the past ten years, Susan Fontaine has led the program. Susan, an artist who lives in a loft studio in a refurbished factory building in Stafford Springs, Connecticut, also coordinates the Baystate Arts Alive program for Baystate Medical Center. Baystate Arts Alive is a gallery space in the medical center that displays the work of local and regional artists. As part of that program, the Senior Class



Susan Fontaine, Loyalty Programs Senior Coordinator at Baystate

has an annual art show where Senior Class members display and sell their fine art.

Susan brings great enthusiasm and a creative artistic temperament to the job. She is widely known in the senior community as a dynamic and accessible leader. She is responsible for Senior Class in all three Baystate locations: Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield, Baystate Mary Lane Hospital in Ware, and Baystate Medical Center in Springfield.

Currently, she is putting together a virtual "road trip," a tour of local attractions that includes tips about quality, safety, and budgets. The presentation will be interactive, with "car-racing" as attendees move from station to station to receive information from places such as Six Flags. Susan aims to make these events lively, fresh, and fun. For the 20th anniversary of Senior Class, she organized a "virtual cruise" with



Dr. John Santoro, chief of the Baystate Emergency Department, gives a talk on being a cruise ship doctor as well as a physician and department chief at Baystate Medical Center.

Senior Class (Continued from page 10)

Dr. John Santoro, chief of Emergency Medicine at Baystate Medical Center, who is also a cruise ship doctor.

There were games and information about what you need to know about receiving medical attention on a cruise ship.

In addition to the quarterly newsletter and the many social events, Senior Class members receive other benefits, including discounts on screenings and valuable health information. Many seniors have chosen their surgeons after attending one of the lectures or seminars.

There is also a strong social networking component to the Senior Class. Many friendships have been made, and there is also some dating among Senior Class members!

According to Susan, “Our members come from all walks of life.”

Looking to the future, Susan mentioned that she is planning to start an online version of the Senior Class newsletter to reach more seniors. The entire program, supported by Baystate Health, goes hand in hand with Baystate’s stated mission to improve the health of the community.

Susan also uses her Baystate connections to help seniors. She is an unofficial link for seniors to find out what services Baystate offers, and often serves as a liaison between members and providers. Finally, Susan wanted to point out that no marketing dollars are spent on this program. Membership is promoted entirely by

word of mouth, one senior telling another about the program.

The Senior Class program is a very successful and beneficial program, and every HNE member is encouraged to take advantage of this valuable free resource!

For more information about the Senior Class program, contact Susan Fontaine at Baystate Health at (413) 794-7630 or go to baystatehealth.org/seniorclass.



Baystate Health Senior Class is a FREE loyalty program dedicated to health and wellness offered exclusively for men and women age 55 and over.

Benefits of joining:

- Free educational seminars on topics such as nutrition, exercise, the latest medical technologies and treatments, and other health issues important to you.
- Free and low cost health screenings.
- Free subscription to *Baystate Health* magazine, Baystate Health’s quarterly guide to healthy living.
- Free quarterly *Senior Class Newsletter* chock full of information about seminars, screenings, volunteer opportunities, articles on wellness, and special events.
- A variety of social activities, including:
 - ♦ Annual Senior Class Picnics
 - ♦ Senior Class Spring Luncheon
 - ♦ Senior Class Holiday Gala Ball
- Automatic membership in Rx Senior Class®, Baystate Health’s free discount prescription program that enables you to save 10-50% on your prescriptions at most area pharmacies. In addition, you’ll receive discounts in the cafeterias at Baystate Medical Center, Baystate Mary Lane Hospital, and Baystate Franklin Medical Center, including the two Friendly’s Cafes at Baystate Medical Center.
- Discount coupon for the Baystate Medical Center Gift Shop



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Not available on the Comedy Series or Golden Circle. Cannot be combined with any other offer.
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