Could I be having a heart attack?” thought Rose Marie Urzetta as she climbed up the stairs feeling a heavy pressure in her chest.

The 58-year-old Irondequoit woman tried to convince herself that it was just indigestion, but something told her she’d better get it checked out. She had just read an article in a national publication explaining the symptoms of heart attack for women, so she decided to call her doctor.

It was a wise decision.

Luckily she knew that chest pain isn’t the only symptom of heart attack. Sweating, fatigue, chest tightness, shortness of breath, nausea and/or pain or numbness in the arm or jaw are symptoms as well.

Rose Marie hadn’t had a heart attack, but she did have 90 percent blockage in one of her main arteries. Thomas Stuver, M.D., at Rochester General Hospital (RGH) performed an angioplasty and put in a stent.

Rose Marie hadn’t had a heart attack, but she did have 90 percent blockage in one of her main arteries. Thomas Stuver, M.D., at Rochester General Hospital (RGH) performed an angioplasty and put in a stent.

Rose Marie found out that she was a high-risk candidate for heart disease because of her family history of heart problems and high cholesterol. She followed her surgery with the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program of RGH, which helped her both mentally and physically.

“At RGH Cardiac Rehab I learned what I needed to do to keep myself healthy,” she said. “I also met many staff members and patients who were there to support me. I’m very grateful to them, to Dr. Stuver and to all who cared for me at Rochester General.”

Rose Marie Urzetta knows the importance of recognizing the symptoms of heart disease.

ViaHealth Plan joins forces with Rochester Red Wings to support heart health

The Rochester Red Wings will be batting against heart disease when they team up with ViaHealth Plan this summer to raise money for the American Heart Association (AHA).

This fun-filled event, set for Friday, July 22, at Frontier Field, will feature the Red Wings vs. Durham Bulls baseball game, prize giveaways, fireworks and valuable educational materials on heart health.

The event will feature a “Shirt off their backs” silent auction of special Red Wings players’ jerseys that will be autographed and worn by the players that evening. ViaHealth Plan, AHA and Rochester General Hospital’s Rochester Heart Institute will distribute important heart health information in the concourse at Frontier Field. Heart disease survivors will be honored before the game and fireworks will follow the game.

In support of healthy lifestyles, we at ViaHealth Plan encourage you to participate in this fun and educational community event. Special discount tickets are available for just $1 and can be purchased through the ViaHealth Plan Web site at www.viahealthplan.com/heart. Tickets are limited, so purchase soon. All proceeds will benefit the AHA.

“We are excited about this event,” said Bonnie Webster, AHA Executive Director, Rochester Division, “and we are grateful to ViaHealth Plan for promoting heart health in our community.”

For additional information about activities and educational programs sponsored by the American Heart Association, visit their Web site at www.americanheart.org or call (585) 697-6267.

I learned what I needed to do to keep myself healthy,” she said. “I also met many staff members and patients who were there to support me. I’m very grateful to them, to Dr. Stuver and to all who cared for me at Rochester General.”

Continued on back page
New and improved viahealthplan.com

We’ve been working on your plan’s Web site www.viahealthplan.com—check it for the latest information about your plan.

You will find a wealth of information and resources on everything from finding a doctor or pharmacy close to home, to keeping your family healthy, to finding the best fitness program to meet your needs through our Member Rewards benefits.

Browse our Research Health Conditions section, where you can determine your target blood pressure and increase your awareness about the effects of high blood pressure and cholesterol. The Health Information Library provides research on health conditions and topics from A to Z. Useful resources and links to other regional and national health care organizations, foundations and institutes are provided for your benefit.

Want to test your knowledge? Take the weekly health care quizzes and learn something new! Need help quitting smoking? Want to learn how to limit weight gain while quitting smoking? Find a smoking cessation program in your area through the Member Rewards program.

Chronic illnesses affect many of us. Learn ways that you can help care for yourself or a loved one with a chronic illness through the Care Calls program.

Information is also available on heart disease and prevention, including a Heart Disease Resource section where you will find educational tips on healthy eating and even some heart-healthy recipes! Or reserve $1 member discount tickets to the ViaHealth Plan/Red Wings heart disease awareness game on Friday, July 22, to benefit the American Heart Association. For more information, see the front page.

Recent events in the media have brought increased awareness and attention to the importance of planning for our future in the event of a health care crisis—known as Advance Care Planning. Many of us might not know how to go about setting up a plan for our future in order to protect ourselves and our family in the event of a health care crisis. Our Web site, www.viahealthplan.com, provides resources for helping you make the best decisions based on your needs. The Advance Care Planning booklet will guide you through the process and also provides legal forms. Your Life, Your Choice workbooks are available and downloadable forms are provided for you. Take action! Protect yourself and your family.

Our goal is to educate members by providing resources to better assist them in making important health care decisions. Check out www.viahealthplan.com today!

Member Rewards offers more value for your family

The BlueCross Member Rewards program offers discounts to help connect you with a healthier lifestyle. As a member of ViaHealth Plan, you can take advantage of many unique opportunities and family savings offered by Member Rewards, including health and wellness classes, smoking cessation programs, swimming programs and selected town youth fitness programs.

Visit the Member Rewards page at www.excellusbcbs.com to learn more about current discounts on activities and education programs.

Establishing care with a new PCP

Are you a new member or are you planning to change your primary care physician (PCP)? If so, it is important for you to know the steps to good care:
- Select a PCP from the directory provided to you.
- Call that PCP to determine if he or she is accepting new patients. Some physicians may also limit the ages of the patients they see.
- At that time, schedule an appointment to become established with the PCP. This initial visit provides your new PCP the opportunity to become familiar with you and your medical history. The physician will also need to receive records from your previous PCP in order to coordinate your care. This is especially true for children who need to follow recommended well-care visits and immunization schedules. Likewise, chronic conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension, which require regular medications and monitoring by your physician, can also be assessed at this visit.
- Your PCP is an important partner in keeping you healthy. He or she is responsible for managing and coordinating your medical care, including diagnosis, treatment, referrals to specialists, hospitalization and follow-up care.
- It is a good idea to establish a relationship with your doctor. Be sure to call him or her whenever you feel you need medical care. Your doctor or his or her on-call physician is available to you 24 hours a day. If your doctor determines that you need to see a specialist for treatment, he or she will refer you to a participating specialist. Before making your first appointment with the specialist, be sure that you have a referral from your PCP.
- You may contact Customer Service at the phone number on your ID card if you need additional information.

Need help finding a doctor?

Our online “Find a Doctor” tool makes it easy to search for a doctor who meets your needs. Best of all, information is instantly updated when changes are made to a provider’s profile.
- You can search by:
  - Gender.
  - Specialty.
  - Languages spoken.
  - Location.
  - Hospital affiliation.
- Whether the doctor is accepting new patients.
- Your search results will include:
  - The doctor’s office hours, location and phone numbers.
  - Whether the office is handicap accessible.
- If there is public transportation nearby.
- The number of doctors and/or nurse practitioners in the practice.
- Information about the doctor’s board certification, medical school attended, residency, fellowship training and teaching affiliations.
- Try it today by clicking on the “Find a Doctor” link at www.excellusbcbs.com.
- Members can also call the phone number on their ID card if they do not have Internet access.

ViaHealth 6/1/05
Your member rights and responsibilities

A s a member of our plan, you have certain rights and responsibilities that are outlined below:

You have the right to:

- Receive all the benefits to which you are entitled under your contract.
- Obtain complete, current information about a diagnosis, treatment and prognosis from a provider in terms that you can reasonably be expected to understand.
- Refuse treatment as allowed by law, and be informed by your physician of the medical consequences.
- Refuse to participate in research.
- Confidentiality of medical records and information, with the authority to approve or refuse the redisclosure by us of such information, to the extent protected by law.
- Receive all information needed to give informed consent for any procedure or treatment.
- Access to your medical records as permitted by New York state law.
- Express concerns and complaints about the care and services provided by physicians and other providers, and have us investigate and respond to these concerns and complaints.
- Candid discussion of appropriate or medically necessary treatment options for your condition, regardless of cost or benefit coverage.
- Care and treatment without regard to age, race, color, sex or sexual orientation, religion, marital status, national origin, economic status or source of payment.
- Voice complaints and recommend changes in benefits and services to staff, administration and/or the New York State Insurance Department or Department of Health, without fear of reprisal.
- Formulate advance directives regarding your care. To obtain a Health Care Proxy form, contact us.
- Contact one of our service departments to obtain the names, qualifications and titles of providers who are responsible for your care.
- All information about your health plan, its services and its providers and procedures.
- Make recommendations regarding the organization's members' rights and responsibilities.

You have the responsibility to:

- Be an active partner in the effort to promote and restore health by:
  - Openly sharing information about your symptoms and health history with your physician.
  - Listening.
  - Asking questions.
  - Becoming informed about your diagnosis, recommended treatment and anticipated or possible outcomes.
- Following the plans of care you have agreed to (such as taking medicine and making and keeping appointments).
- Returning for further care, if any problem fails to improve.
- Accepting responsibility for the outcomes of your decisions.
- Participate in understanding health problems and developing mutually agreed upon treatment goals.
- Have all care provided, arranged or authorized by your primary care physician (PCP).
- Inform your PCP if there are changes in your health status.
- Obtain services authorized by your PCP.
- Share with your PCP any concerns about the medical care or services that you receive.
- Permit us to review your medical records in order to comply with federal, state and local government regulations regarding quality assurance, and to verify the nature of services provided.
- Respect time set aside for your appointments with providers and give as much notice as possible when an appointment must be rescheduled or cancelled.
- Understand that emergencies arise for your providers and that your appointments may be unavoidably delayed as a result.
- Respect staff and providers.
- Follow the instructions and guidelines given by your providers.
- Show your ID card and pay your visit fees to the provider at the time the service is rendered.
- Become informed about our policies and procedures, as well as the office policies and procedures of your providers, so that you can make the best use of the services that are available under your contract.
- Abide by the conditions set forth in your contract.
A cure for the summertime blues

Step Up your physical activity

With summer here, more daylight and warmer temperatures provide an ideal time to increase your physical activity. Most health experts recommend establishing a goal of at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days.

For those who think they cannot fit daily physical activity into their busy schedules, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) offers the following simple Step Up tips:

- Divide and conquer. If you cannot devote 30 consecutive minutes to exercise, split it into two or three shorter activities spread throughout the day—such as a brisk 15-minute walk at lunch and again after dinner.
- Work around the house counts. You don't have to walk on a treadmill or do formal exercise to get a good workout. Remember that any moderately strenuous activity that increases your heart rate is beneficial, such as gardening, vacuuming or washing the car (by hand—not using the drive-thru). Instead of letting the dog out into the backyard, take it for a walk around the block.
- Make it a family affair. Make physical activity fun by involving the family in a game of kickball or Frisbee, or go for a group hike at one of our area's many state, county, and city parks.

"Simply increasing your physical activity even a little bit every day can get you one step closer to a goal of improved health," said Amanda Shanahan, health promotion supervisor, Excellus BCBS.

For more tips and other information about how to Step Up, visit www.stepup.excellusbcbs.com. Anyone who has been inactive for a long period of time or plans to start a new exercise program should first consult his or her physician.

Enhanced Web site enables community to Step Up to a healthier lifestyle

To help upstate New Yorkers reach their goals to eat better and be more active through small, achievable steps, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) has added several enhancements to its Step Up Web site at www.stepup.excellusbcbs.com.

These free resources—which include personalized tracking tools, nutrition and fitness calculators, access to an online health encyclopedia and a variety of other health-related information—are available to anyone, not just Excellus BCBS members.

The main feature of the Step Up Web site allows users to create their personalized, secure Step Up page to track their progress toward reaching their nutrition and exercise goals. They do this by entering daily step totals and servings of fruits and vegetables. The site also includes useful guides, such as a chart that converts common physical activities into steps, and another that helps determine serving sizes and portions.

Individuals, employers and community groups can start a “Healthy Competition” and challenge friends, family or co-workers to compete against each other while achieving healthy goals.

Those who do not want to register can still access a variety of useful health-related online tools and information on the Step Up Web site, such as:

- Fitness and nutrition calculators.
- Healthy recipes, provided by Wegmans.
- A Healthy Encyclopedia that contains information on more than 5,000 health-related topics.
- A parks and trails link listing city, county and state parks in a selected upstate region.
- Links and tools that enable users to locate a doctor or hospital and compare quality care of upstate hospitals.
- A Fitness Center menu that contains a variety of information related to physical fitness, including the benefits of fitness, managing your fitness, fitness calculators and other information geared toward helping you incorporate physical activity into your daily life.
- An Eat Smart area that provides a variety of nutrition information, including tips for eating on the run, healthier fast-food options, eating well at work and even how to read food labels.

All are available free at www.stepup.excellusbcbs.com.

Excellus BCBS’ Step Up campaign was launched in summer 2004 as part of a public campaign to address the region’s obesity epidemic. A recent Excellus BCBS Health Policy Report reported that more than 1.4 million upstate New York adults are overweight. Another 860,000 are obese (classified as 40 or more pounds overweight). That equates to six of every 10 upstate New York adults, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
Centering Pregnancy Program promotes prenatal health for young moms

A special program promoting prenatal health for first-time moms age 21 and younger is being offered through The Women’s Center (TWC) at Rochester General Hospital (RGH).

The Centering Pregnancy Program, based on a national model, offers prenatal care in a group setting. Women are initially seen individually in TWC for their histories and physicals, and those with low-risk pregnancies are then invited to join groups of expectant moms with like ages and similar due dates. The groups form during the first three months of pregnancy and then continue throughout the pregnancy and early postpartum stages.

The Centering Pregnancy Program gives young women and their significant others or families the opportunity to share the pregnancy experience with a support group of their peers. The groups discuss topics related to pregnancy, childbirth, parenting and personal growth. The young women are encouraged to monitor their pregnancies with self-assessment charts and take an active role in caring for themselves and their unborn children.

“This is a great experience for young women who are experiencing pregnancy for the first time and may have fears and concerns,” said Rosemary Janofsky, M.S.N., C.N.M., licensed midwife at RGH. “The groups give the young women extra support during their entire pregnancy,” said Martha Thompson, M.S.N., C.N.M., licensed midwife who works with Janofsky to facilitate the program. Licensed midwives consult, collaborate and refer to physicians when appropriate throughout the pregnancy. Services are covered by ViaHealth Plan.

TWC at RGH is staffed by high-risk specialists, board-certified Ob/Gyn doctors, residents, physicians assistants, nurse practitioners, licensed midwives, a psychologist, a clinical dietitian, and social workers. In addition to medical care TWC offers private counseling for concerns such as nutrition, sexually transmitted disease, infertility, genetics, menopause, substance abuse and incompetence. Many of the staff speak both English and Spanish. For information, call (585) 922-4730 or go to www.viahealth.org and click on the “Women’s and Children’s Services” section.

School-based health program offered in Rochester city schools

An innovative ViaHealth program offering health care and mental health resources in schools has been caring for children in the Rochester city school district for nearly 10 years.

School-based health programs, offered through ViaHealth and the ViaHealth Behavioral Health program, are currently available in five city schools. A ViaHealth nurse practitioner works as needed alongside the school nurse and other health care professionals, including collaborative pediatricians, psychiatrists, child psychologists and certified social workers.

“Our goal is to collaborate with the school district on children’s health care to help keep children healthy and decrease absenteeism,” said Martha Bottoni, ViaHealth Plan family nurse practitioner.

The program can provide acute care services such as rapid strep tests, give immunizations when needed and test for other illnesses. “This eases the process for children with working parents or parents without transportation who would otherwise need to pick up the child to take to the doctor,” Bottoni said.

One of the special features of the program is the ability to provide full-time mental health counseling at school. “It’s difficult for a child to concentrate and be successful in school if they are having mental health issues,” said Bottoni.

Counselors see children who have clinical depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress syndrome or suicidal tendencies during their study hall and lunch hours. “We also have many children who need basics like food, clothing and shelter, and we are able to work with community resources to help them too,” said Bottoni.

The program is funded by state and federal grants. For more information and eligibility requirements, contact Joan Phillips, director, Children and Youth Services of the ViaHealth Behavioral Health Network, at (585) 922-2501. The program is covered by ViaHealth Plan and other insurances and there are no out-of-pocket expenses for students and their families.

GRIPA achieves certification

The Greater Rochester Independent Practice Association (GRIPA) has achieved certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Privacy Certification Program for Business Associates (PCBA). A thorough on-site review in December 2004 found that GRIPA had demonstrated compliance with national standards to safeguard personal health-related information.

Your ViaHealth Plan physicians are part of GRIPA, and PCBA certification demonstrates that GRIPA is committed to safeguarding your ViaHealth Plan personal health information.

GRIPA was required to meet rigorous standards addressing privacy protections for oral, written and electronic health information, and processes and practices respecting the use, disclosure and secure storage of personal health information in Medical Management and Data Analysis business units. PCBA standards also require employee training in protecting personal health information, consumers’ access to their own health information, and contracting between covered entities and their business associates.

Certain protections for such information are required by sections of the HIPAA privacy and security regulations. These regulations establish specific expectations for “covered entities,” such as health plans and hospitals, which in turn are required to obtain satisfactory assurances that their business associates are appropriately protecting private health care information.

PCBA was established in 2003 by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and the NCQA, the nation’s leading advocates for quality in health care.

ViaHealth 6/1/05
Well-child visits keep kids healthy

Well-child visits promote a healthy start and provide a chance for you and your child to get to know your child’s doctor. Working with our participating doctors, we’ve developed guidelines that support preventive health recommendations for children (see chart below).

The goal of the well-child visit is to check your child’s health and development. During the visit, the doctor will let you know if it is time for your child to receive any immunizations. See the chart on page 7 for recommended immunizations and the ages at which they are commonly given.

Your child’s doctor may also recommend certain diagnostic tests appropriate for your child’s age, such as tests to measure potential exposure to lead.

Your child’s doctor will also advise you and your child about injury prevention and healthy lifestyle issues appropriate for his or her age, including nutrition, exercise, dental health, tobacco use, alcohol and substance abuse, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

The well-child visit provides the perfect opportunity for you to talk about concerns and ask any questions you may have.

Suggested exam schedule for kids

Children should visit their doctor for well-child visits at these ages:

**First year of life**

If your child is discharged from the hospital within 48 hours of birth: a follow-up visit within 2 to 4 days, and at 2 to 4 weeks, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 9 months.

**Physical exam to include but not be limited to:**
- Risk assessment: physical exam and history.
- Newborn screen.
- Height and weight measurement.
- Head circumference.
- Development/behavior assessment.
- Hearing screen—newborn checked before discharge from hospital, then tested at well-child visits.
- Immunizations.
- Blood lead level.
- Counseling at preventive health visit.*

**1 to 5 years**

At 1 year, 15 months, 18 months and yearly at ages 2 through 5.

**Physical exam to include but not be limited to:**
- Risk assessment: physical exam and history.
- Height and weight measurement.
- Head circumference measurement.
- Blood pressure measurement.
- Development/behavior school assessment.
- Vision screen (objective).
- Hearing screen (subjective) at ages 4 and 5.
- Immunizations.
- Blood lead level.
- Counseling at preventive health visit.*

**6 to 11 years**

Every two years.

**Physical exam to include but not be limited to:**
- Risk assessment: physical exam and history.
- Height and weight measurement.
- Blood pressure measurement.
- Development/behavior school assessment.
- Immunizations.
- Alcohol and drug use screen.
- Tobacco use screen.
- Counseling at preventive health visit.*

**12 to 17 years**

Every year.

**Physical exam to include but not be limited to:**
- Risk assessment: physical exam and history.
- Height and weight measurement.
- Blood pressure measurement.
- Development/behavior school assessment.
- Immunizations.
- Alcohol and drug use screen.
- Tobacco use screen.
- Counseling at preventive health visit.*

*Counseling can include parenting skills, injury prevention, diet, exercise, dental health, smoking, alcohol and drug use, sexual behavior and mental health.
Why immunize your child?

Immunization is one of the most important ways parents can protect their children against dangerous diseases. Before the widespread use of immunizations in the United States, infectious diseases killed or disabled thousands of children every year.

It is important for parents to realize that even though the actual number of vaccine-preventable illnesses has decreased, these diseases still exist. Talk to your child’s primary care physician to be sure that your child is fully immunized.

### DISEASE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DANGERS OF DISEASE/WHY IMMUNIZE?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measles</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Haemophilus influenzae</em> type b (Hib)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pertussis (whooping cough)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubella (German measles)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varicella (chickenpox)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diphtheria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tetanus (lockjaw)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
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Please refer to the immunization schedule below to help ensure that your child receives the proper immunizations.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

### Recommended childhood immunization schedule

To help ensure your child’s good health, his or her primary care physician will let you know when it is time to receive these important immunizations.

**Vaccines**

- Hepatitis B
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- Inactivated polio
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Varicella
- Pneumococcal
- Influenza
- Hepatitis A

**Range of recommended ages**

- 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- 24 months
- 4–6 years
- 11–12 years
- 13–18 years

**Catch-up vaccination**

- Hep B series
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- Inactivated polio
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Varicella
- Pneumococcal
- Influenza
- Hepatitis A

Vaccines are listed under routinely recommended ages. Bars indicate range of recommended ages for immunizations. Any dose not given at the recommended age should be given as a “catch-up” immunization at any subsequent visit when indicated and feasible. Purple bars indicate vaccines to be given if previously recommended doses were missing or given earlier than the recommended minimum age. This chart is based on information gathered by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Family Physicians as of December 1, 2004. The recommendations do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or procedure to be followed. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate.

**Learn more about well-child visits**

Most of our health plans offer full coverage for well-child visits and immunizations. Some may require a copay, depending on your contract.

For some age-groups, yearly well-child visits are recommended—please see the chart on page 6 for details.

If your child is due for an exam, call today to schedule an appointment with his or her doctor. If you have any questions about well-child visits, ask your child’s doctor or call Customer Service at the number on your ID card.

**Recommended childhood immunization schedule**

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How to get the care you need

As a member of ViaHealth Plan, you can call your primary care physician (PCP) for urgent medical care day or night, seven days a week.

After office hours
If you get sick or hurt and need care after regular office hours, call your doctor’s office first, unless it is an emergency medical condition. Your PCP knows your medical history and is the best person to help you. Your PCP may use an answering service or another doctor who is on call to make sure you can get medical care when you need it.

Your PCP or the on-call doctor will decide if you need treatment right away or if you can wait for regular office hours. If you do need care, your doctor may see you at his or her office, send you to his or her on-call doctor, send you to an urgent or after-hours care center, or send you to an emergency room.

When it’s an emergency
In an emergency medical situation, you should go directly to the nearest emergency room or call 911 for help. ViaHealth Plan uses the following statement from the New York state insurance law to define an emergency medical condition: a “medical or behavioral condition, the onset of which is sudden, that manifests itself by symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, that a prudent layperson possessing an average knowledge of medicine and health could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in placing the health of the person in serious jeopardy, or in the case of behavioral health, placing the health of others in serious jeopardy; or serious impairment to a bodily function; or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part; or serious disfigurement.” Some examples include severe chest pain, poisoning or unconsciousness.

You do not need prior authorization for treatment of emergency medical conditions. However, it is best if you can have someone telephone your PCP as soon as possible so that he or she can know you are being treated.

Even if you can’t make the call when you are being treated, please have someone notify your PCP that you were treated for an emergency medical condition as soon as possible, preferably within 48 hours. This will ensure that your PCP can help manage your health care.

If you are treated for an emergency medical condition while out of the service area, we prefer that you return to the service area to receive follow-up care through your PCP.

Your health care coverage goes with you
As a BlueCross BlueShield HMO member, you have access to health care benefits across the country. To meet the different health care needs of members and dependents who are away from home, your HMO offers separate benefits for short trips and long-term stays.

For short trips (less than 90 days), the BlueCard® program gives you access to doctors and hospitals almost everywhere for urgent and/or emergent care, giving you the peace of mind that you’ll have access to the care you need.

For long trips (90 consecutive days or longer), the Guest Membership benefit is available for you and your covered dependents in most states and the District of Columbia. This benefit is designed to bring you peace of mind if you have a dependent attending school out-of-state, have family members living in different service areas, or have a long-term work assignment in another state. Whatever the reason, you’re eligible for this benefit when you’re away from home for at least 90 days. For eligibility information and specific locations where the Guest Membership benefit is available, please contact your HMO.

To request a duplicate ID card, call Customer Service at the number on your member ID card, or log onto www.excellusbcbs.com.

Caring for you
Our HMO plans review health care services to see if they are medically necessary. This process is called utilization review.

Conducted by licensed health care professionals and physicians, reviews are based solely on the need for care and service. We do not compensate, reward or provide financial incentives to decision makers for denying coverage or services.

ExpressLine available 24 hours a day
ExpressLine, our automated telephone inquiry system, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to handle our members’ most common requests.

You can request a duplicate ID card, check the status of a referral, order a copy of your contract, request a provider directory and primary care physician change request form and more.

Call (585) 454-5010 or 1 (800) 548-6428.
Let’s Make Lead History
Excellus BCBS announces major support of lead poisoning awareness project

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS), Rochester Region, is providing the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning (CPLP) with a four-year grant of $140,000 to help fund the Let’s Make Lead History campaign.

Lead poisoning is a serious health problem in the Rochester community. It affects nearly every system in the body, including the kidneys, bone marrow, reproductive system and the central nervous system. Exposure to lead can cause brain damage, osteoporosis, hypertension, kidney disease and cataracts. In 2003, the Monroe County Department of Public Health recorded 1,019 children with elevated blood lead levels (10 micrograms/deciliter or more), with an additional 3,000 children testing with blood lead levels between 5 and 10 micrograms/deciliter. These levels can be associated with substantial brain damage.

Children are poisoned primarily because of deteriorated lead-based paint in their homes. In most cases, lead paint was applied more than 30 years ago. This paint has now deteriorated to the point that walls, windows, porches and doors shed microscopic lead particles. These particles, often too small to be visible, are ingested by toddlers from their hands and toys.

“The good news is that, compared to many problems our community struggles to overcome, childhood lead poisoning can be conquered,” said Scott Ellsworth, regional president of Excellus BCBS. “The Let’s Make Lead History campaign will empower the greater Rochester community to end childhood lead poisoning. This initiative will arm parents with the knowledge that there is help available and tell them where to find it.”

The campaign objectives are to:

- Convince the community of the danger of lead hazards and increase knowledge of what to look for in homes, how to get homes tested and fixed, and how to protect children.
- Prompt homeowners and residents to take specific actions to protect children.
- Reduce the number of children with elevated blood lead levels.
- Stimulate use of available money for lead hazard control.

For more information about lead, go to www.leadsafeby2010.org.

Manage your health—online!

Our Web site makes it easy to find tools and resources to manage your family’s health. Some of the great features you’ll find here include:

- The Healthwise Knowledgebase®. Research your health conditions, medical tests, medications and treatment options. You’ll also find key decision points to help you decide when you can treat a problem at home, when to see a doctor and which treatment option is best for you.
- Preventive health recommendations. Learn how often you and your family should see your doctor for preventive health screenings, immunizations and vaccines.
- Click and Compare CareSM. If you or a loved one is facing surgery or hospitalization, this tool can help you compare quality, outcomes and utilization for more than 170 procedures and conditions at hospitals nationwide.
- Member Rewards. Enjoy members-only discounts on health and fitness clubs and other services to help you develop a healthy lifestyle. You’ll also find classes on living with chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease and more.
- My Health Connection. Store your family’s health information online for quick access in an emergency, or to help communicate your health history at your next doctor’s appointment.
- Advance care planning. Print your booklet and get important documents to plan for future medical care in case you become unable to make your own decisions.
- Health risk assessment. Complete our confidential online health risk assessment and get instant feedback on your score and steps you can take to improve your health.
- Weekly health quizzes. Test your knowledge and learn something new by taking a different health quiz each week.
- Links to other organizations. Connect with reliable health organizations, such as the American Diabetes Association and the American Heart Association, to research your health questions.

And more. There’s no better time to click with us at www.excellusbcbs.com.

Where to look for lead

Does your occupation involve renovations or remodeling? According to the New York State Department of Health, “lead dust can be brought into your home on work clothes and equipment. This is called ‘take home’ lead and it can harm anyone who comes in contact with it. Lead poisoning in children is especially dangerous because it can cause learning problems and serious illness. Children are sensitive to small amounts of lead.”

Lead can also be found in your drinking water, the soil around your house or in the dust in your home. Lead poisoning is preventable if detected and treated early. Although your physician may have asked you about your home environment and potential risk of lead exposure, the blood lead test is the only accurate method to test for lead. Knowing your child’s blood lead level is the most important step you can take to protect your child.

All children should receive a blood lead level test at ages 1 and 2. Ask your physician about having your child tested to avoid the complications of lead poisoning.

Health plan receives Case Management Accreditation

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) recently was awarded Case Management Accreditation from URAC, a Washington, D.C.-based health care accrediting organization that establishes quality standards for the health care industry. URAC’s Case Management Accreditation standards require companies to establish a process to assess, plan and implement case management interventions.

“This is independent affirmation that our case management program provides effective, supportive care management,” said Heidi Rothenhaus, R.N., J.D., vice president of Medical Benefits Management, Excellus BCBS. “We have a team of experienced health care professionals who serve members with complex needs caused by injury or illness. By coordinating medical services, case managers help members navigate the health care system, respond to individual’s special needs and save health care dollars too.”

More information

For more information about the Excellus BCBS case management programs, members can:

- Go to www.excellusbcbs.com/members/health_and_wellness/help_with_chronic_conditions/care_calls.shtml.
- Call 1 (800) 860-2619 and select option 1 for Care Calls.
- Check out our current Member Rewards health and wellness programs at www.excellusbcbs.com/members/health_and_wellness/keeping_healthy/member_rewards.shtml.
ViaHealth Plan welcomes providers

**Primary Care**

- **Family Practice**
  - Nilsa Martinez, M.D.
  - David Newman, M.D.
  - C. Scott Thompson, D.O.

- **Internal Medicine**
  - Rogelio Fernandez, M.D.
  - Didem Miraloglu, M.D.

- **Pediatrics**
  - Jill Abramson, M.D.
  - Eric Chesley, M.D.
  - Sara Dovichi, M.D.
  - Seema Khaneja, M.D.
  - Molly McLaughlin, M.D.
  - David Topa, M.D.

- **Specialists**
  - **Anesthesiology**
    - Stephen Comella, M.D.
  - **Cardiology**
    - David Fries, M.D.
  - **Critical Care Medicine**
    - Jahan Porhomayon, M.D.
  - **Dermatology**
    - Leena Mehta, M.D.
  - **General Surgery**
    - Jennifer Griffith, M.D.
  - **Hospitalist**
    - Bruce Lee, M.D.
  - **Infectious Diseases**
    - David Mock, M.D.
  - **Maternal and Fetal Medicine**
    - Tulin Ozcan, M.D.
  - **Neurological Surgery**
    - Paul Holman, M.D.
  - **Obstetrics/Gynecology**
    - Damanpaul Sondhi, M.D.
  - **Otolaryngology**
    - Frank Salamone, M.D.
  - **Pediatric Developmental Disabilities**
    - Scott Smith, M.D.
  - **Radiology**
    - Martine Backenstoss, M.D.
  - **Radiation Oncology**
    - Bingren Liu, M.D.
  - **Urology**
    - Ronald Femia, M.D.

- **Bariatric Surgery**
  - Daniel Galvin, M.D.
- **Cardiology**
  - David Fries, M.D.
- **Critical Care Medicine**
  - Jahan Porhomayon, M.D.
- **Dermatology**
  - Leena Mehta, M.D.
- **General Surgery**
  - Jennifer Griffith, M.D.
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  - Ronald Femia, M.D.

**End of life lesson for all**

*By Patricia A. Bomba, M.D., F.A.C.P., vice president and medical director of Geriatrics for Excellus BlueCross BlueShield.*

What will happen if you experience a sudden illness that prevents you from making your own medical decisions? Will your family or loved ones know enough about what you value and believe to feel comfortable about making decisions about your care?

If there’s a silver lining to the tragic case of Terri Schiavo, the 41-year-old Florida woman who was recently the center of a legal battle between her husband and her family over her future care, it’s that her situation has prompted these questions to be openly and thoughtfully discussed.

Everyone 18 or older should express their health care preferences and end-of-life wishes to family members and their physicians and put them in writing in a legal document called an advance care directive. This discussion and documentation process is known as advance care planning, and it will spare your loved ones the emotional burden and turmoil that come with trying to guess what your wishes might have been, particularly during a medical crisis when you can’t speak for yourself.

The reality is that these conversations should begin when individuals are young, healthy and independent, and they should continue as our life experiences transform our views of what is important, and what we are willing to undergo in terms of medical treatments and interventions.

In New York the process of advance care planning involves completing two documents—the Health Care Proxy and the New York Living Will.

If one begins to view advance care planning as part of preventive health, then periodic review can be integrated with the concept of periodic health evaluation. Discussion can then be linked with the behavioral readiness to complete an advance care directive, which is Terri Schiavo’s lesson for us all.

As a community service, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield offers a step-by-step booklet on advance care planning. Copies can be obtained free at [www.excellusbcbs.com/guests/health_and_wellness/advance_care_planning.shtml](http://www.excellusbcbs.com/guests/health_and_wellness/advance_care_planning.shtml).
The power of preventive care

What can you do to stay healthy and prevent disease? You can practice healthy behaviors, take medicines as prescribed and get certain screening tests. When you go for your next checkup, talk to your primary care physician (PCP) about how you can stay healthy no matter what your age.

You’re covered

Depending on your ViaHealth Plan coverage, a periodic physical exam given by your PCP is covered. A copayment may be required.

Recommended physical exam schedule for adults

You should visit your PCP for a physical exam

- at age 35 for men, age 45 for women). If you smoke, have diabetes, or if heart disease runs in your family, start having your cholesterol checked earlier.
- Blood pressure. Have your blood pressure checked at least every two years.
- Cholesterol checks. Have your cholesterol checked regularly (starting at age 35 for men, age 45 for women). If you smoke, have diabetes, or if heart disease runs in your family, start having your cholesterol checked earlier.
- Osteoporosis tests. Begin regular screening for colorectal cancer at age 50. Your PCP will help you decide which test is right for you. How often you need to be tested depends on what test you have.
- Depression. If you’ve felt “down,” sad or hopeless, and have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things for two weeks straight, talk to your PCP about whether he or she can evaluate you for depression.
- Prostate cancer screening. Begin regular screening for prostate cancer at age 50. Your PCP will help you decide which test is right for you. How often you need to be tested depends on what test you have.
- Chlamydia test. Have a test for chlamydia if you are 25 or younger and sexually active. If you are older, talk to your PCP to see whether you should be tested.
- Osteoporosis tests. Have a bone density test at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis (thinning of the bones). If you are between ages 60 and 64, talk to your PCP about whether you should be tested.
- Pap test. Have a pap test every one to three years if you have been sexually active or are 21 or older.
- Mammograms. Have a mammogram every one to two years starting at age 40.
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening. If you have ever smoked, an ultrasound is recommended between age 65 and 75 to check for aneurysms. An aneurysm is a bulge in an artery wall.
- Additional tests or recommendations for adults at risk
- Diabetes tests. Have a test to screen for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol.
- Sexually transmitted diseases. Talk to your PCP about whether you should be screened for sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.
- Tuberculosis testing (PPD). Your PCP will recommend this test if needed.

Screening tests

Screening tests can find diseases early when they are easier to treat. Talk to your PCP about which of the tests listed below are right for you, when you should have them and how often.
- Cholesterol checks. Have your cholesterol checked regularly (starting at age 21 for men, age 45 for women). If you smoke, have diabetes, or if heart disease runs in your family, start having your cholesterol checked earlier.
- Blood pressure. Have your blood pressure checked at least every two years.

Know your risk for kidney disease: Do you know your GFR?

What is GFR? GFR stands for glomerular filtration rate. Your GFR tells how much kidney function you have as estimated from your blood level of creatinine. The earlier kidney disease is detected, the better the chance of slowing or stopping its progression.

Kidney disease risk checklist

Your doctor should check to see if you have any risk factors for chronic kidney disease. These include:
- Diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- A family history of chronic kidney disease.
- Being older.
- Chronic kidney disease is more common in African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders and American Indians.

If you have risk factors for kidney disease, you should have three simple tests:
- Blood pressure measurement.
- Urine test for protein.
- Blood test for creatinine, which is used to calculate your GFR.

Source: National Kidney Foundation (NKF)
Meet Edward Miner, M.D.—
ViaHealth Plan primary care physician

Edward Miner, M.D., is a relatively new face in the Rochester community, but he has been practicing internal medicine for more than 30 years. The graduate of Upstate Medical University in Syracuse was a chemistry major at Alfred University with six months until graduation when a professor suggested that he pursue medicine. “I’ve always loved science,” said Dr. Miner, “and thought I’d be a teacher or work in a lab.”

But his professor’s suggestion piqued his interest and he set off on a path to a career that he loves.

When Dr. Miner met his wife, Dianne, while he was in medical school, she was a nurse. She is now Diane Cooney Miner, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.S., and is department chair of the School of Nursing at St. John Fisher College. The Miners moved to Canandaigua from Binghamton, N.Y., when she was offered the position. The couple, parents of five children, but now empty nesters, live with their West Highland terrier.

Dr. Miner finds the greatest satisfaction in knowing his patients and helping them to improve their health. “Prevention is the hardest thing to do in medicine,” he said. “We can virtually eliminate diseases like colon cancer if we can motivate our patients to have colonoscopies. And if we can encourage good exercise routines and proper nutrition, we can make an impact on the fight against heart disease and stroke in our country.”

He admits that sometimes it’s hard to convince patients to adapt lifestyle changes today that will impact them 10 years down the road. “But the good news is that patients today are much more educated about disease and prevention,” he said. “They come to us armed with information from the Web and already have some insight into their condition.”

He recommends Web sites such as www.webmd.com and www.cdc.org for reliable information.

His advice for better health? “Give up or at least cut down on fast food and incorporate some kind of exercise into your life. Make it something you like to do.”

Dr. Miner is accepting new patients. He is part of Partners in Internal Medicine on Hagen Drive in Penfield. For more information, call (585) 641-0400.

What women should know about heart disease

Continued from front page

Rose Marie, a math specialist in the Rochester City School District, has become an advocate for women’s health care.

“Women need to pay attention to what’s going on with their health. Lots of times we ignore things or make excuses for pains and other signs of disease. But it’s important to follow up,” she said.

For the fifth time, RGH was recently named as a Solucient 100 Top Cardiovascular Hospital. This year RGH is one of only two hospitals in all of New York state and one of only 28 hospitals nationwide to have achieved this prestigious distinction five times or more. This study identifies hospitals that have achieved excellence in care, efficiency of operations and sustainability of excellent cardiovascular outcomes.

As always, in an emergency medical situation, you should go directly to the nearest emergency room or call 911 for help. If you have any questions about nonemergent heart disease and any related heart attack symptoms, please contact your primary care physician.