

In this issue:

- [Patients May Need Encouragement with Eye Health](#)
- [Follow-up After a Mental Health Emergency](#)
- [HIV SNP Quality Performance Matrix Measures](#)
- [Webinar: Medicare Surveys and the Provider Role](#)
- [Helping Patients Tend to Oral Health](#)

Patients May Need Encouragement with Eye Health

Although the CDC recommends an annual eye exam for all adults 18 and older, only half visit an eye doctor each year.

Here is how you can help impact the eye health of your patients:

Discuss eye health with all patients during annual wellness visits.

- Inquire about vision issues they may be aware of.
- Discuss whether they have a family history of eye disease. Since many eye conditions are hereditary, encourage patients to talk to their families about their eye health history.

Encourage patients to protect their eyes.

- Advise patients to wear sunglasses that are made to protect their eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. The best ones will have a tag or sticker saying they block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B radiation.
- For patients who spend a lot of time at the computer, remind them to

practice the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look away about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds. This short exercise can help patients reduce eyestrain and give the eyes a rest.

Continue to prioritize annual eye exams for diabetic patients.

- Patients may not be aware that diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness among working-age (age 20–74) Americans.
- Provide ophthalmologist or optometrist referrals to your diabetic patients if they do not already have a regular eye doctor.
- Let SelectHealth and VNS Health Medicare patients know they may be eligible to receive member rewards for having an a diabetic retinopathy exam.

Encourage patients not living with diabetes to have an eye exam annually to prevent vision loss.

- Provide ophthalmologist or optometrist referrals to all patients if they do not already have a regular eye doctor. Prioritize patients with a family history of eye disease.
- Tell your SelectHealth members they may be eligible to receive member rewards for an eye exam.

Please tell your patients with SelectHealth or a VNS Health Medicare plan that they should **call Superior Vision** if they need help scheduling an eye exam. The number is on the back of their Member ID card. VNS Health Medicare members can also [use the Provider directory](#) on our website, and SelectHealth members can use the directory on the [SelectHealth](#) website, to find a provider in their area.

Follow-up After a Mental Health Emergency

As with any emergency department (ED) visit for a physical condition, follow-up care with a patient who has been to the ED with a diagnosis of a mental illness can improve their physical and mental health functioning, increase their compliance with care instructions, and reduce the likelihood of repeat visits.

The HEDIS measure for **Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness (FUM)** focuses on patients' follow-up visits with any provider type -- i.e., the visit does not have to be with a mental health provider.

The FUM measure looks for two follow-ups within a month of the ED visit, the first at 7 days and the second at 30 days. If the first follow-up visit is within seven days after discharge, then both rates are counted for this measure.

Here's how you can help a patient with follow-up care after a mental health emergency:

- Encourage your patient to **schedule a visit** as soon as possible, **preferably within 7 days of ED discharge**. You can use a **Telehealth** follow-up visit, if possible, to close the gap on this measure.
- Encourage the patient to bring **discharge paperwork** to their first appointment after ED discharge.
- It is **vitaly important** that you use **the same mental health diagnosis code** associated with their most recent ED visit for the follow up to ensure that this care gap is considered closed.
- **Review medications** and educate patients (and caregiver, as appropriate) on the importance of taking medications as prescribed.
- Educate the patient about, and link them to, **appropriate continuing behavioral health services**.

Beacon Health is the preferred partner for behavioral health services for VNS Health Medicare and SelectHealth from VNS Health. Please refer our members to Beacon Health Options by calling **1-855-735-6098**, or recommend that members call Beacon directly.

HIV SNP Quality Performance Matrix Measures

Each year, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) assesses the performance of Medicaid special needs plans (SNPs) to evaluate the quality of care provided to enrollees. This year, NYSDOH has identified the two focus areas for performance improvement discussed below.

Statin Therapy for Patients with Cardiovascular Disease (SPC) - Adherence

Two factors contribute most to a patient's failure to adhere to statin therapy: real side effects or adverse drug interactions and muscle pain they falsely attribute to statin use. ([Recent studies](#) have shown that 90 percent of patients

on statins experience muscle pain where the statin is *not* the cause of the pain.)

Here are some tips on adherence and how you can help:

- Consider **starting low and titrating up** to a more tolerable effective dose.
- **Ask your patient if they have experienced any side effects from statins.** If the patient notices negative side effects, discuss possible workarounds, such as prescribing a low-to-moderate intensity statin as appropriate.
- **Talk with your patient about when they take their statins**, what other medications they take with them, and whether they take them with meals.
- **Educate your patients about the real risks of muscle pain** – note that muscle symptoms caused by statin therapy are no more severe than average severity not caused by a statin.
 - Emphasize that the [small risk of muscle symptoms](#) is insignificant in comparison with highly proven cardiovascular benefits of statins.
 - Rule out other possibilities of muscle pain such as fibromyalgia, vitamin D deficiency and arthritis.
- **Discuss the importance of medication adherence** and options such as a 90-day supply, blister packaging, and mail-delivery options that may improve adherence.

Diabetes Screening for People with Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder Who Are Using Antipsychotic Medications (SSD).

Individuals with serious mental illness who use antipsychotics are at increased risk of diabetes.

Here's how you can help:

- Order a **diabetes screening test** for your patients every year and build care gap reminders in your electronic medical record.
- Educate your patients [about increased risk of diabetes with antipsychotic medications](#), hence, the importance for early detection and management.

Coordinate care between behavioral health and primary care physicians by requesting test results, communicating test results, or scheduling an appointment for testing.

Medicare Webinar: Surveys and the Provider Role

Wednesday, October 26, at 12 noon

This webinar offers the following:

- Understanding the use of member healthcare surveys and the provider's role in driving member satisfaction.
- A refresher on Risk Adjustment and documentation standards.
- Best practices for closing gaps in care at year's end.

Who should attend? Providers and office staff working with members of our VNS Health Medicare plans including:

- Primary care physicians and specialists
- Health information management and quality professionals
- Billers and office managers

[Register at this link](#) up to 11 am on October 26 to attend.

For additional questions please

contact: Provider_Education@vnsny.org

[Learn More and Register for Our Medicare Provider Webinars](#)

Helping Patients Tend to Oral Health

You don't have to be a dentist to check in with your patients about their oral health. Here are some ways any clinician can help patients take care of their teeth and gums:

Ask your patients if they've had their annual dental examinations and cleanings. You can provide dental referrals if they haven't.

- Members of our health plans can reach out to our partner **HealthPlex** to schedule dental exams and cleanings (the number to call is on the back of their Member ID card). VNS Health Medicare members can also [use](#)

[the Provider directory](#) on our website, and SelectHealth members can use the directory on the [SelectHealth](#) website, to find a provider in their area.

- Tell your **SelectHealth** patients that they may be eligible for member rewards for having a dental exam every six months.

Encourage practicing good oral hygiene at home for all your patients.

Remind them to:

- Brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between their teeth daily with floss or an interdental brush.
- Limit sugary drinks and snacks.
- Eat nutritious, balanced meals.
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep the mouth clean.

Examine the mouth for signs of early oral cancers or diseases. Early detection can improve prognosis.

- [Here](#) are some best practices for assessing and analyzing a patient's oral health status during a visit.

Remind patients with diabetes that they are at higher for risk oral infections, dry mouth and tooth decay, and encourage them to complete their annual dental examinations and cleanings.

Remind patients who wear dentures that routine dental check-ups ensure proper fit and help keep dentures clean.

Check out the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (NYCDOHMH) [Guide to Promoting Oral Health](#) for more resources and information on how to bridge the gap between general care and dental care.

Questions?

Contact Provider Services

Call toll free: 1-866-783-0222

TTY for the hearing impaired: 711

Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm

 Forward this email

Use our Provider Portal

View our Health Professional pages on our website

Thank you for being part of the our Provider network!

We want to make this publication useful to you. Please let us know what you think! Write to us at ProviderNews@vnshealth.org.

Provider News is a publication of VNS Health.

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Statements](#)

Copyright © 2022 VNS Health, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Grow your business with  **mailchimp**