

PharmacyWise

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December 2009

The State Health Plan: Our Future for Health and Wellness Is NOW!



Health care costs continue to rise nationally and in North Carolina. Chronic diseases account for costly health problems. Seventy percent of preventable deaths in the United States are due to tobacco use, unhealthy diet and lack of exercise.¹ To prevent or control chronic disease, members should:

- Stop using tobacco
- Eat nutritious meals and snacks
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Engage in regular physical activity

The two leading causes of preventable deaths in North Carolina are tobacco use and unhealthy diet/physical inactivity.² These lifestyle choices may lead to the development of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease; and therefore, it is essential that the Plan focuses on providing supports and resources to assist members in their efforts toward a healthy lifestyle.

What is the comprehensive wellness initiative?

The Comprehensive Wellness Initiative (CWI) was established by law in 2009 to help control health care costs and **encourage State Health Plan (Plan) members** to quit using tobacco and maintain a healthy weight.

Benefit changes to support healthy lifestyle choices

To support healthy lifestyle choices, the State Health Plan offers its members many tools and resources for tobacco use cessation and weight management. The Plan will have the following smoking cessation and weight management resources available to members in January 2010.

TOBACCO USE CESSATION TOOLS & RESOURCES

NC Tobacco Use Quitline 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)	Quitline NC offers tobacco cessation coaching and free over-the-counter Generic Nicotine Replacement Therapy patches to members, subject to specific limitations. Quitline NC is available 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m., 7 days a week, in English and Spanish.
Tobacco Cessation Counseling	Counseling by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant or behavioral health provider.
Prescription Medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicotine Replacement Therapy Patches: \$10 generic copay; \$5 over-the-counter generic copay. • Bupropion (generic for <i>Zyban</i>): \$10 generic copay. • Nicotine Nasal Spray, Nicotine Inhaler, Varenicline (<i>Chantix</i>): \$35 copay.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT TOOLS & RESOURCES

Nutrition Counseling	Four nutrition counseling office visits with a licensed dietician will be available per Plan year for members and their dependents.
Weight Management Medications	Your physician may recommend medication or other supports to assist you in managing your weight. Brand-name medications such as <i>Meridia</i> and <i>Xenical</i> have a \$35 copay and will not require prior authorization.
Bariatric Surgery	Bariatric surgery is offered as a Plan benefit.

OTHER NC HEALTHSMART RESOURCES

NC HealthSmart Health Coach Support Line 1-800-817-7044	Members may contact the NC HealthSmart Health Coach Support Line at 1-800-817-7044 for one-on-one nutrition, weight management, and tobacco cessation information including motivational support.
Web-based Programs	Eligible members* may access Web-based programs to assist with weight management and tobacco cessation by logging in to their personal health portal at www.shpnc.org/nc-healthsmart.html .
Worksite Wellness Initiatives	NC HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit and other educational resources (available at www.shpnc.org/worksite-wellness.html) provide organizations with instructions on creating programs for tobacco cessation, physical activity, stress reduction, and weight management.



Sign up for Member Focus Today

Get the latest pharmacy and benefit news to help you save money and make the best decisions about your health care by subscribing to the State Health Plan's monthly e-newsletter, *Member Focus*. Sign up today at www.shpnc.org.

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/>.

² *NCMJ* July/August 2002, Volume 63 Number 4.

Take as Directed—Your Prescription for Better Health

Did you know that every year, across the nation, literally thousands of people die because they failed to take their medicines as directed?¹

“Medication adherence” is truly an urgent matter. It means taking your medicine *exactly as directed* by your provider, and it can be difficult—especially for members with chronic health conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure. It is estimated that up to 50% of those with a chronic disease do not take their medications as prescribed.² This might mean that they skip doses, do not refill prescriptions immediately, or simply stop taking their medications because of inconvenience or cost.

Whether you have a chronic condition or a short-term ailment like bronchitis, taking your medicine as directed is the best way to get well and stay healthy.

Changing the way you take your medication—or stopping it altogether—is something you should do only with the approval of your doctor.

There are several effective ways to improve medication adherence. Keep in mind that it is especially important for members with chronic conditions—such as diabetes, depression, or high cholesterol—to follow these tips.



Ways to improve medication adherence:

1. Follow the instructions that appear on the medicine label.

- Be sure to let your provider or pharmacist know if you feel the medication isn't working, or if you are having side effects.
- To access Medco pharmacists specializing in common chronic conditions, simply call 1-800-336-5933. These specialist pharmacists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and are trained to work with you and your provider to ensure that your medications work together safely and achieve the best outcome.

2. Take your medication at the same time every day.

- Use a reminder system, which might

include a daily log or planner, multi-day pillboxes, a refrigerator magnet, setting an alarm or asking a trusted person to remind you when to take your medication.

- Several companies, including the Medco Pharmacy, offer medication reminder services. There are also reminder tools on the Internet.

3. Get your prescriptions refilled promptly.

- Know how much medication you have on hand so that you can order refills before you run out. Use refill reminders and ask for automatic refills.
- Get a 90-day supply of your prescriptions so you can plan ahead for refills more easily and reinforce adherence. You'll save time, gas and money on many prescriptions.

4. Use cost-effective medications and always ask for generics.

- For personalized information on generics and ways to save on your medications, visit My Rx Choices® at www.shpnc.org/saving-advisor.html.
- Be sure to shop around for your prescriptions. Many national and local retail pharmacies as well as Medco's mail-order pharmacy now offer generics at discounted prices.

Remember: Adherence is imperative!

Save Money by Shopping Around for Your Prescriptions



Be sure to shop around for your generic prescriptions!

Many national and local retail pharmacies offer generics at discounted prices. Now Medco's mail-order pharmacy also offers a list including more than 400 low-cost generic medications. With these low-cost generic programs, a select list of medications is available to treat diabetes, high blood pressure, and other chronic health conditions. You'll pay only \$4 for a 30-day supply, or \$10 for a 90-day supply.

Stop wasting money now!

Check out the State Health Plan's Web site at <http://www.shpnc.org/pharm-lower-cost-generic-prescription.html> for more information about pharmacies that have a low-cost generic program—and the Medco Pharmacy's low-cost generic list. You may also call Medco customer service at 1-800-336-5933 for more information.

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*Members eligible for NC HealthSmart services are members whose health insurance is through the State Health Plan and who do not have Medicare as their primary insurance. Federal law prohibits the State Health Plan from using your personal health information to discriminate against you in any way or from giving this information to your employing agency/school or other unauthorized third party, unless required by law.