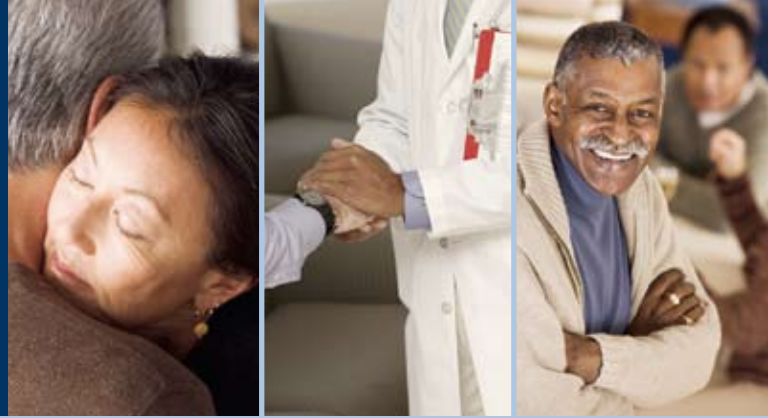


# Caring Connection



Fall 2008

## Survey Shows Care Improvement Plus Members **Overwhelmingly Pleased**

Care Improvement Plus is committed to providing you with the best care and service possible.

An independent research organization recently completed a survey to obtain feedback from plan members. Many topics were included in the survey, and here are highlights of the results:

- **Members are satisfied with Care Improvement Plus:** 94% of members were satisfied with the plan overall.
- **Members value plan benefits and coverage:** More than 91% of members were satisfied with the plan's medical coverage and prescription drug benefits.

Through health education and a variety of benefits and services, Care Improvement Plus encourages members to take steps to better manage their daily health. Feedback from the survey reports members are benefiting from these services.

- **Care Improvement Plus helps members with their health:** More than 90% of members agree Care Improvement Plus is helping them get more involved in their healthcare and understand their health problems.
- **Members cite health status improvements:** 91% of members felt that their health had "stayed the same" or "gotten better" since joining the plan. Thirty percent of members felt their health had "gotten better" since joining Care Improvement Plus, 97% of whom felt Care Improvement Plus contributed to their health improvements.



Take advantage of the benefits and services Care Improvement Plus provides and get involved in managing your health! We are committed to helping you make the right choices when it comes to your health, and we will continue to provide you with information and tools that will help you take steps to stay healthy!

These member satisfaction surveys help us to learn about the issues that concern you and ways for us to improve what we do every day. If you were contacted, thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call member services at the number on the back of your ID card. We look forward to serving you for many more years! ♥





# Maximizing the Benefits of Medicare

According to some studies, 40 percent or some 15 million Medicare beneficiaries are low income – living below or near poverty level.\* Meanwhile, there are programs that save millions of people with Medicare up to \$1,156.80 in 2008.

The state Medicaid authority determines eligibility for programs more commonly known as “Medicare Savings Programs.” These programs will pay some or all of your Medicare Part B premium (\$96.40 a month or \$1,156.80 a year in 2008) and may also pay certain plan copayments for some people who have more limited income and resources. Many people use the extra money to help pay for living expenses or prescription drugs. But, more than half of the people who can get this money never even apply. Are you one of them?

Care Improvement Plus has contracted with a social service company called Social Service Coordinators, Inc. (SSC) to assist members who may qualify for one of the Medicare Savings Programs through the state’s application process.

Social Service Coordinators will also screen members for Medicare Part D-Extra Help and complete and submit the application if you qualify. This will help to pay your Part D annual premium, as well as lower your prescription drug copayments. SSC can help assist members who receive Part D-Extra Help with out-of-pocket drug expenses.

If you are interested in learning more about Medicare Savings Programs or Part D Assist™ or would like an outreach coordinator at SSC to walk you through the application, please call SSC’s Outreach Center directly at **1-866-868-2155**, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. 📞

\* Source: Urban Institute estimates based on 2000 Population Survey.



## Roll Up Your Sleeve

### It's Flu Shot Time

Coughs, sneezes and wheezes are common this time of year, yet many individuals neglect to protect themselves against illnesses such as the flu and the common cold. Although a cold may make you miserable for a few days, it's often not cause for concern. The flu, on the other hand, can develop into a serious condition, especially for those living with chronic illness.

### The Flu Shot Tradition

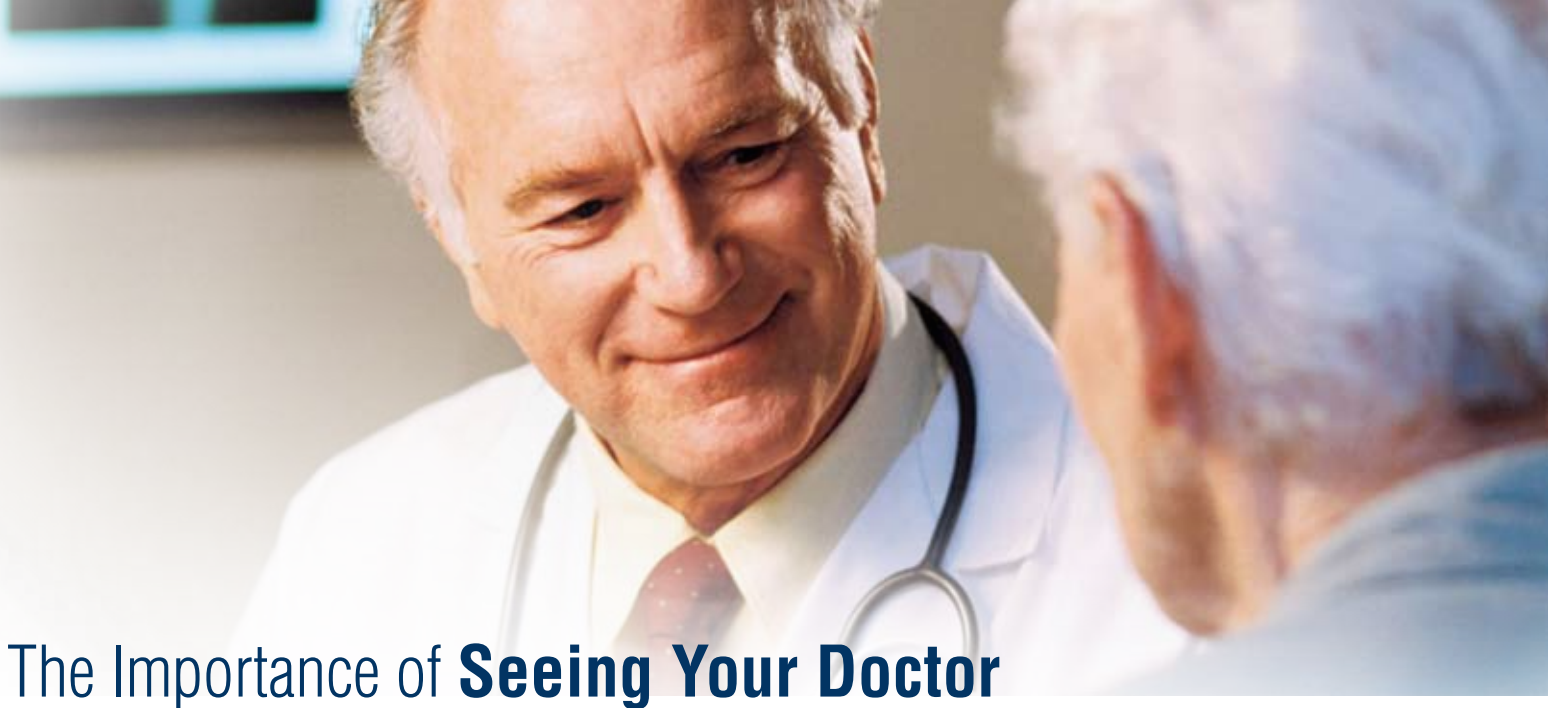
To help keep yourself healthy, make a flu shot part of your yearly fall routine. If you're at high risk of getting the flu – you are 50 or greater, have a chronic condition or work in close contact with others – rolling up your sleeve can help prevent serious flu complications, such as bacterial pneumonia, dehydration and ear and sinus infections.

As a reminder, you can receive your flu and pneumonia shot from your primary care physician or a Care Improvement Plus participating pharmacy\* at no additional cost to you!

Whatever your current health status may be, to protect your health this flu season, we encourage you to schedule your flu and pneumonia shot.

Call member services with any questions or for more information.

\*May vary by region and plan.



# The Importance of **Seeing Your Doctor**

Care Improvement Plus would like to remind you about the importance of seeing your primary care doctor regularly. Your doctor is a great source of advice on how to make the right choices for better health.

Working with your doctor to stay healthy is as important as getting the right treatment when you're sick. It is also important to remember to schedule an annual exam. Simple screening tests performed during an annual exam often find important conditions or diseases when they can be easily treated.

If you haven't seen your primary care doctor recently, please call to schedule your next appointment today.

We would also like to remind you that Care Improvement Plus offers an open-access network, meaning you can see any provider who accepts Medicare and payment from our plan. If your preferred provider is not familiar with Care Improvement Plus, please have them call us today! 🇺🇸



## *Healthy Holidays*

# Eat, Drink and **Be Healthy**

Whether you're a party host or guest, practicing healthy habits can help ensure your enjoyment of the event.

If you're providing food for a gathering, cook meat and poultry thoroughly and carefully wash fruits and vegetables to reduce the risk of food poisoning. Use separate utensils for raw and cooked meats, and wash your hands frequently to help stop the spread of germs. Food that needs refrigeration shouldn't be left out for more than two hours.

Before attending a party, eat a healthy snack. This way, you'll be less likely to overindulge in decadent holiday treats. Also exercise caution with alcoholic drinks. If you plan to consume alcoholic beverages, designate a driver. If you're hosting a party, offer plenty of nonalcoholic alternatives to guests, and don't let guests drive who have had too much to drink.

Take steps now to make sure safety is not lost in the hustle and bustle of

the season. The following web sites\* can help you learn more about holiday safety:

- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov).
- Consumer Product Safety Commission, [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

\* Web sites provided for information only. No endorsement is implied.




# Are You at Risk for Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bones become weak and are more likely to break. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), osteoporosis can strike at any age, but it is most common in older women.

Women are four times more likely than men to develop osteoporosis, and advancing age is a risk factor for both genders. Other risk factors include:

- A family or personal history of fractures as an adult.
- Ethnic origin – Caucasian and Asian women are more likely to develop osteoporosis, but African American and Hispanic women are at significant risk.
- Being small-boned and thin (under 127 pounds).
- Abnormal absence of menstrual periods.
- Smoking.
- Drinking too much alcohol.
- Inactive lifestyle.
- Inadequate lifetime consumption of calcium and vitamin D.
- Certain medications, including some that are used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, endocrine disorders, seizure disorders and gastrointestinal diseases.



We want to remind you to talk to your doctor about whether you should receive a bone density screening. These screenings are important because they can help identify osteoporosis. 

[www.careimprovementplus.com](http://www.careimprovementplus.com)



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