



NEW DIRECTIONS

“By, for, and about consumers of behavioral health services”

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Choosing a Medicare Drug Plan

For People with Medicare & Medicaid

Beginning January 1, 2006 you will begin having prescription coverage through Medicare rather than Medicaid. This change only effects your prescriptions. Your medical benefits will remain the same. If you are on a spend down (deductible), please see the note at the end of the article.

If you do not choose and join a Medicare prescription drug plan by December 31, 2005, Medicare will enroll you in a plan effective on January 1, 2006. *However you may choose or join an alternate plan at any time.*

Finding the Plan Medicare Enrolled You*

- Look at the auto enrollment letter you received in November (yellow in color).
- Visit www.medicare.gov. By using the prescription plan finder tool and entering some personal information and your zip code. (Public libraries have Internet free.)
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). You may call any time day or night and talk with a representative. You will need information from your Medicare card and some personal information.
- Go to your Pharmacy. Starting in January, most pharmacists will be able to tell you the plan you have been enrolled in. You will need information from your Medicare card and some personal information.

Compare Plans

You may want to compare your current plan with other plans, based on your prescriptions and pharmacy of choice.*

- Find out if the plan you are enrolled in covers your medications.
- Drug plans cover different medications in the various categories on their formularies.

Some plans might not carry your medication, but may have

similar medications in the same class of drugs.

- Check to see if the plan has certain requirements about the drugs you take such as prior authorization or step therapy.

Find out the cost of each plan.

- As a dual eligible you should be able to find a plan without a monthly premium.
- Some plans offer a formulary that covers your drugs but with a higher cost (above the \$1-\$3 co-pay).
- Duals with a spend down may incur a higher co-pay depending on their income. (\$2-\$5 co-pay).

For More Help Choosing a Plan

Places to call or go for assistance in comparing plans.

- Visit www.medicare.gov
- Call 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227).
- Contact MMAP (Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Programs).
 - Grand Traverse/ Leelanau 1-800-442-1713, or
 - 1-231-947-9830.
 - Wexford/Missaukee 1-800-775-9833 or 1-231-775-0133, Crawford/Roscommon 1-989-366-0205.
- Attend local events for assistance.

Joining a Plan*

Contact the company offering your plan of choice and request a paper application.

Go to the plan's website.

Call the plan and ask if you can enroll over the phone.

Go to www.medicare.gov and you may be able to enroll online.

*Items you will need: your Medicare card, your prescriptions and dosage, and some personal information, i.e. phone number, date of birth.

Tip

Some medications are not covered on the Medicare formularies. Michigan Medicaid will continue to cover:

- Benzodiazepines,
- Barbiturates,
- Select vitamins and minerals,
- Agents to promote smoking cessation, and
- Select over-the-counter drugs.

If you have questions as to which if any of these prescriptions you are on, contact the pharmacist or the prescribing physician.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Regional Consumer Forum
- 2 Club Cadillac
- 3 Consumer Advocacy Council (CAC)
- 3 Kandu Island/Chat Room
- 4 Recognizing a Stroke: 3 Simple Questions
- 4 Ongoing & Upcoming Events

Regional Consumer Forum

The Region Consumer Forum met in Ludington on November 17, 2005, (the snow did not deter them). All welcomed Dave Branding, Director for Quality, as the newest member. (Dave is replacing the vacancy left by Deb Nussdorfer.)

The groups received reports and information as they have done in the past and will continue to do. The primary focus of the meeting had to do with reviewing the committee and their purpose and functions follows:

Committee Purpose/Recommendations

The group reviewed its current structure, purpose and offered recommendations as follows:

Recommendations:

1. To share meeting minutes between the CAP/CAC and RCF.
2. To have a combined CAC/CAP Forum at least annually.
3. Create guidelines for this forum.

Charge of Group:

All members agree the purpose of this group remains consistent with the original charge and that they do:

1. Provide input on policies and procedures and evaluate performance.
2. Share issues of local concerns and local successes.
3. Plan annual consumer forum.
4. Receive PIHP updates and in turn provide this information back to their local groups.
5. Focus group for MDCH site reviews.

Groups deliverables (products, plans and reports):

1. Planning the annual consumer conference.
2. Review draft policies, various PIHP reports and satisfaction surveys, and provide input and suggestions relative to these.
3. Participate in the MDCH reviews.
4. Identify problem areas that need attention and provide suggestions for improvement and quality of care.
5. Assist in creating affiliation brochures.
6. Assist with the organization of and attend a variety of activities including "Walk a Mile in my Shoes" rally.

Provide affiliation updates, concerns and other relevant information to their local groups for feedback.

Group Membership:

1. Consumer representatives elected by their local CAP/CAC. There are currently two members for the WM CAP with one alternative and three members of the NL CAC. PIHP staff members are the Quality Director, Customer Services and Grievance and Appeals Coordinator and the Chief Managed Care Officer; 2 WM CMHS staff members who represent Quality and Customer Services operations.

Recommendation that the hosting organization's CEO attend these forums.

Frequency of Meetings:

1. Currently meeting on a quarterly basis.
2. Suggestion to move back to a bi-monthly meeting that coincides with the meeting schedules of the local groups.

Managed Care Functions the group addresses:

1. All agreed this is consistent with the information listed above.

Other Recommendations:

1. Clarification and future discussion on how consumers are selected to represent PIHP committees.
2. Have the purpose of each PIHP committee provided to members of this group.
3. Less paper work provided at these meetings. Members will give this some thought for discussion at next meeting as to what material and information they believe is relevant.
4. Send out the entire RCF packet prior to the meeting in order to allow members to review and be better prepared to ask questions, etc.

Club Cadillac, What's New?

Much has been happening at the clubhouse recently, and much more soon to come. Members have every opportunity to be busy and little chance of being bored.

Club members hosted the NLCMH Board meeting in November, and once again pulled it together with great success. Members have every right to be proud of themselves. Just recently they had new windows put in, what a view!

Christmas is here with all of the wrappings and events of the holiday. Members volunteered at Project Christmas and held a great Christmas party. Traverse House members joined in on the festivities.

Looking to the remainder of the holiday they will have a baking event with Christmas Carols, their annual gift exchange, and a tour around town to see the lights. They are also planning to assist with the First Night festivities in town on New Year's Eve.

Looking to the practical side of the clubhouse happenings, they will soon be dancing around the kitchen on a new floor and a donated side-by-side commercial refrigerator/freezer. Soon you will arrive to a new entryway and remodeled clerical unit. They give thanks to the Cadillac Leadership Council for these improvements; it will not be long before the interior will look like a completely new clubhouse.

TEEN SUPPORT GROUP

Cadillac has a support group for teens with Bipolar disorder or Depression, from 13-19 years of age. They meet at the First Presbyterian Church on 221 East Harris St. in Cadillac every Thursday from 3:15-5:00 pm. The group is **peer led** and overseen by a psychologist. The group is a supportive resource for adolescents who are experiencing difficulties with family relationships, peers, school and much more.

For more information call: 231 775-6517 or 231 649-5382.

Consumer Advocacy Council
Consumer Forum, October 2005

Following are the results presented to the Northern Lakes CMH board.

1. How do you feel about: Work, Housing, relationships and how you get along in the Community?

- "I feel positive about work, need more space in housing, good I could have more socializing in the community."
- "I would like to know more about work and what happens to my SSDI, I would like to be more involved in the community, but have trust issues, sometimes I feel alone and wish I were more involved in the community and social things."

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2. Do you know what a Person Centered Planning Process is? Did you receive a copy of your PCP? Did you have a pre-planning process with your case manager? Are you satisfied with your PCP?

- "I have a PCP and am happy with it, we do it one time a year."
- "I spent a good deal of time on my goals, Dreams, and Wishes, but am not happy with the person that assisted me in typing it out. She laughed at me and only wanted to write what she wanted in it."

3. Are you happy with NLCMH services? Is there something you want to change? What are your likes and dislikes?

- "I like the way things are going, but don't like when things get negative with my case manager."
- "Of course many things are happening at Traverse House, just hope that improvements are made in the "case manager there" really helping people not as if it is a bother."

4. Do you have Medicare and Medicaid? Do you know what Medicare Part D is? Do you know about the new prescription services plan?

Many individuals do not know about Medicare part D, or what affect it will have on them. "I need more help and more information."

Kandu Island

Udnak Chronicles

The Third Meal Food Pantry would like to announce an addition to the family. Kandu Island Drop-In Center and the food pantry now have "VANDU" officially on the road. A benefactor from downstate donated the van to CVM, Inc. The donation and accessibility to our own mode of transportation will assist the Drop-In and Food Pantry in community access and food pantry resources.

You're invited to join an NMAIL member and RICC President Jeremy Wolf every fourth Monday of the Month at Kandu Island from 11am to Noon for a Diabetic Recipe Swap and Support Group. The next five meetings are Dec. 26, Jan. 23, Feb. 27, Mar. 27, and Apr. 24. For more information contact Jeremy Wolf at 922-0903 or 645-4884.

*Christmas really isn't about toys,
However much we love them, young and old.
Reductions in the fat of Christmas day,
In time restore its vigor and its health.
So let us not display our absent wealth,
Though children should have ample
chance to play.
More sweet and joyous music must be sung,
And thoughts of peace and mercy make their way
Silent and uncluttered through the noise.*



Kandu Island Drop-In Center and The Third Meal Food Pantry is located at 3003 S. Garfield Road, Unit B, Traverse City, MI, 49686-4007, and our phone number is (231) 932-1590. Happy Holidays everyone!

CHAT ROOM

Happenings: The Chat Room celebrated Thanksgiving again this year with a good showing.

They have 2 new certified CPR/ First Aid/AED instructors on staff. They hope that they will be able to get out and teach at the other drop-in centers, both saving them some money and making certification easier and available more often for members. Ernie Reynolds and Mike Kuhn were sponsored by the Chat Room in this training.

Recently the Chat Room returned from a trip to Henry Ford Museum and the IMAX theater in Dearborn. All had a splendid time and hope to make a trip next year to Niagara Falls. Members are always keeping their eyes on the future.

They are also adding new staff; Myrtle will now be helping out and the drop-in will be open 5 days a week.

Recognizing a Stroke

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke...totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed and getting to the patient within 3 hours, which is tough.

RECOGNIZING A STROKE - A true story

Susie is recouping at an incredible pace for someone with a massive stroke all because Sherry saw Susie stumble - - that is the key that isn't mentioned below-and then she asked Susie the 3 questions. So simple - - this literally saved Susie's life - - Some angel sent it to Suzie's friend and she did just what it said to do. Suzie failed all three so then 9-1-1 was called. Even though she had normal blood pressure readings and did not appear to be having a stroke as she could converse to some extent with the Paramedics, they took her to the hospital right away. Thank God for the sense to remember the "3" steps. Read and Learn! Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

1. *Ask the individual to **SMILE**.
2. *Ask him or her to **RAISE BOTH ARMS**.
3. *Ask the person to **SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE** (Coherently) (i.e. It is sunny out today) If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

After discovering that a group of non medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting last February. Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage.

Be a friend and share this article with as many friends as possible, you could save their lives.

Traverse House

Traverse House recently had Fountain House visit and give them some pointers for interviewing and various other items.

They are interviewing for a new Director and will be looking for other staff as things progress. Several times a week you may run into Betty Clark, the Director of Club Cadillac, helping out in the interim. Hours of the Club House are Monday- Friday 8:00-3:30 pm, and Saturday 9:00- 2:00pm.

Email subscriptions!

Receive *New Directions* through the email. If you would like to receive New Directions electronically please submit your email address to Leslie.Sladek@nlcmh.org writing "New Directions" in the subject line. Your address will be used solely for distribution of *New Directions*. It will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

Contributions!

Ongoing Events

If you know of other ongoing events that could help other consumers, please contact the Editor of New Directions.

- **NAMI Support** second Monday of the month at 6:00pm Munson Medical Center-Doctors Dining room (TC).
- **Support Group** for parents of children with ADHD Third Thursday of the month 6:00-7:30pm. Child Guidance Inc, Traverse City, 947-2255.
- **Survivors of Suicide Support Group** third Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m., at Mercy Hospital 2nd floor Wexford Room, Cadillac.
- **DBSA** (Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance) meets every Tuesday 7-8:00pm Club Cadillac. Contact Betty Clark at 775-5638.
- **Our Kids** support group, for parents/caregivers of kids with bipolar disorder, 7:00pm fourth Tuesday, Traverse Area District Library. 941-9128.
- **Bereavement Support Group**, available to the public through Munson Medical Center's Hospice and Palliative Care program. Mondays at Hospice house 6:30pm or Tuesdays at the TC Senior Center 10:00am. For more information 935-8491.
- **Support Group fro Teens (13-19)**, For Bipolar disorder and Depression. This peer-led group meets every Thursday at the First Presbyterian Church, 221 East Harris St., Cadillac, from 3:15-5:00 pm.

Upcoming Events

January 11- Consumer Advocacy Council 1:30- 3:00 pm

January 19- NLCMH Board Meeting in Cadillac

February 7 - Recipient Rights Meeting 3:00 - 5:00 pm

February 16 – Regional Consumer Forum will be in Traverse City

Save the Dates... A Look Ahead

Next year's Regional Consumer Conference will be on Wednesday, May 17, 2006.

Next year's Walk A Mile In My Shoes Rally in Lansing will be on Thursday, May 25, 2006.