

# Provider eNews

## INTO THE NEW YEAR AND THE FUTURE THAT LIES BEYOND

As we leave behind the year past and move forward into the next, we often pause to take stock of our current situation. For many, this means taking on the "burden" of a New Year's resolution. These often do not prove to be fruitful or lasting, despite best intentions.

The simple truth is that most do not follow through beyond a few days and it is soon that the proverbial treadmill is lying in the corner collecting dust. With that in mind, let's talk about the single most effective action one can take to immediately improve their current health status.

All the change in diet, increase in exercise or any other interventions will not amount to much of anything if there is one factor in your life that remains. By far, the single most effective way to improve your health is to quit smoking. Now!

The benefits are evident almost immediately. Within twenty minutes of quitting, blood pressure decreases, pulse rate drops and the body temperature of the hands and feet increases. After just eight hours, the poisonous carbon dioxide levels in the bloodstream drops to normal and the oxygen levels increase to normal. And after just 24 hours, the chance of a heart attack decreases significantly. After 48 hours, the body's nerve endings begin re-growth and the ability to smell and taste improves.

Between two weeks and three months, circulation improves, walking becomes easier and lung function and capacity increases. Fatigue will decrease and energy levels will increase.

After two years, the risk of coronary heart disease decreases to half that of a smoker and after fifteen years returns to levels similar to those who have never smoked. The risk of stroke decreases by similar levels and the risk of lung cancer drops by 50% after ten years smoke-free.

So what are you waiting for? The time to quit is now. There are innumerable programs and methods to help you begin the journey that will increase your life span and the enjoyment of it significantly.

The most successful strategy for becoming a non-smoker typically



involves several approaches. Utilization of nicotine replacement therapy, whether with gum, lozenges or patches has been shown to be helpful in easing the withdrawal from nicotine and adjusting to a smoke-free lifestyle.

When combined with support from organizations such as the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association or other social support systems, the chance of attaining and maintaining this new lifestyle increase. Supportive therapy can also be a positive factor, particularly those interventions that involve a cognitive-behavioral approach.

Some Medicare benefits are now covering behavioral health interventions to address the smoking issue. For example, in some plans if the member is diagnosed with a smoking related illness or taking medication that may be affected by tobacco use, then four counseling sessions are available with the member paying the regular coinsurance.

Regardless of what your current situation happens to be, if you are a smoker please take action today to immediately improve your health. It may be the single most difficult undertaking you face, but it will improve the length and quality of your life now and hopefully long into the future. If you are a behavioral health care provider, please take the opportunity to address the whole and discuss this with your clients who do smoke. Have a great new year and smoke free future!

## COMPLIANCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

It is the policy of ValueOptions® to comply with all local, state, and federal laws governing its operations; to conduct its affairs in keeping with the moral, legal and ethical standards of our industry; and to support the government's efforts to reduce health care fraud and abuse. The ValueOptions® Corporate Compliance Program establishes a culture within the organization that promotes prevention, detection and resolution of instances of conduct that do not conform to federal and state law, and federal, state, and private payor health care program requirements. Agents, subcontractors, vendors and consultants who represent the company are expected to adhere to the Compliance Program.

One important aspect of our compliance program is confidentiality. We want to remind providers about confidentiality and how to protect the Private Health Information of members. It is very important that providers agree to maintain the confidentiality of treatment and claims-related data concerning services provided to members in the normal course of business. Providers must ensure that each member's treatment record is treated as confidential so as to comply with all state and federal laws and regulations regarding the confidentiality of member records.

Providers must also ensure that any records meet all applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to the storage, transmission and maintenance of such records, including without limitation the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 (Public Law 104-191) and the rules and regulations promulgated hereunder, as well as guidance issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. To this end, it is important that providers ensure the maintenance of this confidentiality is maintained by such things (but certainly not limited to) being mindful of electronic transmissions, using the appropriate mailing envelopes when mailing private and confidential information to members and shredding documents as opposed to throwing private and confidential member information into a general trash receptacle.

To read more about HIPAA and ValueOptions® Compliance program please visit our provider compliance page at: [http://www.valueoptions.com/providers/Handbook/PDFs/Administration/Participating\\_Provider\\_Responsibilities\\_2008.pdf](http://www.valueoptions.com/providers/Handbook/PDFs/Administration/Participating_Provider_Responsibilities_2008.pdf).

### CONTACT US

Please send your comments, ideas and suggestions for future editions of Provider eNews to [PRelations@ValueOptions.com](mailto:PRelations@ValueOptions.com).



## NEW VALUEOPTIONS® GREAT LAKES SERVICE CENTER PROVIDER SATISFACTION SURVEY

ValueOptions® understands that provider feedback is vital to learning about areas that need improvement. In the past, many of you have participated in the annual Provider Satisfaction survey conducted by Fact Finders an independent survey agency. This year the ValueOptions® Great Lakes Service Center is offering an additional method for providers to give us input.

If you are a Great Lakes provider, please take a moment to complete the ValueOptions® Great Lakes Provider Satisfaction Survey administered through SurveyMonkey.com. Your feedback helps ValueOptions® improve the services we offer to you and our members. We thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. All responses are anonymous and strictly confidential.

The survey is available now through January 15, 2009. To learn more please go to: [http://valueoptionsdev/providers/GLProvider/GLSC\\_2008\\_Provider\\_Satisfaction\\_Survey.html](http://valueoptionsdev/providers/GLProvider/GLSC_2008_Provider_Satisfaction_Survey.html).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

## WELCOME TO THE TENNCARE NETWORK!

Welcome ValueOptions® of Tennessee TennCare Network! ValueOptions® and Volunteer State Health Plan (VSHP), a subsidiary of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, have implemented the first TennCare contract for the Western region. ValueOptions® and VSHP are also busy working side by side in preparation for the second TennCare contract for the Eastern region set to begin January 1, 2009. TennCare is Tennessee's Medicaid program that provides health coverage for eligible adults, children and families. ValueOptions® and VSHP have partnered to integrate behavioral and medical health care delivery to provide good health care. An added benefit is an emphasis on healthy living, health care access and improved quality of life for TennCare members.

## VALUEOPTIONS® TO BEGIN SERVING THE HOME DEPOT!

The Home Depot has selected ValueOptions® to provide Employee Assistance Program and Work-Life services to The Home Depot associates and family members. The Home Depot EAP, known as CARE/Solutions for Life, will transition to ValueOptions® on February 1, 2009 and will be served out of the ValueOptions® North Carolina Service Center. Providers may contact ValueOptions® with questions about The Home Depot EAP after February 1, 2009 by calling 1-800-397-1630.