SoonerCare Companion
Oklahoma Health Care Authority
Spring 2014

A Fresh, New Look!

The SoonerCare Companion has a new look! The Oklahoma Health Care Authority has updated its image, and you will see the brand new OHCA logo in the newly designed Companion. We hope SoonerCare members will enjoy the new look and feel of the SoonerCare Companion as we move forward. Our mission with the Companion continues to be focused on informing members of relevant SoonerCare changes or updates plus providing useful information for your health improvement and wellness.

A new feature in the Companion is the use of QR (Quick Response) codes that link to relevant SoonerCare information on the Internet. Use any smartphone to download and use a QR reader app to access these codes.

Motherhood Is Easier With Text4Baby

D'Elbie Walker had been through a pregnancy sixteen years before, but this time she had a powerful tool to help her along. In late 2012, she was introduced to Text4Baby, a mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health through text messaging.

"I signed up in my last trimester and right away, the text encouraged me to make sure that I had my flu shot and the shot for the whooping cough. They asked when the baby was due and followed up for the exact date that I delivered," she said. "That's when the fun began!"

"...our lives are so busy and hectic. We have so much to remember, the reminders come right on schedule..."

She received text messages each week detailing signs to look for in the early stages of taking care of a baby, such as facial expressions, car seat reminders, etc. The reminders even helped D'Elbie learn when to put her baby down for tummy time and how to watch for the baby to roll over.

But the reminder that especially helped Walker involved something that was not even on her radar it was when she received a text asking if her baby had received his flu shot as well.

"I will say that I didn't think my baby could get a flu shot until I received that text," she said. "I called my doctor and they immediately scheduled an appointment for him to get one. This flu season has been hard on babies, and I am very thankful for the Text4Baby reminder. My baby received his shot just in time - before the flu season hit hard."

Walker believes this program is essential for all mothers and urges other mothers to join in the program.

"Every mother needs to participate in Text4Baby. This program is absolutely amazing. As a mother, our lives are so busy and hectic. We have so much to remember, the reminders come right on schedule and help you think about age-appropriate activities that you should be doing with your baby," she said.

Don't forget to text "baby" to 511411 (or BEBE to 511411 for Spanish) today to get started with your own Text4Baby journey!

Early Literacy is the Best Medicine:

Reach Out and Read is Here in Oklahoma!

By Alexandra Bohannon

Have you ever been to a medical home office for a check-up and been prescribed a book? Reach Out and Read Oklahoma, focused on fostering literacy in the home, does that for early readers in the state. In Oklahoma, Reach Out and Read serves 26,442 children via 41 hospitals, health centers and clinics.

Founded in 1989, Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based, early intervention program that prepares America's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. During regular pediatric checkups, Reach Out and Read medical homes give new, developmentally-appropriate book to children, ages 6 months through 5 years. Along with the free book for every child, medical homes offer guidance to parents about the importance of reading aloud with their children every day.

Nationwide, Reach Out and Read medical homes and nurses serve 4 million children and their families annually at nearly 5,000 pediatric practices, hospitals, clinics, and health centers in all 50 states, with a focus on health centers that serve low-income communities.

Reach Out and Read is a proven intervention, supported by fifteen independent, published research studies. During the preschool years, children served by Reach Out and Read score three to six months ahead of their non-Reach Out and Read peers on vocabulary tests, preparing them to start school on target.

In the past, Reach Out and Read has been honored for its impact on literacy by organizations including the American Hospital Association and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. In 2013, the national level of Reach Out and Read was presented with the David M. Rubenstein Prize, which is the top honor among the 2013 Library of Congress Literacy Awards.

The current Oklahoma Reach Out and Read State Director Lori Lake joined Reach Out and Read in September of 2013 after many years as an educator and instructional coach. Reach Out and Read is housed in the Smart Start Oklahoma office and is funded through the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation.

To find out more about Reach Out and Read Oklahoma, please visit their website, find them on Facebook or contact State Director Lori Lake via email.

Website: www.reachoutandreadok.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/reachoutandreadoklahoma
Email: lori.lake@smartstartok.org

Evaluate Your Health: OHCA Online Health Assessment Survey

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority has care management services designed to help you manage long-term conditions and other health care needs. After you are approved for SoonerCare, we invite you to complete a health assessment online at www.okhca.org/OHS. You may also scan the QR code to get to the survey. Completing this assessment will help the agency learn ways to best serve you.

All of the answers you provide are secure and will not be shared outside the agency. If you are interested in any of these service areas, please contact the numbers provided in the assessment. If you have questions regarding the SoonerCare Eligibility process, please call 800-987-7767. Thank you for your participation as we work to serve your needs better.

OHCA Adds New Measure to Combat Public Crisis of Prescription Drug Abuse

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) has a new weapon in the war against prescription drug abuse. The agency has ramped-up its Pharmacy Lock-in Program so that certain SoonerCare (Oklahoma Medicaid) members cannot receive controlled substances from more than one health care provider. The measure aims to deter the practice of doctor shopping and prevent the possibility of accidental drug overdose – a growing and deadly problem in Oklahoma. The new lock-in requirement begins in summer 2014.

"We simply feel this is a necessary change to create a more effective and relevant lock-in program," said OHCA's Health Care Management Medical Director, Dr. Mike Herndon. "We believe this additional measure will have a significant impact on the number of prescriptions those members who are in the Lock-in Program are able to acquire."

Presently, those SoonerCare members who are at risk of misusing prescribed controlled substances are restricted to the use of one pharmacy to fill all of their medications. The new requirement will limit these members to using both a single pharmacy and prescriber (health care provider). Pharmacy claims will be blocked from a prescriber who is not the lock-in member's authorized prescriber. However, this lock-in will only apply to controlled substance prescriptions, including the painkillers Hydrocodone and Oxycodone.

"This measure should not impact those members who seek to legitimately control their chronic pain since only those members who have been identified as being at risk for abuse, misuse or diversion are in the lock-in program. This change actually put us more in line with other state Medicaid agencies' lock-in policies."

Dr. Mike Herndon, OHCA Health Care Management Medical Director

Prescription drug abuse is an epidemic in Oklahoma, particularly in regard to narcotics. According to a recent report by the Trust for America's Health, the Sooner state has the fifth highest drug overdose mortality rate in the U.S., a rate that tripled from 1999 to 2010.

Other facts include:

Oklahoma ranks eighth nationally for prescription drug addiction;

Oklahoma pharmacies filled nearly 10 million prescriptions for narcotic painkillers and other controlled substances in 2013[2];

Non-medical use of prescription painkillers occurs in about 5 percent of the population;

Most Oklahomans who abuse prescription painkillers get them from their doctor or an acquaintance; and

Most of Oklahoma's drug-related deaths involve multiple substances.

The primary goal of the new OHCA lock-in provision is for SoonerCare members to receive the prescribed medication they need (including prescription painkillers) in the safest manner possible.

Sources: Trust for America's Health; Oklahoma Watch; Oklahoma Policy Institute; Oklahoma State Department of Health

Tell Us your story

Below are quotes from current and former SoonerCare members about the positive impact that access to quality health care has had in their lives. We hope you too will share your stories! Whether a life-saving medical treatment or the opportunity to receive routine medical care for your child, we want to hear how SoonerCare made a difference in your life.

"Oh, wow, it's amazing. We can go to the grocery store, we can go to the mall, we can take a vacation, you know, anything that required Jackilynn to walk we couldn't do before the wheelchair."
Melinda Lehnik, commenting on OHCA's Durable Medical Equipment (DME) program assisting her daughter Jackilynn

"We were a young family, and it was a very scary thing to deal with the emotional, physical and financial struggles of all of this but when I found out that SoonerCare was going to help us and that Jonah was going to be able to get the quality treatment he needed and the therapies he needed to survive- I felt so blessed. We are so thankful for SoonerCare!" *-Amy White, mother of Jonah (Tulsa)*

Visit our website at www.okhca.org/tellus to see the full stories and numerous others. While you are there, share "your story" with us! Whether it's a quote or a full story of how SoonerCare helped you and/or your child, let us know!

Prescription Drug Abuse and Addiction

Prescription drug abuse is a rising problem in Oklahoma and the United States. Prescription drug overdoses are now the leading cause of injury death for Oklahomans 25-64, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

SoonerCare members must be careful in handling prescription drugs and avoid potentially fatal situations. Becoming educated about prescription drug abuse and its effects should be a priority for all SoonerCare members and Oklahomans. Also, being aware of warning signs of prescription drug abuse in people around you is very important.

What is prescription drug abuse?

Prescription drugs are powerful drugs that are written by doctors to help treat illnesses. Prescription drugs should be taken exactly as the doctor has directed. Taking prescription drugs in a way that hasn't been directed by your doctor, or taking someone else's prescription drugs, is prescription drug abuse and can be more dangerous than you think. The belief that prescription drugs are safer than street drugs is simply not true. Taking prescription drugs without a prescription is illegal and can be deadly.

The Dangers of Prescription Drug Abuse

Addiction: When drugs are abused, it can change the way the brain functions so that there is a powerful craving and physical need for that drug. Over time, you will need a higher and higher dose of the medication to feel the same effect. These brain changes make it extremely difficult to quit without help.

Overdose & Death: A drug overdose happens when your body cannot handle the effects of the drug(s). Everyone's body reacts differently to drugs, and the same dose that is okay for someone else may cause serious injuries to your body or death. Call 911 immediately if you suspect someone is suffering from a drug overdose. This is a list of common signs of overdose:

Feeling nauseas or throwing up
Acting delirious
Slowed or stopped breathing
Smaller or larger pupils than normal
Dizziness or sleepiness
Weakness

Recognizing Prescription Drug Abuse

Common Signs

- Stealing, faking or selling prescriptions
- Often "losing" prescriptions so more prescriptions must be written
- Trying to get the same prescriptions from more than one doctor
- Taking higher doses than the doctor prescribed
- Sudden changes in behavior or personality, excessive mood swings or aggression
- Sudden loss of weight, declining hygiene
- Increase or decrease in sleep
- Appearing to be high or revved up or periods of drowsiness

What You Can Do To Help

Don't share prescription drugs. Never share prescription drugs with anyone, it is illegal and can be deadly. Always keep all prescription drugs safe and out of the way of others, especially children and teenagers. If you have prescription drugs that are not used, don't leave them around the house, or flush them down the toilet. Instead, take them out of their original bottles and mix them in a plastic bag with something undesirable, like used coffee grounds or kitty litter before throwing them away.

You can also take your prescription drugs to one of the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics Drug Take-Back locations, a place where medications are collected to be properly disposed of. Find a medication take-back location near you by going to their website and entering your zip code: https://portal.obn.ok.gov/takeback/default.aspx.

If you suspect that a friend or family member is abusing prescription drugs, there is help. Your family doctor may be a good place to start, or you may see a psychologist or psychiatrist. Addiction to prescription and/or street drugs can be treated. In fact, millions of people are living in long-term recovery.

The following resources may also help:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) http://www.ncadd.org/index.php/learn-about-drugs

The Coalition Against Drug Abuse http://drugabuse.com

Sources: National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.; Mayo Clinic; Helpguide.org; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

This newsletter is for SoonerCare Choice members. It will tell you about any changes or updates to your SoonerCare benefits. It will also give you other useful news to help keep you healthy. However, if you have specific questions about your health, please talk to your doctor. Disclaimer: Clinical, legal and other comments are offered for general information only. Please talk to your doctor about specific health concerns.

SoonerCare Helpline
800-987-7767 or
711(TDD)

SoonerRide
877-404-4500 or
711(TDD)

SoonerCare provider list
800-987-7767

Si usted quiere leer éste artículo en español, visite la pagina web del OHCA al http://www.okhca.org/soonercare-companion.

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Download additional copies on the OHCA website
http://www.okhca.org
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The Importance of Prenatal Vitamins

Prenatal vitamins are very important for the health of both you and your baby. Taking prenatal vitamins can help prevent birth defects, and provide you with more energy throughout the day. By taking prenatal vitamins, you are covering gaps in your diet to help your baby grow and be healthy. Prenatal vitamins contain many vitamins and minerals. In most cases, a mother who is planning to become pregnant should take prenatal vitamins that contain folic acid, iron and calcium before becoming pregnant and during their pregnancy. While you are pregnant, you may need more of these nutrients to help keep your baby healthy. Taking folic acid daily for at least one month before pregnancy and daily during pregnancy may help prevent birth defects of the baby's brain and spine. The baby is already developing in the first 28 days following conception before many women know they are pregnant, so taking a prenatal vitamin before becoming pregnant is important if you are planning on becoming pregnant. Extra iron helps your body make more blood to supply oxygen to your baby. The calcium supplement will help your baby grow as well as help you keep your bones strong. Some prenatal vitamins also contain omega-3 fatty acids, which might help promote the baby's brain development. Remember that prenatal vitamins are not a substitute for good nutrition and won't necessarily meet 100 percent of your vitamin and mineral needs. Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet is also important, especially during pregnancy.

Some women feel queasy after taking prenatal vitamins. If this happens to you, it may help to take your prenatal vitamin with a snack or before you go to bed at night. If you have trouble swallowing your prenatal vitamin, there is a chewable version that your Medical Home can give you a prescription for. Some women may experience constipation while they are pregnant and while taking prenatal vitamins. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids, eat more fiber-containing foods (fruits, vegetables, beans, bran flakes) and talk to your MH if you are concerned about it. Your MH may recommend continuing to take prenatal vitamins after the baby is born, especially if you are breastfeeding. There are both over-the-counter and prescription prenatal vitamins. SoonerCare covers a variety of prescription prenatal vitamins. Be sure to talk to your MH about the right prenatal vitamins for you. Questions about prenatal vitamins can be directed to your MH or your local pharmacist.

SoonerCare Prenatal Vitamin Tips:

- There is no charge or copay for preferred prenatal vitamins.
- Prenatal vitamins do not count against your monthly prescription limit.
- Ask your MH or pharmacy about our preferred prenatal vitamin list which can also be found on our website at http://www.okhca.org/rx.

Sources: The Mayo Clinic; American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Family Physician

List of Covered Prenatal Vitamins

• O-Cal Prenata • Triveen-U • Concept Ob
O-Cal Fa • Trinatal Gt • Concept Dha
Prenatal Plus • Trinatal Ultra • Inatal Advance
Prenatal Low Iron • Se-Natal 19 • Inatal Ultra
Trinatal Rx • Multinatal Plus • Prenatal Plus
Completenate • Pnv Folic • Acid Plus Iron
• Prenate Plus • Complete Natal Dha • Prenata
• Triadvance • Vol-Nate • Vinate Gt • Folivane-Ob
Vol-Tab R •Vinate Ii • Taron-C Dha • Vol-Plus

This list can change, but you can find an updated list at http://www.okhca.org/rx. You can also ask your doctor to write for a SoonerCare covered prenatal vitamin.

Early Dental Exams are Important for Healthy Smiles

Getting your children to the dentist early plays a big role in preventing tooth decay, infection and premature loss of teeth. SoonerCare members should prioritize getting children dental exams as soon as teeth appear, usually around 6 months of age. Teeth are at risk for decay as soon as they appear, so early exams are critical.

Early dental examinations play a big role in preventing tooth decay, infection and premature loss of teeth. Tooth decay is the number one chronic infectious disease among children in the United States. However, tooth decay can be avoided with proper prevention and early evaluation. Teeth have thinner enamel (the white outer coating of the tooth), making these teeth more at risk for cavities than permanent teeth.

Ideally, children should have their first dental examination by age 1. Delaying a child's first dental exam until age 2 or 3 can have a negative impact on dental health. It is not uncommon for a patient under 3 years old to have multiple cavities; these cavities may have been caught earlier, or even prevented, if the patient had been seen by a dentist. Untreated cavities can result in painful dental infections and early loss of teeth.

To avoid dental disease, dental cleanings and examinations are recommended every 6 months. This builds a relationship between the patient and the dentist, which can decrease dental fear and allow any oral health issues to be caught early on. During the exam, the dentist will check for cavities, oral injuries and evaluate overall dental development.

The dentist will also provide oral hygiene instruction, discuss treatment needs and address any concerns. Do not wait until a dental emergency to see the dentist; contact your dentist for an appointment today. Establishing a 6-month dental checkup routine, as well as brushing twice a day and flossing daily, will allow our SoonerCare members to have lifelong healthy smiles.

SoonerCare covers these dental services for children under 20:

• dental exams • cleaning • education • sealants • fluoride • fillings • crowns • root canals • gum disease treatment • full or partial dentures • extractions • emergency dental care • other services.

Make an appointment today for your children for great oral health!

By Leon Bragg, D.D.S., M.Ed.
OHCA Chief Dental Officer

"OHCA is trying to build awareness about oral health for parents of young children. Our focus is on the prevention of dental disease and steps every family can take to move towards better oral health. We really want parents to be better partners to improve our children's oral health."

Be Proactive in the Fight Against Spring Allergies

By Robert D. Evans,
M.D., M.Ed.
OHCA Medical Director

Spring is upon Oklahoma again, and it is finally time to put away the winter coats and get outdoors. But for those who suffer with seasonal allergies, the sounds of sniffling and sneezing will soon fill the air. Although there is no magical cure for spring allergies, there are a number of ways to fight them, from medication to household habits.

Pollen is the most common trigger for spring allergies. The immune system reacts to the pollen by fighting back, which leads to the release of chemicals called histamines into the blood. This triggers the runny nose, itchy eyes and other allergy symptoms.

It is possible to keep seasonal allergies under control using these tips from the Mayo Clinic:

Reduce your exposure to allergy triggers. Stay indoors on dry, windy days – the best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air. Delegate lawn mowing, weed pulling and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.

Take extra steps when pollen counts are high. Check your local media for pollen forecasts and current pollen levels. If high pollen counts are forecasted, start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start. Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen counts are highest.

Keep indoor air clean. Use the air conditioning in your house and car. If you have forced air heating or air conditioning in your house, use high-efficiency filters and follow regular maintenance schedules. Use a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your bedroom.

As one who does not like cold Oklahoma winters, I anticipate the arrival of springtime. Though trading tornadoes for cold is not fun, I do enjoy starting my garden, planning the canoe trips and other springtime activities. All of that comes with spring-time allergies added upon the year-long allergens from our adopted furred and feathered kids.

All who suffer with these indoor and outdoor allergens should take care with common allergy medicines. Consult with your Medical home and pharmacist about these compounds which might interfere with medicines for other medical conditions.

Since we cannot "cure" the allergy problem, managing it as well as we can will help us enjoy the spring and summer.

Keep Your Eyes Healthy

Maintaining healthy vision from the time you are young to old age can be accomplished, but some basic steps must be taken that require regular commitment. Follow the steps below and you will be to have healthy vision into the later days of your life:

1. Have a comprehensive dilated eye exam.
2. Know your family's eye health history. It's important to know if anyone has an eye disease or condition since many are hereditary.
3. Quit smoking or never start. Smoking is as bad for your eyes as it is for the rest of your body. Research has linked smoking to an increased risk of developing age-related macular degeneration, cataract and optic nerve damage, all of which can lead to blindness.
4. Give your eyes a rest. If you spend a lot of time at the computer or focusing on any one thing, you sometimes forget to blink and your eyes can get fatigued. Try the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look away about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds.
5. Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of developing diabetes and other systemic conditions, which can lead to vision loss.
6. Eat right to protect your sight. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, particularly dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale or collard greens and omega-3 fatty acids is important for keeping your eyes healthy.

SoonerCare covers vision services for children and adults:

- Children: Eye exams and glasses *(No referral required)*
- Adults: Treatment of eye disease or injuries *(Referral required)*

Make an appointment today and get you and your children on the path to better vision health!

Source: National Eye Institute

Oklahoma Health Care Authority
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Oklahoma City, OK 73105
www.okhca.org

Tips from Former Smokers

Nathan, a Native American and member of the Oglala Sioux tribe, never smoked cigarettes. For 11 years, he worked at a casino that allowed smoking. Secondhand smoke contains dangerous chemicals. The exposure to secondhand smoke caused him to develop allergies and serious infections that triggered asthma attacks, eventually causing permanent lung damage called bronchiectasis. "The casino was filled with smoke from so many people smoking," he said. Breathing in other people's smoke on a daily basis made his health so bad that he had to leave that job.

Nathan used to be active and athletic. He served in the Marines. He loved to participate in tribal dances. After getting sick, dancing just a few steps wore him out. Nathan hoped that sharing his story would help others understand how dangerous exposure to secondhand smoke really is. Nathan's lung damage led to his death on October 17, 2013. He was 54.

For help with quitting tobacco use or staying quit, call 1-800-Quit Now and talk with your doctor

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline
1 800 QUIT NOW
1-800-784-8669 OKhelpline.com

Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline
1 855 DÉJELO-YA
1-855-335-3569 OKhelpline.com