

STRONG **body**
mind



MEMBER NEWSLETTER
// WINTER 2023



DENVER HEALTH
MEDICAL PLAN INC.



THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF PETS



The bond between humans and pets is undeniable. Besides the unconditional love they give us, pets can improve our physical and mental health as well. If you have a pet, you might not be aware of all the benefits it can have on your life.

PETS KEEP YOU HEALTHY

Pet owners tend to be more active, less stressed and genuinely happy, which can all contribute to better health.

- » **Pets are exercise buddies.** Rain or snow, they aren't going to let you forget it's time for a walk. Even playing with and caring for your pet will keep you moving on a consistent basis.
- » **They can lower your blood pressure.** According to one study of 240 married

couples, those with pets had lower blood pressure during rest than non-pet owners. In another study, children improved their blood pressure when petting their dog.

- » **They also help build immunity.** Children who grow up with a dog, cat or farm animal have a stronger immune system than those without pets and are less likely to develop allergies.

PETS RELIEVE ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

No one loves you like your pet. And after a stressful day, coming home to a happy, tail-wagging furry friend who's excited to see you can't help but improve your mood. (Did you know that simply petting your cat or dog releases oxytocin, your happy hormone?)

If you suffer from depression, chances are you'll feel much calmer around your pet. Walking, feeding, grooming and playing with your pet gets you out of your head and makes you feel good about the care you're providing.

Dr. Terese Donch, a family medicine specialist in Greenwood Village, CO, puts it this way, "Animals, including our pets, can play an important role in our health. Not

If you need any of the information in this newsletter in Spanish, please call Health Plan Services at 303-602-2100 for DHMP or CHP+, 303-602-2090 for Elevate Exchange, 303-602-2116 for Medicaid Choice or 303-602-2111 for Medicare Advantage.

Si necesita en español alguna parte de la información contenida en este boletín, llame a Servicios del Plan de Salud al 303-602-2100 para DHMP o CHP+, 303-602-2090 para Elevate Exchange, 303-602-2116 para Medicaid Choice o al 303-602-2111 para Medicare Advantage.



only do they lower our stress levels and keep us company, but they also serve to get us out of ourselves; they remind us that it is not all about us." (T. Donch, personal communication, November 1, 2022)

PETS HELP YOU BUILD CONNECTIONS

Owning a pet is great for socialization, which has a profound effect on physical and mental health. If you live alone, you'll always have your faithful companion by your side. Heading to the park with your dog will also help you build connections with other dog lovers.

What's more, children who have a family pet have been found to show higher levels of emotional development than those without pets in the home. Through nonverbal communication, they learn to understand their pet's needs. And by contributing to their care, they feel important and have a higher degree of self-esteem.

SERVICE DOGS CHANGE LIVES

You've probably seen service dogs in many hospitals and airports. A service dog is trained to perform tasks for people with physical or mental disabilities. For example:

- » Pulling wheelchairs
- » Helping blind individuals with navigation
- » Retrieving items for people with mobility issues
- » Alerting those with diabetes to a sudden drop in blood sugar

- » Interrupting harmful behaviors in people with neurological conditions

Make sure if you encounter a service dog, you speak to the owner and not the dog. Don't pet the dog unless you ask permission first.

ADOPT!

If you're considering a pet, adopting is easy and cost-effective — plus you're saving an animal. But before you take the plunge, ask yourself if you truly have the time, space and money to make this commitment. Then, do your research and choose the breed that will work best for your lifestyle. There are numerous animal shelters and rescues in the Denver area who can't wait to help you find your new best friend.

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WebMD. (2020, December 17). 27 Ways Pets Improve Your Health. WebMD. Retrieved October 30, 2022, from <https://pets.webmd.com/ss/slideshow-pets-improve-your-health>.

SonderMind. (2020, March 3). 8 reasons having a pet is good for your mental health - sondermind. SonderMind Therapy and Counseling. Retrieved October 31, 2022, from <https://www.sondermind.com/resources/having-a-furry-friend-is-good-for-your-mental-health>.

Child health & development. HABRI. (2020, November 17). Retrieved November 2, 2022, from <https://habri.org/research/child-health/>.

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Gittlen, D. Best practices when around a service dog. Guide Dogs of America. Retrieved November 2, 2022, from <https://www.guidedogsofamerica.org/best-practices-when-around-a-service-dog/>.

Everything you need to think about if you want to get a dog. PETA Kids. Retrieved November 2, 2022, from <https://www.petakids.com/save-animals/dog-adoption-guide/>

NURSELINE ADVICE:

AVOIDING THE WINTER BLUES

Now that winter has arrived and temperatures are colder, humans have a survival instinct to rely on comfort foods, become less active and hibernate in a sense. Research has found that winter weather changes can negatively affect our mental health. When the temperature drops, people tend to stay indoors and can sometimes detach from normal activities. Staying mentally healthy is key to avoiding the “winter blues”.

With the days being shorter and less hours of sunlight, our brain craves more sleep than what is typically needed during the summer months. Less sun exposure causes our bodies to produce more melatonin, which can be associated with depression, and less serotonin, which is often associated with happiness. If you’re able to, try to fit in a 30 minute power nap each day, or try going to bed a bit earlier than usual. Listen to your body and adjust your routine as needed.

Sure, it’s comforting to curl up with a soft blanket and read a book or watch TV. But our bodies also need activity. Get up and move. Set an hourly alarm to remind you to do a quick, simple activity. Get up and walk around, climb stairs, stretch or dance like no one is watching! This is a great mental health enhancer.

Stock up on healthy foods. Gather nuts (like our squirrel friends do), veggies, hummus dip, and other nutritious foods instead of junk food. Wisely feed your winter hunger and cravings. By doing this, you will experience a boost in both mental and physical health.

Be mindful of how winter weather changes can affect your mental health. Focus on things you have control over. Staying connected with family and friends is important. Healthy eating habits and daily exercise will help. If “winter blues” symptoms become severe, causing you to miss work or school, experience appetite changes, or you become unable to find enjoyment in your day-to-day activities, you may need to seek professional help. Remember, the weather eventually will change and spring will come.

Written by: Marie Richardson, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, Call Center Charge Supervisor

Sources: Kim Foundation. (2019). “Winter Weather and Mental Health”; <https://thekimfoundation.org/winter-weather-and-mental-health/>

**The Denver Health NurseLine
is available to talk with you about
any health concerns or questions
24 hours a day, 7 days a week!
Give them a call at 303-739-1261.**



Quick Skillet Lasagna

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 pound – ground beef
- 1/2 cup – onion, chopped
- (1) 16-ounce – canned tomatoes
- (1) 6-ounce – canned tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon – fresh or dried parsley
- 1.5 cups – water
- 1 teaspoon – fresh or powdered garlic
- 2 cups – egg noodles, cooked
- 3/4 cup – low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/4 cup – parmesan cheese



DIRECTIONS

In a frying pan, cook the beef and onion until the beef is brown and the onion is tender. Drain off the excess fat. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, parsley, water and garlic to the beef mixture. Bring to a boil and simmer until the sauce is thick, about 25 minutes. Add the cooked, drained noodles to the beef mixture. Stir to prevent sticking. Mix cheeses and drop by spoonfuls into the pan. Cover and heat over low heat for about 5 minutes. Serve with garlic bread if desired.

SAME-DAY CARE OPTIONS

If you need care today and can't get in to see your Primary Care Provider, we have options for you...



THE NURSELINE IS HERE TO HELP YOU.

Call **303-739-1261** and speak to a Denver Health nurse about your health concerns at **no cost to you**. Sometimes they can even call in a prescription for you. NurseLine nurses can help you decide the best plan to get the care you need, which may include any of the options below.



DISPATCHHEALTH WILL COME TO YOU.

DispatchHealth is our on-demand health care provider that can treat a range of injuries and illnesses in the comfort and convenience of your home (available 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., 365 days a year). Visit **DispatchHealth.com**, download the free app or call **303-500-1518**. Refer to your plan coverage for cost sharing details.



VISIT AN URGENT CARE CENTER.

Denver Health offers multiple Urgent Care centers. There are separate Pediatric (open 24/7 at 777 Bannock St.) and Adult (open daily, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 660 Bannock St.) Urgent Care centers on its Main Campus, as well as the Federico F. Peña Southwest Clinic for Pediatrics and Adults at 1339 Federal Blvd. (open Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. | Sat.-Sun., 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed holidays) and the Downtown Urgent Care Clinic at 1545 California St. (open daily, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.). In addition, virtual Urgent Care is now available for Denver Health MyChart users. Refer to your plan coverage for cost sharing details.

Note: You can visit any urgent care center that is convenient for you. Your DHMP plan will cover you at any urgent care center, anywhere in the U.S.



EMERGENCY ROOM.

You can access 24/7 emergency care for both children and adults on the Denver Health Main Campus at 777 Bannock St. The Denver Health Pediatric Emergency Department is designed just for kids and is completely separate from the Adult Emergency Department. Refer to your plan coverage for cost sharing details.

Note: If you need emergency care, go to the nearest hospital or call 9-1-1. Your DHMP plan will cover you at any emergency room, anywhere in the U.S.

COMPLETE A HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT. GET A \$25 REWARD!

If you are an Elevate Medicare Choice (HMO D-SNP) member, you will have an opportunity to participate in a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) each year!

We want you to be healthy and feel good. By answering the questions on the HRA, we will identify your health risks and try to lower them. Each year, we will ask you to complete a HRA so we know if there were any changes in your health. This will also help us know if you need more help. Your answers to these questions do not affect your insurance coverage and may be shared with your doctor. We can work with your doctor and health care team to try and improve your health.

We will call you to complete the HRA over the phone, or we may mail you the HRA. You can also call us to complete the HRA at **1-833-292-4893**. TTY users should call 711.

Coming soon! Completion of a health survey will qualify Elevate Medicare Choice (HMO D-SNP) members for the \$25 reward, beginning 1/1/2023. Upon completion of the survey, the reward will be sent to the mailing address we have on file for use at participating merchants. For more information or questions, call our Care Management Department at **303-602-2184** or visit **DenverHealthMedicalPlan.org**.

Denver Health Medical Plan, Inc. (DHMP) has been approved by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to operate as a Special Needs Plan (SNP) until 2023, based on a review of DHMP's Model of Care.



IMPORTANT INFO: 2023 PART B PREMIUM

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) wants to remind Medicare beneficiaries that the 2023 Part B Premium will be \$164.90, a decrease of \$5.20 per month. Your Medicare Part B premium is a monthly fee that Medicare beneficiaries pay directly to Medicare and not Elevate Medicare Advantage.

If you have any questions about this premium, or premium change, contact our Health Plan Services at 303-602-2111. TTY users should call 711.

DOWNLOAD OUR NEW 'MyDHMP' MEMBER PORTAL MOBILE APP!

The 'MyDHMP' member portal mobile app is your go-to resource for managing your health insurance plan anytime, anyplace. With it, you will be able to access important information, member materials (including ID Cards), communicate with your health plan, check claim status and more — all right from your tablet or smartphone.

 Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
 Google play

Visit DenverHealthMedicalPlan.org and click on 'MyDHMP Portal' or download the 'MyDHMP' mobile app for iPhone and Android devices!



**1 IN 8 WOMEN ARE AT RISK
OF DEVELOPING BREAST CANCER.**
Getting a mammogram can save your life!

IF YOU ARE:

- A woman aged 40+
- Have not had a screening in the past year

You are eligible to get a mammogram at Denver Health!

A MAMMOGRAM:

- Takes 10-15 minutes
- Catches breast cancer early, when it is most treatable

Appointments available within a week at the clinic in the
Outpatient Medical Center (Pavilion L), 5th floor

**Call 303-253-7679 or schedule through
your MyChart account today!**

Scan the QR code for more information.



WHAT'S NEW WITH YOUR PHARMACY BENEFITS?

Depending upon your plan, your pharmacy benefits may be updated many times over the course of the year. To see what's changed, visit [DenverHealthMedicalPlan.org](https://denverhealthmedicalplan.org). Hover over *Current Members*, navigate to your plan's page, then click *Pharmacy* under "Member Resources". There you will find documents that provide any changes in your plan's formulary, such as newly added drugs, newly added generics and more!

Your plan's webpage and formulary documents, called *Formulary & Pharmacy Management* (for Exchange, CO Option or Employer Group plans), *Formulary/Drug List* (for Medicaid Choice and CHP+) or *Formularies* (for Medicare Advantage), provide:

- » A list of covered drugs, along with restrictions and preferences
- » Details on how to use the formulary and pharmaceutical management procedures
- » An explanation of limits or quotas
- » Details on how prescribing practitioners must provide information to support an exception request (non-urgent requests may be processed the next business day)
- » Your plan's process for generic substitution, therapeutic interchange and step-therapy protocols

ELEVATE MIND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



SCAN ME

Elevate Mind is a new mental health benefit available to Exchange, Colorado Option, Medicare Advantage, and DHHA members within Denver Health Medical Plan (DHMP).

It's ok to not be ok. We encourage our eligible members to utilize this benefit as needed. Elevate Mind is an easy, fast way to get the mental health care you need, when you need it, via phone or video. Simply select a provider and connect. Our licensed therapists and psychologists are here to help you. You can schedule an appointment with one of our providers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Visit ElevateMind.org or download the Elevate Mind mobile app for iPhone and Android devices!



IMPORTANT PLAN INFORMATION



DHMP'S AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT ABOUT INCENTIVES

Denver Health Medical Plan, Inc. (DHMP) has a Utilization Management (UM) Program to ensure that members have access to quality health care. The Program utilizes a team of health care professionals to evaluate the medical necessity of services by using nationally-recognized, evidence-based clinical guidelines and community standards. The decisions are based on the appropriateness of care and services available to members within their contracted benefits. DHMP affirms the following UM Program practices:

- » UM decision-making is based only on the appropriateness of the care and services requested and the existing coverage and benefits available to the members;
- » DHMP does not specifically reward or otherwise incentivize practitioners or other individuals to issue denials of coverage or services; and
- » UM decision-making staff members do not receive financial incentives that encourage decisions resulting in underutilization.

Please contact DHMP's Health Plan Medical Management Department at 1-800-700-8140 if you have any questions regarding the Program and its practices.

MEMBER SURVEYS - WE APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK

You can help us make Denver Health Medical Plan, Inc. (DHMP) the best health plan for you! In the next few weeks, you may receive a survey in the mail about your DHMP health insurance plan. Please take some time to fill it out and mail it back as soon as you can. If you do not have a chance to fill out this survey, you may get a call to take the survey over the phone. This survey is sent to a random group of members each year. We would like to hear your thoughts about your health plan services and benefits. If there is anything we can do to assist you, please call Health Plan Services at 303-602-2100 for CHP+ and Employer Group plans, 303-602-2090 for Exchange and CO Option plans, 303-602-2116 for Medicaid plans and 303-602-2111 for Medicare Advantage plans. TTY users call 711.





**DENVER HEALTH
MEDICAL PLAN** INC.[™]

777 Bannock St., MC 6000
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LARGE PRINT OR OTHER LANGUAGES: If you have questions about this notice, we can help you for free. We can also give it to you in other formats like large print, audio or in other languages. Please call 303-602-2116, toll free 1-855-281-2418, or 711 for callers with speech or hearing needs.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed a nice holiday with family and friends, and wish you all the best in 2023. The new year is a great time to think about positive changes that you'd like to make in your life. DHMP is here to support you, your physical health and your mental well-being. Be sure to schedule your annual wellness visit with your Primary Care Provider (PCP).

An easy way to stay up-to-date on your health care coverage is to sign up for our "MyDHMP" Member Portal, which you can access from any smartphone, tablet or computer. See page 8 for more information.

GREG MCCARTHY

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director
Denver Health Medical Plan, Inc.

