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March 2007

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Employer Update

from MEDICA.

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Employer Resources

Member Resources



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Events

Beyond Benefits Seminars

These seminars are designed for managers and supervisors and provided through the

Innovative approaches to managing health care costs

Whether you're a health care consumer, provider or insurer, escalating health care costs are a top-of-mind concern. Spending on health care represented 16% of the total U.S. Gross Domestic Product in 2006, and if costs continue to grow at their current pace, health care will consume almost 20 cents of every dollar spent in this country by 2014.

At Medica, we're committed to offering innovative ways to help our customers and their employees keep health care costs in check, including consumer-directed benefit plans, health improvement programs and disease management initiatives. We're also taking aim at some of the largest drivers of rising costs.

For example, in approximately 10-20% of cases, patients either

Medica[®] Optum[®] Employee Assistance Program.

Workplace Engagement: Attracting and retaining a committed and challenged workforce

Do your employees come to work with energy, passion, creativity and commitment? Or do they drag themselves in, do only what's expected and pick up their pace as they walk out the door? This two-hour training program will look at the key drivers of employee engagement, the critical role of the manager and the costs of disengagement.

[Tuesday, May 15](#)
[8 a.m.– 10:30 a.m.](#)

[Wednesday, May 16](#)
[8 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.](#)

Medica headquarters
401 Carlson Parkway,
Minnetonka, MN

receive an incorrect or unnecessary high tech scan (CT scans, MRIs and PETs). Our new radiology management program, which went into effect March 1, uses appropriateness guidelines from the American College of Radiology to ensure that best practices are followed in the delivery of outpatient radiology services. Ultimately, members benefit because they are getting the right treatment at the right time.

We believe the single most effective approach for reducing the cost of health care is also the most difficult – getting individuals to make healthy choices around things like exercise, diet and tobacco use. This often means changing long-standing habits. However, by working together we can make a significant difference. You can help transform your employees into informed, motivated health care consumers by encouraging them to use our online health management center, My Health Manager from MedicaSM. If you're not already taking full advantage of this attractive benefit, [click here](#) for an online tour of the site.

At Medica, we are actively engaged in developing aggressive strategies to address these complex issues, and will continue to keep you informed and bring you effective solutions to help manage your health care costs.

My Health Manager from Medica is available to all fully insured customers and optional for our self-insured customers.

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Health care cost & quality toolbox enhancements

We encourage our members to be active, informed health care consumers, and recently expanded our transparency efforts to provide them with more cost and quality of care information.

Our online transparency tool, called the "Health Care Cost and Quality Toolbox," now allows members with access to www.myMedica.com to compare clinic-specific prices for 13 commonly treated conditions such as asthma, ear infections and sinusitis. The cost information is based on Medica's in-network rates with nearly 140 primary care clinics in our Medica Choice[®] network.

In addition to cost information, the online toolbox provides links to several resources to help members better understand and evaluate quality and patient safety, including:

- Outpatient costs for common procedures and tests
- Maternity/Child birth costs

- Hospital comparisons by complications, patients-per-year, average length of stay, and more
- Treatment Cost Estimator for estimated in-network and out-of-network care for Diseases & Conditions, Surgeries & Procedures, Office Visits & Tests, and Drugs

The more your employees know about what various services and procedures cost, the better prepared they are to discuss care recommendations with their health care provider. New information is added to the toolbox regularly, so encourage your employees to check back often. To see an online demo of the Health Care Cost and Quality Toolbox, [click here](#).

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Legislative update

As we approach the middle of Minnesota's 2007 legislative session, Medica's public policy department is actively engaged in reviewing hundreds of pieces of legislation. They also work to lobby and educate legislators on health insurance topics.

In early January, when the session first began, there was extensive discussion regarding major health reform initiatives. Proposals to expand health insurance to all children and other major health reform ideas began taking form.

In late February, the state budget forecast showed a \$2.1 billion surplus. However, half of this surplus is eaten up when inflation is considered, and the other half is considered "one-time money" – meaning it can't be used for on-going programs. In addition, the finance department is forecasting substantially less money available in the upcoming years.

As a result, many lawmakers are concerned funds won't be available for major new programs such as expanding health insurance coverage or for proposing major reform initiatives. Most insiders expect this session will result in the creation of a health care reform commission that will make recommendations on major health care reform for the 2008 legislative session.

Medica representatives plan to work closely with lawmakers to ensure that the focus of this group will be on addressing the most pressing health care issue today – increasing health care costs.

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Lipitor® reminder

Lipitor will be removed from Medica's formulary of preferred drugs effective April 1, 2007, for new prescriptions and November 30, 2007, for members currently taking Lipitor. To view the full article that appeared in last month's Update about this change, [click here](#).

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Shape Up Challenge starts April 9

Congratulations to the 162 companies participating in Medica's 5th annual Shape Up Challenge! In all, more than 12,000 employees will take part in the six-week campaign from April 9 through May 21, earning rewards for adopting healthy behaviors that improve their physical, mental and social health.

Participants earn points for wellness activities that they complete each day. Medica conducts prize drawings each week and a grand prize will be awarded to the worksite with the highest average number of points for their employees.

If your company isn't participating in the Medica Shape Up Challenge for employers, employees eligible for My Health Manager from MedicaSM can participate individually. Starting April 1, encourage your employees to go to My Health Manager and click on the Shape Up Challenge icon. They'll learn how to participate in the challenge and how to earn up to 15 Wellness Credits. Those credits can put them well on their way toward a nice reward – My Health Manager participants need only 25 Wellness Credits to earn a \$25 gift card each quarter.

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Kick start your worksite wellness efforts

A great way to start promoting worksite wellness is to send out a monthly newsletter, and the Wellness Resource Center makes it easy to do. Simply go to the Wellness Resource Center and click on the "Send a Newsletter" tab to find downloadable PDFs of colorful, easy-to-read newsletters. New issues of *Wellness News* are available each month, or you can publish the articles in your own company newsletter.

You'll also find quick, fun and motivating *Health Action Messages* on current health topics under this tab. These downloadable PDFs can be used in a variety of ways, such as handouts, paycheck inserts or e-mails.

There's never been a more important time to help employees

make healthy changes. Go to Medica.com>Employer Resources>[Wellness Resource Center](#) and enter the password, "wellness."

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Medica Optum EAP survey confirms program's benefits

A recent third-party survey of employees who were involved with the Medica® Optum® employee assistance program (EAP) showed the program increased productivity and decreased absenteeism. Of those employees responding to the survey:

- 40% reported they avoided missing work.
- 35% believed their work performance had improved.
- 100% believed their productivity had increased.

Nearly half of the respondents said they were more satisfied with both their health plan and employer after their Optum experience. "From an employer's perspective, the benefit they gain revolves around better retention of employees and fewer health care costs," according to Richard Paul, president of the Employee Assistance Society of North America. "If we can assist individuals in getting help early on, it becomes much less costly down the road."

The Medica Optum EAP provides several services to both companies and their employees, including:

- Free on-site training programs for employees and managers.
- Management consultations offer information and support to help address work-related challenges.
- Critical incident stress management to help minimize the effect of traumatic events.

Employer groups with access to Medica Optum EAP can view the 2007 training catalog online. It lists topics for various free programs that can be held at your worksite for managers or for all employees. To see the catalog, [click here](#) and enter the password "wellness."

Medica Optum EAP is available to all fully insured customers and optional for our self-insured customers.

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Fit Choices offers incentives and more locations

Fit ChoicesSM by Medica is providing a \$20 monthly membership credit to eligible members who exercise eight or more days each month at any of the designated Fit Choices by Medica health clubs. It's a great way to encourage your employees to make a life-changing commitment to regular exercise, with an affordable membership at a state-of-the-art workout facility.

Effective March 1, 2007, Fit Choices added 14 new locations to our list of participating health clubs. To see a list of the new additions, [click here](#). You can also view the full list of health clubs in our network [here](#).

Fit Choices by Medica is available to all fully insured customers and optional for our self-insured customers.

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