

Privacy Notice

MetroPlus Health Plan respects your privacy rights. This notice describes how we treat the nonpublic personal financial and health information ("Information") we receive about you, and what we do to keep it confidential and secure as required by New York State Insurance Law (Regulation 169).

Categories of Information We Collect and May Disclose

MetroPlus collects Information about you from the following sources:

- Information you give us on applications and other forms, or that you tell us.
- Information about your dealings with us, the healthcare providers we work with, and others.

What We Do With Your Information

We do not disclose Information about our members and former members to anyone, except as permitted by law.

We do use Information as permitted by law for health plan purposes, such as the following:

- To provide the healthcare benefits you receive as a member of MetroPlus Health Plan; for example, to arrange for treatment that you need and to pay for services you receive.
- To communicate with you about programs and services that are available to you as a MetroPlus member.
- To manage our business and comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

How We Protect Your Privacy

- We limit access to your Information to employees and

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Early Intervention for Babies and Toddlers

Your baby needs to visit his or her Primary Care Provider (PCP) regularly. Visits include immunizations on a regular schedule, a check of how the baby is doing overall, and screenings for certain conditions. Your baby needs to see the PCP at least five times before the 15th month. After that, if the child is healthy, visits should take place at least once a year.

Babies should have a hearing and vision screening at birth. Kids should be screened again when they are age 3 or 4.

Children should be screened for anemia and the presence of lead in their blood at age 1 and again at age 2. They should be screened for TB at least every two years.

The age at which kids start walking and talking varies greatly. You see your baby every day. If you don't feel your child is developing as he or she should, tell the PCP. Some babies are referred for Early Intervention soon after birth. If, at any point, the PCP suggests Early Intervention

for your child, take action. Use the referral, and make an appointment right away. You can also call 311 and ask for Early Intervention. MetroPlus can help as well. Call Sandra Lee Wilson, pediatric case manager, at **1-800-303-9626 (TDI: 1-800-881-2812)**. If your baby has a problem, early treatment is best.



Illustrations by Brie Spangler

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Managing Your Asthma

Asthma is a lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. Some people have only mild symptoms. Others get sick a lot. They have trouble sleeping due to coughing or wheezing. They may feel they can't get enough air.

Cigarette smoke, strong smells, allergies to pets, plants, or house dust, cockroaches, dust mites and even stress can trigger an asthma attack. Learn what triggers you are sensitive to so you can avoid them.

Anyone with asthma needs a personal

asthma action plan developed by his or her doctor. You need to use a peak flow meter to learn if an attack is coming and try to prevent it. Your doctor

may prescribe control medication to avoid attacks.

Talk to your doctor about managing your asthma. Take your asthma action plan to your doctor every time you visit. Be sure you understand how and

when to use your medications. If you are not clear, ask again.

MetroPlus has a program to help you, too. Our AsthmaPlus program includes trained Case Managers and a Health Educator who want to help you learn how to live well with asthma and feel better.

Call them at:

1-800-303-9626. Then the caller can ask to speak to Marie Legaspi at extension 8682 or Soraya Sussman at extension 8718.



From left to right: Marie Legaspi—Case Manager, Frances Robles—Case Management Associate, Soraya Sussman—Case Manager, and Ann Allen—Health Educator

Renew and Keep Your Health Insurance!

MetroPlus is here to help you. When you get your renewal notice from HRA, call us: **1-800-475-METRO**. We can help you over the phone or tell you where to go in your neighborhood. We want you to stay a MetroPlus member. Call us *anytime*.

Site News & Notes

Diabetic patients at **Elmhurst** and **Queens Hospitals** have their condition monitored electronically. This way, staff learn about problems fast. If a patient comes in with another problem, the doctors and nurses also know about the diabetes. Everyone benefits.

The H.E.L.P. Project at **Bellevue Hospital Center** explains how to give medications and how to ask the doctor important questions during the time parents spend waiting with kids to see the pediatrician. The time is also used to make referrals to free English and GED programs. If the child gets a prescription, the pediatrician hands out a personalized, bilingual instruction sheet with pictures to show how to give the medicine properly. Parents also get a log sheet with a check-off system to keep track of every dose.

Reminders

Do you have a hearing problem? If so, use a TDD machine to call Member Services: **1-800-881-2812**.

Every family member needs a complete physical exam once a year. Call your PCP to make an appointment for each person *now*.

Did you move or change your phone number? If so, please call Member Services: **1-800-303-9626**.

Important Information on HIV Counseling, Testing and Free STD Services

Everyone should know his or her HIV status. The only way to learn this is to be tested. Your PCP can test you. Anyone—MetroPlus members and non-members—can go to certain New York City health clinics. These clinics also offer confidential (only you know) STD services and rapid HIV testing and counseling. They can help sex- and needle-sharing partners get free, sterile needles and syringes. To find a clinic, learn where to get free needles or to ask questions, call **311**.



Dealing With Domestic Violence

If you are hurt by a spouse, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, it is domestic violence. The hurt can be physical or emotional. It doesn't matter if you are married, living with someone, dating, separated, gay or straight.

If you want help, call our Domestic Violence Coordinator: **(212) 908-8542**. You can learn about services in your community. Or, call **1-800-799-SAFE** for help 24/7. They speak many languages.

The MetroPlus Advisory Committee



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, BACK ROW: Calvin Dalton (Member, Kings County Hospital), Philip Passantino (Chief Operating Officer), Adeline Prosper (Member, Cumberland D&TC), Dr. Arnold Saperstein (President), Evelyn Corcino (Executive Secretary), Dr. Van Dunn (Acting Chief Medical Officer), Gail Smith (Deputy Executive Director, Customer Services, Human Resources & Organizational Development, Intergovernmental Relations), Rebecca Santana (Director of Customer Services), Shawndesse Kancso (Project Manager), Linda Cummings (Director of Utilization Management), Mari Gold (Director of Communications), Maria Rivera (Customer Services Manager), Lavern Williams (Customer Services Administration) **From left to right, front row:** Jacqueline Brathwaite (Member, Dr. Nagamma Duddempudi), Neenakumar Ramtahal (Member, Morrisania D&TC), Tamira Boynes (Member, East New York D&TC), Christina Williams (Member, Kings County), Nella Lewis (Member, Gouverneur Hospital)

Stressed Out? Learn to Relax

The news is full of disaster stories. Work can be stressful. Caring for children can be a strain. Stress is part of modern life, but it overwhelms some of us.

After stress dies down, your heart rate and blood pressure go back to normal. But, if you are stressed over and over, your body has no chance to recover. This can cause problems to you:

- Digestive, immune, and nervous systems.
- Heart and blood vessels.
- Skin.

Some of us are "laid back." We don't overreact. Others react strongly to even the slightest stress. To combat stress, look after yourself. Eat a healthy diet. Get plenty of sleep. Exercise. Learn to relax. Practice deep breathing. Try to shift your outlook. Is your reaction out of proportion? Are you so mad you lose control? If you try to control stress on your own and it doesn't work, you may need help. Talk to your PCP.

To manage stress, you have to practice all the time. It takes work, but it's worth it.

Nurse-Family Partnership Helps First-Time Moms

Having your first baby? Join the Nurse-Family Partnership. A nurse will visit you every one or two weeks while you are pregnant. Afterwards, she will visit until your baby is age 2.

The nurse works with you to help you:

- Ensure a healthy pregnancy.
- Make your home safe for your baby.

- Set goals for your own life.
- Refer you for child care, mental health care, job training and other services.

The service is **free**. You can sign up as early as you want, but no later than the 28th week of pregnancy. To join, call MetroMom: **1-800-475-METRO**.



MetroMom
The key to healthy babies

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other persons who need it to conduct MetroPlus Health Plan business or comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

- Employees are subject to discipline and may be fired if they violate our privacy policies and procedures.
- We also use physical, electronic and procedural safeguards to keep Information confidential and secure, in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Former Members

If your membership in MetroPlus Health Plan ends, your Information will remain protected in accordance with our policies and procedures for current members.

You Can Contact Us at the Address or Phone Number Below to:

- Request more information about our privacy policies and practices.
- File a privacy-related complaint with us.
- Request (in writing) to review Information about you in our records.

Member Services
MetroPlus Health Plan
160 Water Street
New York, NY 10038
Phone: 1-800-303-9626
(TDD 1-800-881-2812)

A "Notice of Health Information Privacy Practices" Is Also Available

MetroPlus has a "Notice of Health Information Privacy Practices" that describes in detail how we may use and disclose medical information about you. The notice also tells you about your rights under federal privacy regulations (HIPAA). You can get a copy of this notice by calling Member Services at the number above, or by visiting our Internet Web site at www.metroplus.org and clicking on the Privacy Policies link.