

METROMONITOR



METROPLUS HEALTH PLAN, INC. PROVIDER NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Medical Director

MetroPlus Health Plan has been growing quite rapidly over the past few months. We reached our initial goal of 100,000 earlier in the summer and have surpassed 114,000 members as of September 1.

This summer we performed site visits at many of our higher volume primary care offices. We appreciate your time and would like to let you know that we have heard your suggestions. The first suggestion implemented was an increase in the rates paid for immunizations. We are also evaluating numerous other suggestions for implementation.

As always, we appreciate the care you provide to our members and look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards, Arnold Saperstein, M.D.

100,000 MEMBERS!

We are proud to announce that MetroPlus has recently reached the 100,000 member mark.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you and your staff for working with us to ensure that MetroPlus members continue to receive quality healthcare services.

Immunization Rates Increase

Please note that effective September 2, 2002, MetroPlus has increased the additional fee-for-service payments for vaccines. The increase is based on a review of the pricing for the market and is set to match the Average Wholesale Price. The increase will apply to all MetroPlus products except for Managed Medicaid where vaccines are covered through the Vaccines for Children Program.

Spotlight on Yaoming Wang, MD

Dr. Yaoming Wang was one of the first Pediatricians in Flushing to join MetroPlus in 1998.



Dr. Wang attended medical school in China, completed his internship in Pediatrics and Genetics at Mount Sinai Hospital, and did his residency at Cornell Hospital. After graduating in 1996, Dr. Wang joined the medical staff at Queens Hospital as a full-time teaching attending and served as Education Director for Queens Hospital's Pediatrics Residency Program. Dr. Wang practiced Pediatrics in Queens until 1998 when he opened a

private office in Flushing where he continues to practice today.

A strong believer in preventive care, Dr. Wang has always recognized the importance of educating the community that he serves and, to this end, he has been involved in many local health promotion initiatives. Through a regular collaboration with local radio and TV stations, Dr. Wang has used the opportunity to speak to his community about such issues as children's asthma and the importance of vaccines.

Dr. Wang's goal is to offer his patients an experience that is both accessible and attractive. He believes that the quality of the services offered by Participating Providers is the best way to promote MetroPlus. As Dr. Wang says, "the quality of services offered by MetroPlus is ultimately measured by the quality of the services offered by the Providers who see and treat the patient".

If you would like to contact Dr. Wang, you can reach him at his office at 41-61 Kissena Blvd., Flushing Plaza, Suite J, First Floor, Flushing, NY 11355, (718) 961-8881.

MetroPlus Awarded NYSDOH Grant for Innovative Approaches to Quality

MetroPlus has been awarded a grant to develop, implement and evaluate a guideline for the treatment of major depression in the coming year. To complete this project, MetroPlus will collaborate with the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation's Behavioral Health Office and

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We want to hear from you! If you have ideas or suggestions for the next issue of the MetroMonitor, please call the MetroPlus Provider Relations Department at (212) 730-3040 or E-mail pintea@nychhc.org.

Behavioral Health Providers. The grant award will enable MetroPlus to offer training on the guideline and follow-up technical assistance on guideline implementation to Participating Behavioral Health Providers. This training curriculum will include use of a standardized screening tool to increase the detection of major depression and monitor symptom reduction, a verbal and written member education component, and reinforcement of Provider use of MetroPlus' Protocol for Communication and Consent between Behavioral Health and Primary Care Providers. This grant project is particularly timely given research that suggests a rise in depression rates since the 9/11 disaster and the anticipated influx of Plan enrollees who previously received Disaster Relief Medicaid and may be affected by depression.

Advanced Access Program

The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) is collaborating with the Primary Care Development Corporation in an ambulatory care restructuring initiative called "Advanced Access". Advanced Access is designed to reduce wait time for patient appointments, decrease no-show rates, and increase patient and staff satisfaction.

Advanced Access is based on the principle "do today's work today." Instead of booking schedules with appointments far in advance, Providers will leave a majority of their time open each day. When a patient calls the office, the staff simply offers an appointment for the same day, regardless of the reason for the visit. If a same day appointment is not convenient for the patient, he/she is offered an appointment for a day in the very near future. Studies have shown that most patients will make and keep same-day appointments, with the rest largely making visits within a few days.

In addition to reducing the patient's wait time, the program promotes other positive benefits. Schedulers no longer have to hold appointments in anticipation of same-day needs so they can maximize their schedules and gain capacity for appointment availability. Patients will more likely see their own personal physician, which means greater efficiency, a greater sense of control, and improved satisfaction for everyone.

Advanced Access has been shown to reduce wait time at offices in California, Minnesota, and Alaska. In New York, pilot teams at selected HHC facilities will implement Advanced Access beginning this Fall.

PICA for MetroPlus Gold Members

The Psychotropic, Injectable, Chemotherapy & Asthma (PICA) Program is a prescription drug program provided by the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations and the Municipal Labor Committee. The program became effective July 1, 2001 and it is administered by the National Prescription Administrators, Inc. (NPA).

The PICA Program provides coverage to all City employees, non-Medicare retirees and their dependents enrolled in a plan offered by the City's Health Benefits Program. **Members of the MetroPlus Gold program with a Pharmacy Rider are covered under this plan.** There are no payroll deductions for PICA and no pharmacy copays for generic drugs. Copays for brand-name drugs range between \$6 and \$12.

PICA prescriptions can be filled at participating pharmacies by using the NPA PICA card. With the NPA PICA card, members can obtain up to a 30-day supply of drugs at a participating pharmacy. NPA also offers a mail order program through Central Fill, Inc. (CFI). Through CFI, members can order a 90-day supply of PICA drugs.

For more information about PICA or to find a participating pharmacy, please visit NPA's website at www.e-npa.com or call NPA's Customer Service at 1-800-467-2006.

Family Health Month

The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) has declared October to be "Family Health Month". The event is intended to promote the Family Health Plus (FHPlus) product through various activities planned by HHC facilities.



Events in which MetroPlus will participate include the **Circle of Sisters Exposition** held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan, on October 19th and 20th and **Halloween Week**, hosted by Bellevue Hospital on October 26th, at Woodhull Hospital on October 30th, and at Metropolitan Hospital on October 31st. At these events, MetroPlus Marketing Representatives will give out small gifts and prizes and will provide information on MetroPlus products.

For more information on FHPlus, or for a complete list of events scheduled for Family Health Month, please call the Marketing Department at (212) 597-8981.