

July 2003

METROMONITOR



METROPLUS HEALTH PLAN, INC. PROVIDER NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Medical Director

In this edition of the MetroMonitor, we would like to introduce to you Dr. Robert Wicks, who has joined MetroPlus as Associate Medical Director. We are very excited to have launched our HIV Special Needs Plan and now have our first members effective July 1. In addition, you will find information on two changes in authorization requirements and a reminder to help ensure timely claim payment by submitting paper claims to the address included below on this page.

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

Best Regards,
Arnold Saperstein, M.D.

AUTHORIZATION NO LONGER REQUIRED FOR VISION SERVICES TO METROPLUS MEMBERS

MetroPlus Participating Providers are no longer required to request authorization for payment for optometric examinations and prescriptions for MetroPlus Members. The change applies to services provided for Members enrolled in Medicaid, Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus.

Please note that benefit limitations apply. For complete information of benefits, please call your Provider Relations Representative.

CLAIM AND ENCOUNTER SUBMISSION FOR METROPLUS MEMBERS

Please be reminded that **ALL** paper claims and encounter forms for MetroPlus Members must be mailed **only** to the following address:

**P.O. Box 1966
New York, NY 10116-1966.**

Paper claims must be submitted on HCFA1500 or UB-92 forms and must be received by MetroPlus within ninety days of the service or discharge date.

SPOTLIGHT ON METROPLUS STAFF

In January, 2003, Robert C. Wicks, M.D., M.B.A. joined the Medical Management Department of MetroPlus as Associate Medical Director.

After receiving his medical degree from the University of Iowa, Dr. Wicks completed a residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and a fellowship in Gastroenterology at the University of Colorado. He is Board certified in both Internal Medicine and Gastroenterology. Dr. Wicks also has an M.B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley.

Before moving to New York in 1996, Dr. Wicks practiced medicine in San Francisco, CA and between 1985-1996 served as a Member of the Board of Directors of San Francisco IPA, Chairman of the Department of Medicine of Davies Medical Center, and later as Chief Financial Officer of Davies Medical Group.

In 1996, Dr. Wicks accepted the position of Medical Director of Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New York and then, in 1997, of Physicians Health Services of New York. In 1999, he joined Horizon Healthcare of New York where, in his capacity of Medical Director, Dr. Wicks

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

focused on medical expense reduction and UM oversight. In addition to the Medical Director functions, he also performed valuable roles in other areas such as financial analysis, contracting and network development.

At MetroPlus, Dr. Wicks joined the Medical Management division which includes the Quality Management, Provider Relations & Contracting, Utilization Management, and Partnership in Care departments. Since joining MetroPlus and with the able assistance of Nona Getz, the Director of Utilization/Care Management, Dr. Wicks has refocused department efforts on areas that can best deliver value to both Members and Providers. Dr. Wicks is especially interested in better ways to provide useful health plan data to Providers so that members can receive timely, cost efficient care. He can be reached at 1-212-597-8680.

SARS NOW A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Effective April 10, 2003, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome ("SARS") was added to the reportable disease list (Section 2.1 of the New York State Sanitary Code).

Any suspect cases should be reported within 24 hours by Providers to the Bureau of Communicable Disease at 1-212-788-9830; after hours, call the Poison Control Center at 1-212-764-7667 or 1-800-222-1222.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED FOR PRESCRIPTION SECOND GENERATION ANTIHISTAMINES

Effective April 30, 2003, the New York State Medicaid Program has implemented a prior authorization requirement for prescription second-generation antihistamines such as Clarinex, Allegra/Allegra D, Zyrtec/Zyrtec D, and Semprex-D. Over-the-counter second generation antihistamines do not require prior authorization.

Prescriptions ordered prior to April 30, 2003 will not require prior authorization. When current prescriptions (including refills) expire, prior

authorization will be required for any new prescription second-generation antihistamines.

For Medicaid Members in medical need for a second generation prescription antihistamine, Providers must obtain patient-specific prior authorization for that particular drug by calling the same Medicaid Prior Authorization Call Line used for the Mandatory Generic program, at 1-877-309-9493.

For CHP and FHP Members, Providers should complete the MetroPlus Health Plan Pharmaceutical Prior Approval Form (included in the Provider Manual) and fax it to the MetroPlus Utilization/Care Management Department at 1-212-597-8901. MetroPlus will make every effort to evaluate the request before the Member reaches the pharmacy.

To request electronic copies of the MetroPlus Health Plan Pharmaceutical Prior Approval Form and for more information about the prior authorization process, please contact your Provider Relations Representative.

METROPLUS HIV SNP LAUNCHED

MetroPlus is pleased to announce the launch of the Partnership in Care program, a Special Needs Plan for Medicaid recipients who are HIV positive and their children under the age of 19 regardless of their HIV status.

If your patients are interested in joining the Partnership in Care program, please refer them to the MetroPlus Marketing Representative at your facility or ask them to call either MetroPlus at 1-800-475-METRO or Medicaid CHOICE at 1-800-505-5678 to request additional information.

If you have any additional questions regarding the Partnership in Care program or if you are interested in becoming a participating provider in this program, please contact your Provider Relations Representative.

If you need to reach our HIV Medical Management Team regarding a HIV positive MetroPlus Member, you may call them directly at 1-212-597-8638 or send them a confidential Fax at their new Fax number: 1-212-908-8897. The HIV Medical Management Team is responsible for all aspects of medical care including care and utilization management to MetroPlus' HIV positive Members.

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 1-800-597-3380 or E-mail pintea@nychhc.org.