

CHANGES IN HEALTH SERVICES

SPECIAL LETTER TO PATIENTS ELIGIBLE FOR THE CONTRACT HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM OF THE PORTLAND AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE WESTERN OREGON SERVICE UNIT.

The CHS Program of the Portland Area Indian Health Service has experienced severe spending increases this year. It has been projected that if spending continues at the present rate, the program will overspend by more than one million dollars. This is not allowed by law, so we must wither make major cuts in the program now or plan to close the program down for a period of time when the programs runs out of money prior to the end of the year. We feel it would be much better to make cuts now so that we can continue to provide the most critical emergency services to eligible patients throughout the entire year.

At a special meeting of the Executive Council of the Portland Area Indian Health Service April 27, the following changes were made in allowable costs under the CHS program, effective as of that date:

1. All eyeglasses, hearing aids, and refractions must be deferred.
2. All hospital admissions must be limited to a very strict interpretation of Priority I (necessary for the preservation of life, limb, or function) and deferrals made whenever possible.
3. A strict interpretation of Priority I must be applied to skilled nursing care, medical equipment purchases, physical therapy, prosthetics, and all mental health therapy.
4. Use of alternate resources must be increased. IHS staff will be reviewing every case for possible Medicaid or insurance eligibility, and will require application by the patient if there is a possibility of eligibility.
5. Every emergency room visit will be reviewed by our physician, and denials will be made for non-emergency visits.
6. Dental care purchased through Contract Health Services will be limited to emergencies only (serious infections and trauma involving serious injury.)
7. Any cardiac surgery will be performed at St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland, where we have a contract and reduced rates, unless we can get DRG rates in a local hospital.
8. Payments to pharmacies for prescription costs will be reduced by switching to the Medicaid formulary and fees.
9. Ambulatory care (outpatient care) will be restricted to a strict interpretation of Priority I only.

CLARIFICATION FROM GRAND RONDE CONTRACT HEALTH

In clarification of this recent notice that many of you received from the Western Oregon Service Unit, regarding Contract Health Services. This letter will not be effecting Grand Ronde CHS eligible tribal members.

However, due to our own spending increases this year Grand Ronde Contract Health Services will be experiencing some spending changes.

1. All Hospital admissions for members without a primary insurance or Medicare will be required to apply to Adult and Family Services for a medical card.
2. All OB patients without a primary insurance prior to delivery will be required to apply to AFS for a medical card.
3. All emergency room visits will be limited to preservation of life, limb or function. These visits will be reviewed by the community Health Nurse, if these do not fall within Priority I they may result in a denial.

4. All immunizations, school physicals, routine physicals will be referred to WOSU-Chemawa Clinic, the County Health Department. For the Grand Ronde area members, there is the Wednesday clinics at the Tribal Office that are available.

5. All ROUTINE mammograms and ROUTINE OB ultrasounds will not longer by a Priority I Level. Exceptions will be:

- a. Any suspect mammograms
- b. Follow-Up mammograms after an abnormal one
- c. OB ultrasounds ordered to rule out any anomalies

6. All cardiac surgeries will be performed at St. Vincent's Hospitals in Portland, unless we can get DRG rates in a local hospital.

7. All extensive pediatric services will be referred to Dorbechors Children's Hospital at OHSU.

8. Pharmacies will be asked to dispense generic brand products unless specified by a physician. Absolutely no over the counter drugs.

For non-life-threatening emergencies that occur on WEEKENDS OR AFTER BUSINESS HOURS, there is the Immediate Care Clinic, located at 3777 Commercial St. SE Salem - phone 588-9026, or the After Hours Clinic at 1233 Edgewater St. NW Salem - phone 371-8212.

For acute problems, (i.e. colds, flu, allergies, shots, rashes-skin problems) appointment should be made a few days ahead of time for the Wednesday Clinics.

It is extremely important for PRE-Authorization BEFORE your doctor or dental appointments.

We deeply regret the hardship and the inconvenience this program change will mean for some of our patients, but please understand that it was absolutely necessary because of a spending crisis which has been brought on by increased cost, increased medical inflation, increased need for medical and dental services in our population, and a rapid growth in the population we serve, please understand that CHS is not telling you that cannot receive medical services, it is just that we can only pay for the most urgent and emergent services.

Thank-You for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. Hopefully these measures will be temporary in nature, and we will keep you informed if they can be relaxed at some point in the future. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 879-5211 or toll free at 1-800-422-0232.

Contract Health Services

Teri Holsclaw

Mary Brickell

SUMMMER HEALTH ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

The Health Sciences Minority Program at the University of Minnesota is offering a variety of summer enrichment and exploration programs for students who might be interested in pursuing health sciences careers.

All programs are offered at no cost to the accepted student. To be considered for any of the programs, an application must be submitted that describes the student candidate as a members of an under represented group in the health sciences including American Indians. For more information and an application, contact Cynthia Simmons-Cooper, Health Sciences Minority Program W61 Centennial Hall, 614 Delaware Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455 (612-624-7901).

POISON - PROOF YOUR HOME

Grandparents and older adults who do not have children living in the home need to be alert to the dangers of accidental poisonings when youngsters come to visit. Because they don't have to worry about child safety on a daily basis, older persons often forget to put away medicines, cleaners, and other potentially harmful substances when children are around.

That oversight can sometimes be fatal. In a recent Consumer Product Safety Commission Study, 17 percent of the child poisoning cases investigated involved grandparents' medications. The most common reason for the accidents was the easy availability of the medicines, either because they were placed on a shelf or counter within the child's reach or because the caps were not child-resistant.

"Older persons who do not request child-proof containers because they have difficulty opening them should take extra precautions to keep medicines up high, out of the reach and sight of children," advises Brian Howell, director of the Oklahoma Poison Control Center at Children's Hospital of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City.

"They should also beware of medicines kept in purses and suitcases when visiting homes with young children," Howell says, noting that young ones are often attracted to bottles of brightly colored pills.

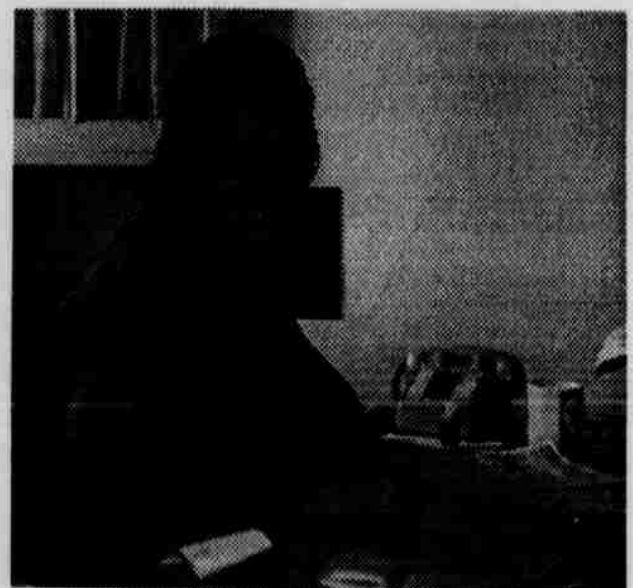
Other guidelines Howell recommends for poison-proofing your home are:

- Avoid using hazardous household products while children are in the home. If you do use them, do not leave them open and or unattended.
- Use child-resistant closures on medicines if at all possible.
- Discard old medicines and household products when they are no longer needed.
- Do not make a game out of taking medicine, since children love to imitate adult behaviors.
- Keep a bottle of syrup or ipecac on hand in case vomiting needs to be induced. But don't use the ipecac unless instructed to do so by a health professional or poison control center. Sometimes it will make the effects of the poison worse.
- Keep the number for your nearest poison control center close to the phone. You'll find the number in the front of your telephone directory, or call the local hospital and request the number.

You can help save the life of a child by practicing these safety tips and by encouraging others to do the same.

For other tips on poison prevention, call your local poison prevention center.

- From "Highlights", published by the American Association of Retired Persons.



Contract Health Bookkeeper, Ellen Calder