



# Public Forum

## Protecting Your Health

### The Bureau of Health Professions

▪ MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS ▪ 2011 ▪ VOLUME 5 ▪ ISSUE 1

#### **Public Forum Newsletter now under the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs**

On April 24, 2011 the Bureau of Health Professions was officially transferred to the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs as part of an Executive Order 2011-4 [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/2011-4\\_346311\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/2011-4_346311_7.pdf) signed by Governor Snyder in February 2011. The Bureau was previously housed in the Department of Community Health. The transfer of the Bureau is part of a reorganization of state government in order to increase the efficiency of state services, improve the grouping of similar programs under each state department, and sharpen the focus on jobs.



The *Public Forum* newsletter, which was first published in 2007, will continue to be produced in the Bureau's Professional Practice Section. In keeping with the goals of the governor's reorganization, *Public Forum* will continue to provide the public with an electronic newsletter regarding a host of health consumer issues. These will include professional practice issues related to the 25 health professions the Bureau regulates, and will range from patients' rights to public and private health care programs and services available to Michigan citizens. We will also provide articles and resources regarding health careers and job opportunities with Michigan's largest employer: the health care industry.

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> issue of *Public Forum* since 2007, which is currently received by more than 4,600 subscribers. Subscribers to this newsletter have more than doubled in the past year. If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, you may wish to view previous issues at [http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-27417\\_27529-162134--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-27417_27529-162134--,00.html). You are encouraged to subscribe to this newsletter by going to [www.michigan.gov/healthlicense](http://www.michigan.gov/healthlicense) and selecting the *Public Forum* newsletter link in the *Spotlight* box. If you are a health professional, you are encouraged make copies of *Public Forum* and make it available in your patient waiting rooms. If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, you may contact Doreen Lyman at 517-241-1181 or [lymanD@michigan.gov](mailto:lymanD@michigan.gov).

#### **Michigan Citizens Warned On Risks Associated With Higher Temps**

In light of higher temperatures expected to affect most of the Great Lakes area during summer months, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is pointing out several preventative measures citizens can take to keep their families safe when the weather becomes unbearably hot.

MDCH is offering several tips to help you beat the heat when temperatures reach 80 degrees or above.

High temperatures can create stress on your body and mind. Very hot days can cause body temperature to rise, resulting in muscle cramps, dizziness, and eventually making you dangerously ill. To prevent symptoms of heat stress, adults and children should stay completely hydrated by drinking water frequently, even if they may not be thirsty. It is also important to try to stay clear of alcoholic and caffeinated drinks as they cause dehydration.

Heat-related illnesses target young children and the elderly, so it is important to monitor these citizens by checking them frequently. For more information about the different signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses, go to [www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-8347-172976--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-8347-172976--,00.html).

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## National Health Care Reform: How does it affect *Me*?

In March 2010, President Obama signed into law the comprehensive health reform legislation, called the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). The goal of the ACA is to control health care costs, improve the health care delivery system, and to expand coverage in changes occurring over eight years. Because the ACA represents an enormous change in how health care will be delivered, many people are confused about how this reform will be rolled out and how these changes will impact our lives. To better understand these changes, here is a timeline showing the major changes that have already occurred and those we can expect in the years to come:

### 2010

- No Discrimination Against Children with Pre-existing Conditions
- Dependent Coverage Extended Until Age 26
- Guaranteed Coverage for Preventive Care



This means that health care plans can no longer deny coverage to children with pre-existing conditions. Until the age of 26, dependents will be able to have coverage even if he or she is no longer living with a parent, is not a dependent on a parent's tax return, is no longer a student, and even if married. However, coverage will not be available to the spouse or children of the married dependant. Coverage for preventative care will eliminate out-of-pocket costs for major preventive services with a so called "A" or "B" rating, which includes such services as mammography coverage for all women 40 or older.

### 2011

- Prevention Services for Medicare program
- Restaurant Menu Labeling
- Improvements in Pain Management



Seniors will have improved Medicare services, including personalized prevention plans, eliminated co-pays for preventative services, and coverage for an annual wellness visit. Menu labeling will require chain restaurants to disclose the nutritional content of every item. A national program will be established to improve the ability of health professionals to understanding, assess, and properly treat pain.

### 2012

- Fraud and Abuse Prevention
- Medical Advance Payment Plans
- Accountable Care Organizations in Medicare



Procedures will be implemented for screening, oversight, and reporting for providers and suppliers that participate in Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP to prevent fraud and abuse of care. Medical Advance Payment Plans will reduce rebates paid to Medicare Advantage plans and provide payment bonuses to high quality plans. The Accountable Care Program will have providers organized that voluntarily meet quality thresholds to share in the cost savings they achieve for the Medicare program.

### 2013

- CO-OP Health Insurance
- Financial Disclosure
- Improve Administrative Simplicity



CO-OP health insurance plans will be created to foster the ideals of non profit member run health insurance companies. Financial disclosure will require financial relationships between health entities (such as hospitals or pharmacies) and other providers (such as manufacturers or distributors of drugs and medical supplies). To improve administrative simplicity, there will be a single set of operating rules for eligibility verification, claims status, electronic funds transfer, and health care payment and remittances.

## 2014

No Annual Limits

Limited Waiting Periods

Access to Affordable Health Care



A ban will be in place from most individual and all group health plans from placing annual limits on the dollar value of coverage. Waiting periods for coverage will be limited to 90 days. A state-based American Health Benefit Exchange and Small Business Health Options Program will be created through which individuals and small businesses with up to 100 employees can purchase qualified health care coverage.

In 2015, Children's Health insurance will see a 23 percent point increase in the match rate up to a cap of 100 percent. In 2016, it will be permitted for states to form health care choices compacts programs and allow insurers to sell policies in states participating in the compact. In 2018, an excise tax will be imposed on insurers of employer-sponsored health plans with expenses that exceed \$10,200 for individual coverage and \$27,500 for family coverage.

Although national health reform has just begun, it is important that each of us understands the major components of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and how it will impact Michigan residents. For a complete and detailed listing of benefits and a timeline for implementation of the ACA, please visit <http://healthreform.kff.org/> or <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/timeline/index.html>.



### Have You Considered a Career in Health Care?

Did you know that the health care industry is Michigan's largest employer - far surpassing even the automotive industry? Finding information about the many careers in this industry is made easy by visiting the Bureau of Health Professions *Health Careers in Michigan* website at [www.michigan.gov/healthcareers](http://www.michigan.gov/healthcareers). This website offers valuable information about many of the attractive career opportunities in health care.

With a simple click of the mouse you can learn about Michigan's in demand health careers, with both written and video profiles of many of the top career opportunities in Michigan. Profiles include the type of work a professional does in each of the several health care fields, the training and education required, and the average wage earned. The website also contains a list of more than 70 Michigan colleges and universities containing hundreds of health care training programs-ranging from occupational therapy, social work, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and dozens of other exciting health care fields.

Whether you are looking for an extensive training program in medicine or accelerated training to become a radiological technician-it's all here. If all this information still isn't enough, the website also offers additional links and other resources to help prepare you for some of the most fulfilling and high-paying jobs in Michigan. If you need additional help navigating the website, you may contact Doreen Lyman at 517-241-1181 or [lymanD@michigan.gov](mailto:lymanD@michigan.gov).

**Jobs available NOW!**

**Try a career in health!**

## The Importance of Dental Health

The human mouth is not only one of the most active body parts, it is also one of the most revealing. Teeth and gums can actually reveal the inside story of a person's general health by just one quick look by a licensed dental health professional. Currently there are more than 20,000 licensed dental professionals in Michigan, including dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and surgeons. Getting regular dental check-ups is an important part of daily care because signs and symptoms of many potentially life-threatening diseases appear first in the mouth. Furthermore, it is also true that many problems in the mouth, such as gum disease, can cause problems in other areas of the body. A person's overall health and oral health are much more connected than most people realize.

Heart disease is one of the deadliest problems for both men and women. Research has shown that periodontal (gum) disease has a link to heart disease, along with clogged arteries, and stroke. Several types of bacteria that cause gum disease have also been found in plaque lining in arteries of the heart and elsewhere. Plaque in the heart and vessels is a fatty substance that can build up over time. This plaque has been shown to be the cause of many health complications involving the heart, veins, and arteries. Oral infections may also cause inflammation (swelling) throughout the body, which can lead to heart attack and stroke.



Diabetes is a condition whereby the body is unable to regulate levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood, resulting in too much glucose present in the blood. Diabetes has been shown to be linked to oral health as well. It is estimated that 95 percent of Americans who have diabetes also have periodontal disease, which are diseases of the tissues supporting the teeth. Diabetes increases the risk of gum disease, cavities, tooth loss, and other serious problems. In turn, not getting proper oral care can also lead to blood sugar levels that are harder to control. High glucose levels can cause red, sore, and swollen gums that bleed, along with losing teeth.



Many people would be surprised to learn there is a connection between oral health and osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is the thinning of bone tissue and the loss of bone density over time. This is a health threat to more than 28 million Americans. The first stages of bone loss often occur in the teeth, which can be a sign of developing osteoporosis. This bone loss can actually make oral infections occur more frequently and with greater severity. Osteoporosis can result in teeth that become brittle and break more easily, just like any other bone tissue in the body.

Periodontal disease can also seriously affect pregnancy and birth. Pregnancy is a period when women are more prone to having dental complications such as gingivitis, gum disease, and tumors. Hormone levels increase during pregnancy, which makes the teeth and gums more prone to plaque and other bacteria. Plaque on the teeth is made of a soft, sticky material and contains harmful bacteria. The bacteria produce acid, which is harmful to the teeth and gums. Proper oral health is therefore vital before and during pregnancy. Not only does gum disease cause problems for the mother, but it also causes problems for the unborn child. Not having proper dental care during pregnancy has been associated with premature and/or low birth weight babies.

Oral health and general health should be considered two very interrelated health care domains. Oral health results in more than just healthy teeth. With the proper dental care, early detection of oral health problems may contribute to the early diagnosis and treatment of a number of other health problems and diseases. The best way to protect your oral health is to brush and floss daily, and by going to the dentist every six months for regular check-ups.

For more information on proper oral care and finding a dentist near you, visit the American Dental Association website at [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org). You can also learn more about your dentist by visiting our "Verify a License" website at <http://www7.dleg.state.mi.us/free/>. The Bureau of Health Professions regulates more than 20,000 dental health professionals in Michigan.

## MI Prescription Drug Price Finder

If you don't have prescription drug insurance coverage, the [www.michigandrugprices.com/](http://www.michigandrugprices.com/) website can help you to find the best price, for the top 150 prescribed medications in your area. Just enter your zip code or city, the name of the medication and the distance from your home you are willing to travel. A list of all pharmacies in the area you specified and the price they charge for the medication will be listed. You will probably find that there is a significant difference in the price of your medications, depending on where you shop.

## Stroke? Act F.A.S.T.

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A cerebral vascular accident (CVA) commonly known as a stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States. There are two types of strokes. The most common type occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery. The second type occurs when a blood vessel in the brain breaks. Both cause an interruption in blood flow and deprive an area of the brain of oxygen.

Brain cells control how the body functions. The lack of oxygen causes the surrounding brain cells to die. When these cells die, certain parts of the body lose some, or all, of their ability to function normally. How the stroke victim is affected depends on the location of the stroke and how much brain damage occurred.

A stroke can cause a number of problems, such as muscle weakness, paralysis, and problems with speech, swallowing, vision, memory and reasoning. It can also lead to coma, and all too often results in death.

When someone has a stroke, time is of the essence. According to the National Stroke Association, "A person experiencing a stroke can be treated if people have acted "FAST". F.A.S.T. is an acronym for four things to check in a suspected stroke victim:

- F** – Face: Does the face droop on one side when the person smiles?
- A** – Arm: After lifting both arms, does one arm drift downward?
- S** – Speech: Does a person's speech sound slurred or strange when they repeat a simple phrase?
- T** – Time: If any or all of the above symptoms are observed call 9-1-1 immediately.

Prevention is key. Eighty percent of strokes are preventable. Talk with your primary care physician on ways to keep your blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol controlled. If you smoke or drink, you should quit smoking and only drink in moderation. Also, eating a low sodium (salt) diet and exercising regularly can help prevent strokes.

A stroke can happen to any person at any time, regardless of age, race, or sex. Remember that strokes strike fast and you should too. Calling 9-1-1 when you recognize the FAST symptoms can save you or your loved one's life. For more information on stroke prevention, contact the Cardiovascular Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity Section at the Michigan Department of Community Health at 517-335-8180. A brochure on state efforts to deal with stroke and other cardiovascular health issues is available at [http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940\\_2955\\_2959---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940_2955_2959---,00.html).

## Bureau Websites

The Bureau of Health Professions has several websites for health professionals and the general public. The Health Careers website [www.michigan.gov/healthcareers](http://www.michigan.gov/healthcareers) contains information about health careers. If you are thinking about a job in health care, or know of someone else who may be interested, please share this information with them. You can even send your friends an ePostcard from the site to tell them about it.

The Bureau's Pain and Symptom Management website [www.michigan.gov/painmanagement](http://www.michigan.gov/painmanagement) target audience is both the general public and health professionals alike. The general public can access information about diseases and conditions that cause pain, medications for treating pain, and tools to search for a physician or psychologist in your area that specializes in pain management.

The Patient Safety website [www.michigan.gov/patientsafety](http://www.michigan.gov/patientsafety) like the pain management site, is for both the general public and health professionals. The public can learn about what a person can do to protect themselves and their family from medical and nursing errors in various health care settings.

There is also a document you can view that lists all the websites of interest at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/BHP\\_Website\\_Brochure\\_277235\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/BHP_Website_Brochure_277235_7.pdf)

## The Connection Between Mental Health and Overall Health

Mental health is related to how a person thinks, feels, and acts, throughout everyday situations. It is connected to how an individual deals with handling stress, relationships with others, decision making, performing routine tasks, and one's overall approach on life. The federal Center for Mental Health Service estimates there are about 1.4 million adults in Michigan with various forms of mental illness. About a third of these have a "serious mental illness," such as schizophrenia, personality disorders, and other forms of cognitive (thinking) impairment. Serious mental illnesses or disorders impair a person's ability to perform regular tasks, maintain healthy relationships, cope with stress, and express emotions appropriately. Many common symptoms include extreme mood swings, irrational or destructive thought patterns, poor control of one's impulses, and numerous other behavioral problems. Those with untreated mental illness often suffer with school or job failure, serious conflicts with family or friends, drug or alcohol abuse, violence, and even suicide. Although a majority of Michigan residents are not diagnosed with a serious mental illness, it is estimated that 1 in 4 of us will be diagnosed with some form of mental illness in our lifetime.

It is important to know the status of your mental health, because it can impact every part of your overall physical health and emotional well being. Students and employees who have untreated mental disorders are much more likely to have concentration problems, anxiety, and suffer from relationship problems. Mental illness can get in the way of basic interactions with family, friends, and colleagues. Commitment to one's family, friends, and colleagues can become a daily struggle for those with untreated mental disorders. Having good mental health promotes good grades, high performance at work and secure relationships, which leads to a better self-image and greater self-confidence.

A positive self-image is the ability to appreciate your achievements and accept your weaknesses. Untreated mental illness can cause a distorted view of self-image, creating negative body images, feelings of self-hate, anger, disgust, uselessness. Conversely, poor mental health may lead to an inflated view of one's self which is not appropriate. These symptoms not only lead to depression, broken relationships, and other emotional problems, but they can also impact one's overall health by causing sleep disturbance, eating disorders, and a host of poor health habits.



Sleep disorders represent a major symptom of mental illness. Lacking the ability to handle stress and anxiety can lead to broken or restless sleep. The inability to stay asleep -*insomnia*- is the most common sleeping disorder. Sleep is the body's way of recharging itself and it is believed that most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night to maintain a healthy body and mind. Frequent insomnia can become the so called "slippery slope". Without the proper amount of sleep, one becomes increasingly exhausted, irritable, and less productive. This, in turn, can lead to more frequent insomnia- further impacting one's life.

The impact of untreated eating disorders is another way that mental health is critically related to one's overall health. Having control of what one eats is important to every aspect of physical, emotional and mental health. Most people use control to decide when to eat, what to eat, and when to stop eating. Those with untreated mental disorders are frequently unable to make good choices. Important signs of mental illness include excessive comfort eating, overeating binges, anorexia (self-induced starvation), and purging (self-induced vomiting after eating). Overeating can lead to obesity, which increases the risk for heart disease, diabetes, negative body image, and low self-esteem. Anorexia has been shown to be associated with heart failure, malnutrition, dehydration, cancer, and death.

Mental illness can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, race, or location. Although many forms of mental illness are at least partly affected by the genes we inherit from our parents, most mental disorders can be effectively treated with counseling and/or medication. The "stigma" of seeing a psychologist or other mental health professional should not be a reason to avoid mental health issues. Early recognition of a mental health problem can help reduce the many negative health outcomes that can result from untreated mental disorders. The Bureau of Health Professions licenses and regulates more than 46,000 health professionals that help Michigan residents with mental health issues, including psychologists, counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and occupational therapists. For a list of Michigan's Community Mental Health Centers, go to [www.mhweb.org/directory.htm](http://www.mhweb.org/directory.htm) or [www.michigan.gov/documents/cmh\\_8\\_1\\_02\\_37492\\_7.PDF](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cmh_8_1_02_37492_7.PDF). More information about Michigan's mental health services be sure to visit the Mental Health website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdch>. The Bureau of Health Professions regulates more than 46,000 mental health professionals in Michigan.

## Department of Community Health Offers Help to Those in Need of Assistance with Drug Abuse, Alcohol Abuse, or Gambling Problems

Deborah Hollis, Director, Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services  
Michigan Department of Community Health

The Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services (BSAAS) operates out of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration, with the mission of promoting wellness, strengthening communities, and facilitating recovery. BSAAS priorities for 2009-2012 include: establishing a recovery oriented system of care, reducing underage drinking, reducing prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse, and expanding integrated behavioral health and primary care services for persons with mental health and substance use disorders. BSAAS coordinates a network of prevention, treatment and recovery services through 16 regional coordinating agencies (CAs) that are responsible for the oversight of local provider networks.



The most commonly abused prescription drugs for pain are the opioids, which include oxycodone (OxyContin), propoxyphene (Darvon), hydrocodone (Vicodin), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), meperidine hydrochloride (Demerol), and diphenoxylate hydrochloride (Lomotil). In the past three reporting years, the number of all prescriptions written in Michigan has increased (17,254,281 prescriptions written in 2008; 17,761,231 in 2009; and 18,869,836 in 2010). The home is the most prevalent point of access for prescription drugs. Adults are often ill-informed about how accessible their prescriptions are to their family, friends, babysitters, visitors and youth. Serious issues related to medication misuse include drug-related driving accidents; accidental injuries and death; risky sexual behaviors; poor academic and employment performance; and poor school/work attendance.

Any person who needs substance abuse treatment for prescription drug abuse in Michigan will not be refused by our CAs because of their inability to pay for such services. Treatment may include detoxification, residential services, outpatient treatment, and medication-assisted treatment. Services funded by Medicaid and other federal or state funds are available through regional access management centers operated by CAs. To obtain the phone number of a local access management center, see the 'Get Help Now' map at [www.michigan.gov/mdch-bsaas](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-bsaas). Priorities for treatment admissions are (1) pregnant, injecting drug users; (2) pregnant drug users; (3) injecting drug users; (4) people at risk of losing custody of their children; and (5) all others. The BSAAS website also provides a link to the Bureau of Health Professions licensing database for substance abuse service providers at [www.dleg.state.mi.us/bhs\\_car/sr\\_sal.asp](http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/bhs_car/sr_sal.asp).



Problem gambling services are also available through BSAAS; services include: helpline, prevention programs, and treatment programs. If you, or someone you know, has a potential gambling problem, help is available. Call the Problem Gambling Helpline at (800) 270-7117, 24 hours a day. Non-Michigan residents can call (313) 224-7000 to obtain a help-line number for their state. For more information, visit BSAAS's problem gambling webpage at [www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2941\\_4871\\_43661---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2941_4871_43661---,00.html).

### ***Plan First!***

*Plan First!* is an insurance benefit that covers family planning services for women. You are eligible for this insurance program if you:

- \* Are 19 through 44 years of age
- \* Are not currently Medicaid-eligible
- \* Have a family income at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level.
- \* Live in Michigan
- \* Meet Medicaid citizenship requirements
- \* Do not have comprehensive medical insurance
- \* Meet all other eligibility requirements set by the Michigan Department of Human Services

A woman's coverage will continue for as long as the eligibility criteria are met. Program determinations will be completed annually. Family planning services are defined as any medically approved services, including diagnostic evaluation, pharmaceuticals, and supplies for voluntarily preventing or delaying pregnancy. There are no patient co-pays for family planning services, supplies or pharmaceuticals. Services covered under this waiver include most family planning services, excluding infertility treatment and abortion. To view a brochure about this important family planning insurance benefit, select the following link: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Plan\\_First\\_brochure5\\_1\\_163972\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Plan_First_brochure5_1_163972_7.pdf). Call 1-800-642-3195 to obtain an application.



## Q and A

Vonda Van Til, Public Affairs Specialist  
Social Security Administration



**Question:** Individuals on Medicare file for extra financial help for prescription drug costs with the Social Security Administration. Does the state of Michigan help with any Medicare costs and, if so, how does someone file for it?

**Answer:** Beginning January 1, 2010, when someone files an application for extra help with Medicare prescription drug costs, they are also starting the application process for the Medicare Savings Program — a state program that provides help with other Medicare costs. When someone applies for extra help, Social Security sends the information to the State of Michigan unless they choose not to on the application. The state will contact the applicant and help them apply for the Medicare Savings Program. To apply for the extra help with the Medicare prescription drug costs, go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp).

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Readers' comments are invited. Please e-mail comments and suggestions to the editor at: [lymand@michigan.gov](mailto:lymand@michigan.gov) or write to Public Forum Editor, Doreen Lyman, BHP, LARA, P.O. Box 30670, Lansing, MI 48909.

**Rick Snyder, Governor**  
**Steven H. Hilfinger, Director**

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