

A publication for **AvMed Medicare** Members

ASPIRE

Winter 2022



**Rosalind T. is Flourishing
Online and in Life**

Pals on Demand

Women's Heart Health

AvMed Member
Rosalind T.

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ASPIRE

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AvMed, one of Florida's largest not-for-profit health plans, provides quality health benefits throughout the state.

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OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Dear Valued Member:



At AvMed, our commitment is to each and every one of you – our Members. No matter what is happening in the world this is your chance to embrace what's ahead and focus on the things that matter most: your health and happiness. We are empowered to help

you transform your life in big and small ways.

This issue of ASPIRE is designed to help you do just that. Our Virtual Events have expanded outdoors and also continue to help you stay connected and engaged while staying safe at home. In fact, you can read more about an AvMed Member who is flourishing in life and feels uplifted when participating in AvMed's Virtual Events. We also alert you to the risk factors about women's heart health. In addition, you'll find articles full of information about how to take advantage of an over-the-counter allowance, Papa Pals and a guest piece by Dr. Charles Lopiccolo, a specialist in behavioral health.

Lastly, remember to read about AvMed's HealthyperksSM enhanced program, which rewards you with gift cards for taking care of your health through wellness visits, flu shots and more. Remember the Member Portal enables you to easily access needed information, online tools, resources and tips. A video tutorial and step-by-step guide to help you register for an account is available at www.AvMed.org/News/Service-Portals.

AvMed is here to help you live your best life. We look forward to a healthy future and hope you do too. Thank you for being a loyal Member and here's to a great 2022!

Be well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James M. Repp', written in a cursive style.

James M. Repp

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Share Your WELLfluent™ Life! How are you joining the WELLfluent? Email us at ASPIRE@AvMed.org with your story and photo or share it on Facebook – tag AvMed and use the hashtag **#JoinTheWELLfluent**. You could be featured in an upcoming issue of the magazine.

WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH:

The first risk factor we need to understand about women's heart health: being a woman.

Go Red for Women, opens our eyes to the fact that being a woman increases your risk for heart disease and stroke. Fortunately, there are behaviors and habits you can control to minimize this risk.

Below you'll find some of the risk factors you can control or treat, and highlights directly from GoRedForWomen.org about each condition.

- **High blood pressure (HBP):** It makes the heart work harder than normal. While there is no cure, HBP can be managed and sometimes prevented by: adopting an overall healthy dietary pattern, getting the recommended regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight (and taking medications as prescribed).
- **Smoking:** Women who smoke have a 25% higher risk of developing heart disease, as compared to men who smoke. The good news is that when you stop smoking, your risk for heart disease and stroke can be cut in half just one year later and continues to decline until it's as low as a nonsmoker's risk.
- **High blood cholesterol:** Note that all cholesterol isn't created equally. There are two types: good and bad. And understanding the difference and knowing the levels of each in your blood is critical. Too much of one type, or not enough of another, can put you at risk.
- **Lack of regular activity:** Walking, swimming, cycling, jogging, aerobic dancing or any of dozens of other activities can help your heart. Whether it is a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all exercise adds up to a healthier heart.

- **Obesity or overweight:** It's about carrying excess weight to the point of straining your heart. And remember: Eating smart doesn't mean dieting. It means eating certain foods in smaller amounts and eating high-calorie and high-fat foods less often.
- **Diabetes:** Adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have heart disease or a stroke than adults without the condition. But the good news is that by working with your healthcare provider, diabetes is highly controllable.

AvMed provides resources to help Members commit to a healthier lifestyle, such as SilverSneakers® with workouts available in person or online, Heart Disease Management (including high blood pressure), Diabetes Disease Management, and AvMed's CDC recognized Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program (for pre-diabetics).



Start taking advantage of AvMed's tools and be part of the Go Red for Women movement, for you and women around the world. Count on us to support your heart-healthy efforts! Visit: Go Red for Women www.GoRedforWomen.org/en/

GOOD NEWS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Our AvMed Virtual Events keep growing in number of participants, and now we're also expanding our types of classes. We'll have free classes within Broward County Parks in February and March. Now this is a breath of fresh air! Of course, our Virtual Events will continue to be available for you to enjoy from home.

Alice D. talks about Papa Pals

Alice D. has no core family remaining, but she's found family in Umeka, her Papa Pal. She even refers to her as "my daughter." Alice is wheelchair-bound outside and walker-bound inside, so she has limitations moving around, but her Papa Pal has brought flexibility and entertainment to her life. From helping her with household chores like laundry, to driving her on errands or to her cat's vet, to sharing an enjoyable conversation, Alice's quality of life has improved thanks to this supplemental benefit from AvMed. Umeka has also helped Alice learn to use her phone and computer in order to shop online and order her food from Instacart. Alice loves the program to the degree that she says, "I talk about it all the time, people think I'm nuts. I've gotten several people to try Papa Pals."



Alice D. with Papa Pal, Umeka.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

Your Medicare Plan comes with supplemental benefits that can help you in your journey to better health and happiness. One of these is our post-hospitalization meal program. This is what one of our Member shares about DeliverLean™ CARE.

Jean P. talks about DeliverLean

Jean P. had to be hospitalized for COVID and when she was discharged, her Case Manager offered the meal program DeliverLean. Jean didn't know what to expect, but when she tried the first meal she was delighted, "I can't tell you enough about the food. There was not one bad meal. Not one. Very tasty, delicious." DeliverLean delivered 10 personalized meals, and in Jean's words, "A chef cooked up the meals, because they were truly delicious." Beyond DeliverLean, Jean is extremely appreciative of her Case Manager and of AvMed: "AvMed follows through on everything. The people that work with AvMed actually care... I get goosebumps. It's true. I feel like family with AvMed instead of just a number."



Visit www.AvMed.org or log in to your Member Portal to find out about all the Programs available to you at no additional cost!

Virtual Events - www.AvMed.org/About-Us/Calendar

Deliver Lean - 1-800-286-3386 | www.DeliverLeanCare.com

Papa Pals - 1-877-751-9187 | www.JoinPapa.com

February is Heart Health Month

We value your opinion. Your feedback helps us deliver the best healthcare experience possible. Every year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires AvMed to survey a small sample of our Members with the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) and the Health Outcomes Survey (HOS). The CAHPS survey asks Members about their experiences with AvMed and their network Providers. The HOS survey asks Members about their health and the healthcare they received from their doctors.

We encourage you to check your mailbox regularly and fill out any surveys you may receive about AvMed, so we can learn about your experience to improve our services and better meet your needs. Another way to make your healthcare a priority: getting the flu shot. If you've already had your flu shot, we applaud you for embracing better health. If you haven't, it's still not too late! Ask your doctor or visit a participating pharmacy for a flu shot. Remember to answer "yes" to receiving your flu shot in any survey you may receive.



To find an AvMed Provider near you, log into www.AvMed.org

Rosalind's Energy is Blooming with AvMed Virtual Events and Programs

Rosalind T. puts her name down for every virtual event, and this has caused her energy levels to go up. An avid gardener, Rosalind was feeling tired when doing her everyday tasks, until she joined AvMed Virtual Events.

Ageless Face Yoga was the first event Rosalind tried. Connecting was difficult for her at first because she doesn't consider herself technically savvy, but the class instructor helped her figure it out and now she doesn't miss any session. Rosalind shares that "The muscles of your face get used in the right way, so they relax, stretch. So, when you finish, you feel rejuvenated."

When it comes to dancing, Rosalind used to stay away from any group dancing class because she thought she was not coordinated enough to participate. Now she's a regular at TJ's virtual class, Purposeful Movement. TJ is a professional choreographer who trains participants on body awareness, strength, and strong muscles to provide the foundation for purposeful aging. Rosalind shares how proud she is of her improved coordination, and how she feels uplifted after every class.

Rosalind encourages all AvMed Members to join the virtual events, "It's not that you have to go out, you sit there with your phone, take part, sleep better, feel better and the benefits are there."

Rosalind's not kidding when she says she participates in all of AvMed's available programs. She was invited to participate in the SWORD program, a digital physical therapy program designed specifically to help Medicare Members get active at home and lower their chances of having a fall. She shares that she wasn't into exercising, but with the program it became her goal, and she did it all. When asked what benefit she got out of it, she enthusiastically answered: **"E. N. E. R. G.Y. Big time! I was amazed."**



Feel inspired? Be sure to share your WELLfluent™ story with us by emailing ASPIRE@AvMed.org



*AvMed Member
Rosalind T.
tending to her garden*


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You have access to a variety of brand-name and generic health and wellness products through NationsOTC®. Your benefit allowance can be used to order the items you need while saving you time and money. Your personalized OTC Member Portal makes ordering products simple and hassle free. You can easily search by category, price and more.

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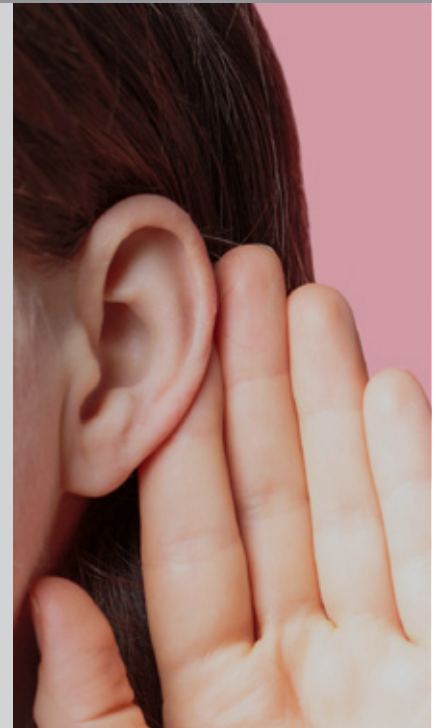
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The CVS Health logo, featuring a white heart icon to the left of the text "CVS Health" in white, set against a dark blue background.

AvMed RESPONDS



» MEET DR. LOPICCOLO

Dr. Charles J. LoPiccolo, MD, LFAPA,
Behavioral Medical Director at Optum

We interviewed Dr. LoPiccolo,
about the effects of the
pandemic and mental health.



1. How has the pandemic affected Members' behavioral health?

It has affected all of us tremendously in ways that we couldn't have imagined in everyday life and has resulted in a lot of isolation, especially to those in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. There are times when these residents are sick and can't have visits from family members. We've been disconnected from our work life, everyday activities, religious communities, family celebrations, birthdays, and holidays. It has caused a separation within families – grandparents are afraid to visit with their kids and grandchildren and vice versa. There has been a tremendous effect on quality of life and the ability to stay alive. We've put off our routine doctor's, dental and chemotherapy appointments. There have been problems with financial concerns, loss of income and jobs and businesses have been forced to close. We've seen a large increase in the use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, opioids, Marijuana, hallucinogens, and an increase of fentanyl overdoses. There's been increased criminal activity, some proven to be deadly. Overall, it's had a tremendous effect on the lives of people in the state of Florida as well as our members. All of these factors produce stress, anxiety, depression, and anger.

2. Do you have suggestions for staying positive during such a challenging time?

The most important thing we can do is stay connected in a manner that is appropriate to our health. If you feel sick, stay home. If you're not protected, you don't want to make other people sick. If you feel well, follow the CDC guidelines and your doctor's guidance. There is so much misinformation, but your most reliable source is your primary care physician. Using other means of staying connected has also helped bridge the gap such as electronic devices, cell phones, Zoom calls, Facetime, virtual doctor visits and events. This is a time when teenagers become the family heroes. This is their moment to shine and help their parents and

grandparents stay connected with their families.

If you're feeling well, get out and reconnect with your local church, synagogue, gym, and the community under the guidance of your doctor. Avoid negative people including those who are very active on social media. "Unfriending" is your superpower. There is enough stress and aggravation in the world so don't add to it by dealing with negative people. Studies have shown that social media uses anger to generate clicks. We are seeing now that social media is targeting the youth and we must be mindful of what we allow to pass into our minds. Regarding the television, your superpower is your remote control. If you find that a program makes you feel angry, change the channel, or turn it off!

Rest is extremely essential, especially if you're still working. Avoid use of substances and pay attention to your smoking or alcohol intake. If you need help, call Optum's nurse line. Practice meditation, watch what you eat and exercise.

3. How do I know when to seek help for depression? Are there warning signs?

The best warning sign is a change in how you usually function. Key indicators include avoiding people, feeling sad, not wanting to get out of bed, or neglecting to take care of priorities like your family or household needs. Talking to your primary care physician can help.

They are the most accessible person and someone you can feel comfortable with, someone that you trust and know has a genuine concern for you as an individual. One thing about depression, it doesn't have a timeline. People who are depressed think that what they are experiencing is permanent. It's good to have an objective observer to detect your illness, someone to say, "You are better today than you were yesterday."

Again, we have Optum's nurse line. Connect with our panel of therapists and psychiatrists, if necessary. If you're working, Employee Assistance Program is available to you. Seek help through those resources. If any suicidal, self-harm or hopeless thoughts occur, call 911.

4. How do I know if my depression medication (s) is working and when should I speak to my prescriber if I have any concerns about my medication (s)?

The most important thing is to have a relationship with your prescriber. It's important to talk to your prescriber before making a choice not to take your medications.

Some medications can take a long time to achieve a full effect. Side effects and other barriers, such as high member cost share should be discussed so that adjustments can be made by the provider.

The most common reason for non-compliance in our Medicare population is general concern as to what a patient should be taking. This can be worked out with your PCP who can help you set up your pills, if necessary. There are also home health aides and community resources available depending on your health plan and your location. Keep in mind that it is extremely important that you do not disrupt your medication intake routine as well as the dosage.

5. Any other tips you would like to share?

In summary eat a healthy diet, get exercise appropriate to your health status under guidance of physician, stay connected to your community, family, and religious activities, avoid unnecessary stress, meditate, and know that things are getting better.



For more information, please call Optum Behavioral Health at 1-866-284-6989. You can also visit: www.AvMed.org/BehavioralHealth-Medicare.

Enjoy the perks of living healthy

Healthyperks™

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For more information about Healthyperks rewards, visit www.AvMed.org/Healthyperks.

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you?
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