

# Network NewsBrief

A publication for **AvMed**  
Providers and Staff

**WATCH FOR THE SIGNS OF  
POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION**

**INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICAL  
CONDITIONS AND LINKING**

**3 THINGS PATIENTS CAN  
DO TO PREVENT FALLS**

**TALK TO YOUR PATIENTS  
ABOUT QUITTING  
SMOKING AND VAPING**



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For complete details on all the current news you need to know and to download forms, please visit our website at [AvMed.org](https://www.avmed.org).

**Submit New Claims:**

P.O. Box 569000  
Miami, FL 33256

**Claims Correspondence, Reviews, and Appeals:**

P.O. Box 569004  
Miami, FL 33256  
Fax: **1-800-452-3847**

## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Dear Provider,

At AvMed, we believe knowledge is power. We pride ourselves on offering resources and information to help you play an active role in helping our Members live healthier.

In this issue of *Network Newsbrief*, we deliver reminders and guidance to mitigate health risks, manage patient care and chronic conditions, and identify and inspire change of harmful patient behaviors. Highlighted topics include postpartum depression, medical condition linking, medication adherence, diabetes management, smoking cessation, and opioid misuse.

We also want to remind you to login to our Provider Portal to access additional tools to help you best serve our Members. If you haven't registered yet, visit [AvMed.org](https://www.avmed.org) to set up your account. Please call AvMed's Provider Service Center at 1-800-452-8633 or email us at [Providers@AvMed.org](mailto:Providers@AvMed.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



**Frank Izquierdo**

Senior Vice President  
Provider Solutions &  
Strategic Alliances  
AvMed

## CARE OPPORTUNITY CORNER

# Watch for the Signs of Postpartum Depression

Continuous care is critical for a healthy pregnancy and delivery. But just as important is postpartum care: As a new mother recovers from childbirth, her body undergoes a number of changes – some of which can lead to adverse complications. HEDIS measures whether the patient has had a follow up visit with an obstetrician, gynecologist, or other health care professional within three to eight weeks after delivery.

The follow-up visit should include a postpartum pelvic exam as well as a breast examination, abdomen evaluation, and other screenings like weight and blood pressure. During this appointment, you should also look for any signs of depression in the patient.

While it's normal for women to feel overwhelmed after giving birth, those feelings shouldn't last longer than a few weeks. If such feelings are persistent in a patient, then postpartum depression could be a possibility.



Some of the signs to look out for:

- Social withdrawal
- Lack of care for oneself or child
- Severe mood swings and/or anxiety
- Feelings of inadequacy.

Assessing a patient's personal and family history can also help determine whether your patient is at risk for postpartum depression (or other mental health issues). A history of depression, substance abuse, and complications during childbirth put a mother at a higher risk.

To ensure your patients take the necessary steps for postpartum care, consider the following tips:

- Send appointment reminders to new mothers
- Remind new mothers about scheduling their own wellness visits during their child's first appointment



For more help on improving the patient experience, contact AvMed's Provider Service Center at **1-800-452-8633**. Providers who contact the Center will be invited to participate in the Provider Post-Call Survey, which will ask you about the services you received during your call. Your feedback will help us improve our overall services to better suit your needs. You will only be asked to participate in this call once in a 15-day window.

## 3 THINGS PATIENTS CAN DO TO PREVENT FALLS



Encouraging your patients to stay active and social is very important. If your patients are at risk of falling, make sure to give them a fall prevention plan. Here are some fall safety tips to help:

1. Discuss things that may increase your patient's risk, like medications, health conditions, vitamin deficiencies, injuries or lifestyle factors.
2. Share with patients how they can safeguard their home, using this checklist from the Centers for Disease Control:
  - Install grab bars in places where assistance getting up/moving is needed
  - Use nonslip mats in the bathroom
  - Install and use handrails on

staircases and clear out clutter

- Ensure lighting is bright enough to allow you to see hazards clearly
- Talk about how regular physical activity – even if in a seated position – may help reduce the risk of falling by improving balance, flexibility, muscle strength, and gait. Another bonus? It can also improve confidence.

Learn more about fall risk and risk reduction at [www.nia.nih.gov/health/falls-and-falls-prevention/falls-and-fractures-older-adults-causes-and-prevention](https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/falls-and-falls-prevention/falls-and-fractures-older-adults-causes-and-prevention)

# INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND LINKING

## **MEDICAL CONDITION DOCUMENTATION:**

Physicians are strongly encouraged to conduct annual wellness visits with their patients. These wellness visits ensure medical conditions, whether chronic or in remission, are appropriately assessed, documented, and monitored.

## **MEDICATION LINKING:**

Certain prescription drugs are taken for multiple chronic conditions. One good habit is to link such medications to the medical condition for which they have been prescribed.

## **MEDICAL CONDITIONS LINKING:**

The physician is strongly encouraged to document when chronic conditions such as Hypertension (HTN), Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), and Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) are associated with one another.

The rules pertain to the following combinations:

- HTN + CHF (unspecified)
- HTN + CKD5

- HTN + ESRD
- Hypertensive Heart (DIS) w/ CKD1-4 and CHF
- Hypertensive Heart (DIS) w/ CKD5 or ESRD and CHF
- Hypertensive Heart (DIS) w/ CKD5 or ESRD without CHF

Many manifestations of Type I and II Diabetes need to be documented if the complications are associated with the Diabetes.

Diabetes with Complications NE Care commonly linked with the following conditions:

- Neurologic Complication NEC
- Specified Complication NEC (Hyperlipidemia, Erectile Dysfunction, Morbid Obesity)
- Oral Complication NEC (Gingivitis, Xerostomia)
- Ophthalmic Complication NEC
- Circulatory Complication NEC



## LOWERING YOUR PATIENTS RISK OF DIABETES



With regular screenings and wellness visits, you can help your patients prevent and manage diabetes before it becomes a bigger problem.

As you know, prediabetes is a health condition characterized by blood glucose levels that are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Prediabetes increases the risk for Type II Diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. If left untreated, up to one third of people will progress to diabetes within five years.

As clinicians, you can help lower that risk by:

- Offering educational opportunities for patients to learn about their risk for prediabetes
- Screening and identifying patients for prediabetes using diabetes risk assessments
- Referring patients to diabetes prevention programs (DPP)
- Creating feedback loops, linking the patient's progress in diabetes prevention programs back to your practice
- Encouraging lifestyle change interventions

Medicare and certain employer groups may have access to a DPP program through AvMed.



Learn more at [www.AvMed.org/individuals-families/programs-tools/prevention-education/diabetes-prevention-program/](https://www.AvMed.org/individuals-families/programs-tools/prevention-education/diabetes-prevention-program/)

# ENCOURAGE YOUR PATIENTS TO CATCH UP ON VACCINES AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Summer is a great time for everyone - children, adolescents, and adults - to get caught up on their vaccinations and immunizations as an essential preventive care service.

All vaccines due or overdue should be administered according to the recommended CDC immunization schedule, unless a specific contraindication exists. This provides protection as soon as possible and prevents illnesses that lead to unnecessary medical visits and hospitalization.

Communicating the importance of vaccination to patients and parents/caregivers, as well as the safety protocols and procedures, can help provide reassurance to those who may otherwise be hesitant to present for vaccination visits.

Check out the latest recommended vaccinations schedules for people of all ages at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html)



## TALK TO YOUR PATIENTS ABOUT QUITTING SMOKING



Tobacco use can lead to tobacco/nicotine dependence and serious health problems. Quitting smoking greatly reduces the risk of developing smoking-related diseases. A young smoker could feel fine now, may not have a cough, or get winded when walking up a flight of stairs. But it takes a while before the effects of smoking are really felt. By the time they are, nicotine may have them in its addictive grip.

Trying to help a patient quit smoking? Share these facts to drive the message home:

- 8 hours after quitting, carbon monoxide in blood goes down and oxygen levels go up.
- 48 hours after quitting, there's an improved sense of taste and smell.
- 10 years after quitting, the risk of lung cancer is cut in half.

- 15 years after quitting, your health is essentially the same as that of someone who never smoked.

Patients want to quit? AvMed can help with easy-to-follow methods for kicking the smoking habit:

Tobacco-Free Florida

- Quit kit with resources and tips at [tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com)

1-877-U-CAN-NOW

- To find a local face-to-face center near you, visit [ahectobacco.com](http://ahectobacco.com)

American Cancer Society Quit for Life

- [quitnow.net](http://quitnow.net)
- [cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco.html](http://cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco.html)

National Cancer Institute  
Smoking Quitline

- [cancer.gov/cancertopics/tobacco/smoking](http://cancer.gov/cancertopics/tobacco/smoking)



## HOW TO IMPROVE MEDICATION ADHERENCE

After a patient walks out your office door, it's their responsibility to take medications as directed. Unfortunately, many Americans do not follow these guidelines. And for people with chronic conditions, that can mean serious – and often life-threatening – problems. For example, low statin adherence is associated with more fatal and non-fatal cardiovascular events as well as a greater need for stents or bypass surgery.

Fortunately, there are some ways you can help your patients stick to their regimen.

We've put together a list of common reasons people often skip or stop taking their medicine altogether, along with sample responses for each one.

- Reason Number 1: "I can't afford the medication."
  - Response: If your patient raises concerns about a medication's price, consider prescribing a generic. Generics that impact Star measures have low or no cost share to the Member.
- Reason Number 2: "I don't understand how this medication will help me."
  - Response: Remember that your patients are not doctors. If they don't fully understand how a drug will benefit them, it's less likely they'll take it. In these cases, communication is a must. Explain to them why the drug is needed, how it will improve their health, and how long they need to continue taking it. While doing so, avoid jargon and other language that may confuse them.
- Reason Number 3: "I forget to take my medications."
  - Response: Adherence tools like pill boxes can increase the odds of medication adherence in older patients. Younger patients may find that a mobile app or another technology makes it easier for them to maintain medication routines. There are even services that help monitor one's therapy. Talk to your patients about these options to see which works best for them.



# ENCOURAGE YOUR PATIENTS TO SCHEDULE A WELLNESS VISIT

AvMed is guided by our mission to help our Members live healthier. This mission is at the center of everything we do. It includes educating and reminding Members to take a proactive role in monitoring and maintaining their health and well-being through annual wellness visits with our network of primary care physicians.

We are currently reaching out to Members to remind them to schedule appointments with Providers. Understanding that a multi-pronged approach will lead to greater action, we are

asking for our primary care physician's help in this effort as well. Members hearing from their doctor creates another familiar reminder and assists in caring for preventable medical conditions and issues.

Working in partnership to care for our Members allows us to maintain our rating with Medicare and provides you the opportunity to assist in the promotion of better population health. Thank you for your support and continued partnership in helping our Members live healthier.

## CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING AVAILABLE!



AvMed believes in the importance of having culturally and linguistically appropriate services available to our Members.

To better serve our Members, we have placed a link on the AvMed Provider Portal that allows practitioners access to training on culturally competent care, sponsored by the Office of Minority Health.

This is a free online training in which you can attain CME/CE credits by completing all courses and scoring a minimum of 70% on your post-test. We hope you will take advantage of this resource to improve the quality of healthcare services provided to our Members (Note - It is not necessary to report the course completion to AvMed).



Follow this link to the training on the AvMed Provider Portal:

[www.AvMed.org/web/provider/provider-education/training/](http://www.AvMed.org/web/provider/provider-education/training/).

## QUEST DIAGNOSTICS – YOUR PATIENTS' LAB PARTNER

AvMed partners with Quest Diagnostics to provide routine outpatient lab services for its Members. To ensure your patients avoid unexpected out-of-pocket expenses, it's essential that they are referred to or have their lab specimens sent to Quest. By utilizing Quest Diagnostics, you ensure your patients receive reliable, accessible, and cost-effective lab services.

[MyQuest.QuestDiagnostics.com](https://MyQuest.QuestDiagnostics.com) is a secure tool that makes it easy for your patients to get test results, schedule appointments, track their health history and more, all in one place.

## PREVENTING OPIOID MISUSE: HOW TO MAKE AN IMPACT



We can't reverse the opioid epidemic until we begin to increase the barriers to inappropriate opioid use.

AvMed is working to promote access to non-opioid alternatives for chronic pain and ensure that opioids are used appropriately by Members who need them. AvMed has limited short acting opioids to a seven (7) day supply for opioid naïve Members and there is now a step through requirement of a short-acting opioid before a long-acting opioid will be authorized.

AvMed's goal is to reduce the number of Members receiving opioid prescriptions from multiple Providers and improve access and referrals to behavioral health services for Members who may benefit from counseling. AvMed is committed to providing information that is easy to access to assist Providers in managing long-term chronic pain patients.



For more information, please contact our Provider Services Center at **1-800-452-8633**.

## We welcome your feedback.

It's SURVEY time again and Members are being surveyed to assess their experiences with health plans, Providers and our ability to maintain or improve their physical and mental health. Remember, these surveys are used to assess the patient experience focusing on how patients perceive key aspects of their care. Some of those aspects include: office access and wait times for all Members, care coordination between the PCP and the Specialists and whether providers assess fall risk and provide a fall risk reduction plan to their Members.

If you would like to participate more directly in our Quality Improvement Program or would like information about the program, including progress toward our goals, email us at **Providers@AvMed.org** or call the Provider Service Center at **1-800-452-8633**, Monday-Friday, 8 am-5 pm, excluding holidays.

### AVMED'S WEBSITE: [AvMed.org](http://AvMed.org)

#### ONLINE PROVIDER SERVICES:

Claims Inquiry, Member Eligibility, Referral Inquiry, Provider Directory, Physician Reference Guide, Clinical Guidelines, Preferred Drug List

Please note our email address:

**Providers@AvMed.org**

Use our centralized toll-free number to reach several key departments at AvMed.

#### PROVIDER SERVICE CENTER

**1-800-452-8633, Monday-Friday, 8 am-5 pm, excluding holidays**

- AvMed Link Line, press one (1).  
Use this option to verify Member eligibility and limited benefit information, or confirm and request authorizations.
- Claims Service Department, press two (2).  
Use this option to verify status of claims payment, reviews and appeals.
- Provider Service Center, press three (3).  
Use this option for questions about policies and procedures, to report or request a change in your panel status, address/phone, covering physicians, hospital privileges, Tax ID and licensure, or any other service issue.
- Clinical Pharmacy Management, press four (4).

#### AUDIT SERVICES AND INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

**1-877-286-3889**

(To refer suspect issues, anonymously if preferred)

#### CARE MANAGEMENT

**1-800-972-8633**

#### CLINICAL COORDINATION

**1-888-372-8633**

(For authorizations that originate in the ER or direct admits from the doctor's office)