



# Leading the way

## My eLink: 24/7 Access to Benefit Information

In the last issue of the newsletter we introduced *My eLink*, a convenient web portal enabling providers (and members) to access health plan information 24/7.

*My eLink* is a unique tool for providers to view benefits, eligibility, claims data, and accumulators. You can download forms, request prior authorizations, and search our drug formulary, even when our offices are closed.

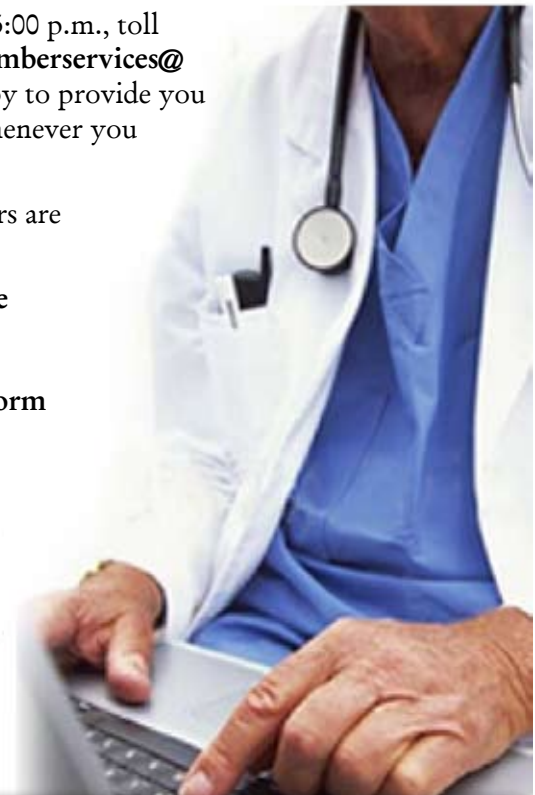
If you have not had an opportunity to sign up for this timesaving new service, please visit [www.mahealthcare.com](http://www.mahealthcare.com). Simply click "provider" under the *My eLink* icon located on our homepage. Click on "sign up" and follow the steps to create an account.

Remember, our expert Member Services reps are still available in Dubuque Monday

through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., toll free 866-821-1365, or by email: [memberservices@mahealthcare.com](mailto:memberservices@mahealthcare.com). They are happy to provide you with excellent customer service whenever you prefer to talk by telephone.

Here are examples of how providers are currently using *My eLink*:

- Check eligibility for an enrollee
- Check the status of a claim
- Submit a prior authorization form
- Review provider procedures



## Low Back Pain Update

We appreciate your efforts to promote effective management of low back pain. As you know, we issued treatment guidelines to all Plan providers last fall, based on national standards of care. Our goal is 90% compliance with these guidelines, per NCQA benchmarks:

- low back pain is a common ailment
- time will heal most low back pain

- history/PE are the best diagnostic tools
- x-rays are rarely needed (see guidelines)
- exercise increases back strength

Data from 2004 demonstrated a compliance rate of 76%. A repeat study reflected 83% in 2005. Data for 2006 will be available in July.

Please continue to manage low back pain as effectively as possible among your patients. If you have questions, don't hesitate to call our QI staff at 563-556-8070 or 800-747-8900.



# Quality Improvement

We make copies of our Quality Improvement (QI) Plan, Quarterly QI Reports, and Preventive Health Guidelines available to providers and members. To obtain a copy, please contact our QI staff at 563-556-8070 or 1-800-747-8900. Our Preventive Health Guidelines are online at [mahealthcare.com/prac\\_guide.htm](http://mahealthcare.com/prac_guide.htm)

## Utilization Management

Utilization Management (UM) decision making is based only upon appropriateness of care and service, and existence of coverage. Medical Associates does not reward practitioners or others conducting utilization review for issuing denials of coverage or service care. Financial incentives for UM decision makers do not encourage decisions resulting in underutilization.

## Coverage for HPV Vaccine

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a group of harmful infectious viruses, many of which are sexually transmitted.

Medical Associates HMO, Point of Service, and Community Plan policies include coverage of the HPV vaccine series, including Gardasil®, for females ages 11 to 18.

Please contact Member Services at 563-584-4885 or 866-821-1365 if you have questions.

## Communication

All of our participating providers may freely communicate with patients regarding treatment options including medical care, risks, benefits, consequences of treatment or non-treatment, opportunity to refuse treatment, and preferences for future treatment.

In addition, participating providers may freely communicate with a physician reviewer by contacting our Health Care Services Department at 563-584-3275 or 800-325-7442.

## Confidentiality

We respect the privacy of all members. Employees and providers show respect for patient confidentiality by not accessing a member's medical record unless it is necessary for the provision of medical services or administration

## Correct Coding is Essential

Correct ICD9 coding ensures that accurate information is recorded in medical records and on claim forms. Incorrect coding can adversely affect the patient, the provider, and the insurance plan.

Please submit only those diagnosis codes for problems actually assessed or treated during the visit and which support the reason for the visit.

Contact Claims Processing at 563-556-8070 or 800-747-8900 with questions.

of the Plan. Member information obtained during activities related to utilization review, case management, and quality improvement is kept confidential in accordance with federal and state laws. Information is used only for the purposes of utilization review, quality assurance,

discharge planning, benefit determination, and case management.

Information is shared only with our Chief Medical Officer, Quality Improvement staff, Health Care Services staff, Claims staff (those with authority to receive such information), and external review organizations.

## Expert Specialty Care for Your Patients

### Nationally Recognized Diabetes/Heart/Stroke

The Medical Associates Department of Internal Medicine has been honored by the Diabetes Provider Recognition Program and the Diabetes Education Recognition Program, which are both developed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance and awarded for high quality diabetes care and education.



In addition, the Medical Associates Department of Internal Medicine was among the first in the nation to be honored by the Heart/Stroke Recognition Program (also developed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance). Medical Associates was the first group in Iowa to be recognized.

If you have a patient in need of specialty care, please contact Medical Associates to arrange a convenient appointment. Call 563-584-3000 or toll free 800-648-6868.

## Maintenance Drug Update

We continuously review our clinical programs to ensure quality patient care. Effective April 1, we will begin using a therapeutic class-based Mail Order Drug List. We feel this system will assure that members have ongoing access to the most up-to-date, effective drug products on the market.

Members who are currently utilizing mail order for a drug no longer covered at mail order will be notified that a three-month supply (for the cost of one copay) will be discontinued. In the retail setting, coverage is available for a one-month supply only (copay applies). We will encourage our mail order members to discuss alternative drug options with their provider. Please contact our Health Care Services staff with any questions: 563-584-3275 or 800-325-7442.

