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COVID-19: Risk & Vaccination Information

by Lynn Jones, M.D., FACP

As concern about coronavirus (COVID-19) continues, Capital Health Plan is ready to do its part to help protect the community. That includes providing members with access to the best advice from health care professionals so they can take appropriate preventive steps.

If you or a family member has recently traveled to an area of risk or if you think you may have been exposed to the virus and have symptoms of respiratory illness, you should call your primary care physician (PCP) for further instructions. It's important to call your PCP ahead of time rather than going directly into their facility. By calling ahead, they can direct you to the most appropriate care and take precautions to protect other patients and employees.

Who is at Risk

The risk for severe illness increases with age, with the majority of reported deaths in people over age 65. The risks are also higher for people with chronic health conditions such as:

- Heart disease;
- Chronic kidney disease;
- Diabetes;
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease;

- Sickle Cell disease; and
- Obesity.

If you are at an increased risk, discuss your concerns with your PCP.

How to Prevent Infection

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following protocols to prevent becoming infected with COVID-19:

- Wear a properly fitting mask, covering your nose and mouth, to protect yourself and others.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from others who don't live with you.
- Avoid traveling.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Who Should Be Vaccinated

Because the supply of the COVID-19 has been limited at first, the CDC has provided recommendations to federal, state, and local governments about who should be vaccinated.

As vaccine availability increases, CDC vaccination recommendations will expand to include more groups.

In addition to seniors, the CDC recommends that people with underlying medical conditions may get a COVID-19 vaccine as long as they have

not had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or any of the ingredients in a COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccine Safety

The FDA has issued Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. The issuance of an EUA is different than an FDA approval (licensure) of a vaccine.

**We are focusing
on what matters
most to you —
the patient.**

After a thorough analysis of the data, the FDA's scientists and physicians have determined that the vaccine meets the FDA's expectations for safety and effectiveness appropriate for the authorization of a vaccine for emergency use," said Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Millions of people in the U.S. have received the COVID-19 vaccines under the most intense safety monitoring in U.S. history.

Where To Find the COVID-19 Vaccine

There are several types of authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines available and there are additional vaccines currently in clinical trials across the United States per the CDC.

Florida has many sites that are providing COVID-19 vaccines to eligible persons. Supplies may be limited and appointments may be required, so call ahead before making the trip. There is a vaccine pre-registration system available through The Florida Department of Health. The Department also offers an online tool to find COVID-19 vaccination sites throughout the state. For more information, please visit floridahealthcovid19.gov/vaccines.

You should wait at least 14 days before and after getting any other vaccine, including the flu or shingles shot. It is also recommended, if possible, to avoid getting any steroid shots.

If you have additional questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, please schedule an appointment to discuss with your PCP.

Resources

Please visit the Florida Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19. This remains the best and most up-to-date resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

For other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Florida Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling 1-866-779-6121 or emailing COVID-19@flhealth.gov. The Call Center is available 24/7.

For Capital Health Plan information, please visit capitalhealth.com/covid.

For national information, please visit the CDC website at cdc.gov/coronavirus.

The information contained in this article at the time of publication may have changed. Please consult the CDC website for the most up to date information.



Dr. Jones serves as Capital Health Plan's Associate Medical Director and is also an Internal Medicine Physician at the Nancy Van Vesse, M.D., Center for Healthy Aging.



Join CHP at an Upcoming Medicare Webinar or Seminar

Learn More about Your Medicare Options at CHP with Toni Kilgore, Medicare Sales Manager

Now that you're approaching retirement, it will help to begin thinking about your choices ahead of time — before you have to make decisions about your Medicare coverage. Did you know that we offer **Employer Group Retiree and Individual Medicare Advantage plans**? If you are a State of Florida member or with an employer group offering benefits through us, ask your benefit administrator for more information!

By attending a webinar or in-person seminar you will have a more in-depth understanding about Medicare, the plans that CHP offers, and learn how our local Medicare plan options keep getting better. One of our local representatives is available to answer your Medicare questions at the end of the seminar, help you enroll online, or make an appointment to discuss your options one-on-one.

All in-person seminar attendees will be required to wear face masks, and CDC recommended protocols will be strictly adhered to. To reserve your spot, please visit capitalhealth.com/calendar or call us at 850.523.7441 (TTY: 850.383.3534), 8:00am – 8:00pm, seven days a week. Let us take the stress out of the enrollment process by helping you find and enroll in the right Medicare plan for you!

UPCOMING IN-PERSON SEMINARS

Join us at an upcoming **Medicare Advantage (HMO)** seminar at 1491 Governor's Square Boulevard, Tallahassee, FL.

Visit capitalhealth.com/calendar for additional dates, times, and webinar information.

April 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8*	9	10
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May 2021

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2	3	4	5*	6	7	8
9	10*	11	12**	13	14	15
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30	31					

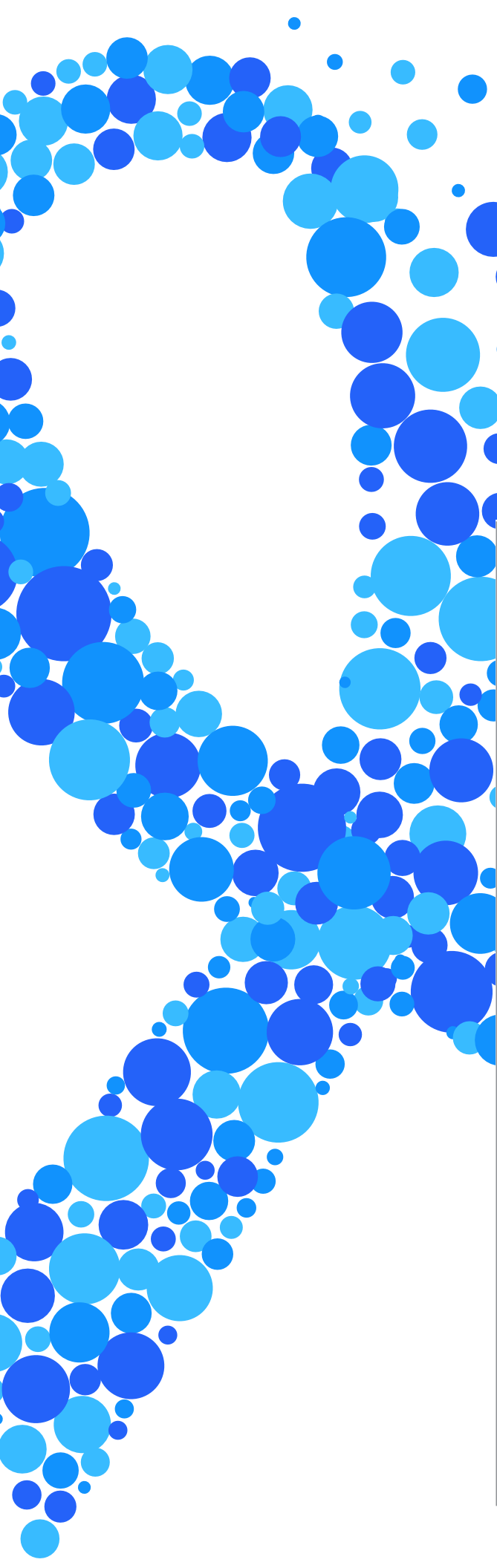
June 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2*	3	4	5
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13	14	15	16	17**	18	19
20	21	22	23	24**	25	26
27	28	29	30			

*Silver Advantage (HMO), Advantage Plus (HMO) & Preferred Advantage (HMO) seminar
 **Retiree Advantage (HMO) seminar

■ Seminar begins at 10:00 am
 ■ Seminar begins at 2:00 pm
 ■ Seminar begins at 5:30 pm





Colon Cancer At A Glance

45+

Begin screening at age 45. Several types of tests can be used. Talk to your doctor about which option is best for you.

76+

Talk to your doctor about continued screening from ages 76-85. Take into account your overall health and screening history.*



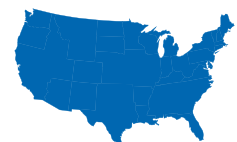
On average, your risk is about 1 in 20, although this varies widely according to individual risk factors.



People with a first-degree relative (parent, sibling, or offspring) who has colon cancer have two to three times the risk of developing the disease.



Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S.



There are currently more than one million colon cancer survivors in the U.S.

*People should no longer continue screening past age 85.



Colon Cancer Screening: Get in the Fight, It's Your Life!

Tara Loucks, APRN-C, discusses the importance of colorectal cancer screening

The American Cancer Society predicts that 149,500 people will receive a new diagnosis of colorectal cancer and 52,980 people will die of the disease this year alone. The National Cancer Institute also predicts that in this year 18,000 new cases of colorectal cancer will occur in those under 50 and notes that the rate of colorectal cancer in this age group has more than doubled since the 1990s.

Colorectal cancer is a cancer of the large intestine or rectum, and it is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. The primary goals of screening are to prevent cancer from occurring and to detect colon cancer early, when the chance of survival is highest. The American Cancer Society recommends that **everyone should start colon cancer screening beginning at age 45** and, according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), screening should continue for everyone through age 75, and in **some cases should continue through age 85**.

The USPSTF lists several options as acceptable methods for colon cancer screening such as structural exams of the colon (i.e., flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, or CT colonography) or stool studies that check for blood or DNA. The benefit of having a flexible sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy as compared to other screening methods is that growths can be painlessly removed during the exam, before cancer cells develop, therefore preventing colon cancer from occurring. Neither exam type requires sedation, but that is an available option. The risks associated with sedation should be considered and discussed with your physician.



It is ideal to be screened for colon cancer before symptoms occur. But if you have developed symptoms such as unexplained abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, or a change in bowel habits, you should notify your doctor immediately, no matter how recently you have had an exam. If you have never had a colon exam, if your last flexible sigmoidoscopy or CT colonography was more than 5 years ago, or if your last colonoscopy was more than 10 years ago, you should update the exam even if you are having no symptoms.

Colon cancer screening is an important part of staying healthy. It may sound like an embarrassing subject to broach, but it is a crucial one as it can save your life. Schedule your appointment today to initiate or update a colonoscopy (or flexible sigmoidoscopy) by calling the Capital Health Plan Colon Screening Program at 850-523-7350. If you're not sure which screening option is right for you, contact your primary care physician to have an important discussion about periodic screening and its role in disease prevention.





National Health Care Decision Day

Mary Goble, RN, MSN, discusses advance directives on National Health Care Decision Day

National Health Care Decision Day is April 16, and exists to inspire, educate and empower the public about the importance of advance care planning, also known as Advance Directives. Capital Health Plan's preferred Advance Directive of choice is called Five Wishes.

Five Wishes is an easy-to-use legal advance directive document. It helps all adults, regardless of age or health, to consider and record how they want to be cared for at the end of life. It is America's most popular living will with more than 35 million copies in circulation.

Five Wishes is a unique living will and health agent forms because it speaks to all of a person's needs: medical, personal, emotional, and spiritual. Five Wishes also helps guide and structure discussions among your family and physician, making conversations easier.

Current statistics reveal that only 20% of the population has completed an Advance Directive. You may think that your loved ones and doctors will automatically know what you want when you are very ill, but in reality, everyone has different wishes and it's important to make them clearly known. Expressing your wishes helps empower your family, friends, and doctors to make the best decision when the time comes, and helps avoid disagreements about what to do. Completing Five Wishes can help you and your loved ones gain peace of mind around these difficult decisions.

In the month of April, Five Wishes will be available at the reception desk at all three of our health centers. You may also call the CHP Health Information Line at 850.383.3400 to have a copy

mailed to you or if you have questions about Five Wishes. For more information about Five Wishes, please visit capitalhealth.com/fivewishes.

Be sure to take the following steps to use Five Wishes:

- Review Five Wishes with your family/friends as well.
- Fully fill out the Five Wishes booklet.
- Follow the included directions for signing your Five Wishes booklet.
- Discuss your completed Five Wishes with your doctor and give them a copy.
- Discuss your completed Five Wishes with your family/friends and give them a copy.
- Place your completed Five Wishes booklet in an easily and publically accessible place (i.e. a desk, an envelope on your dresser, etc.), and also complete the wallet card that comes with Five Wishes in the event medical personnel need to find it.

Life can change at any time. Please give your family the gift of having completed an Advance Directive today.

FIVE WISHES[®]

MY WISH FOR:

- 1 The Person I Want to Make Care Decisions for Me When I Can't
- 2 The Kind of Medical Treatment I Want or Don't Want
- 3 How Comfortable I Want to Be
- 4 How I Want People to Treat Me
- 5 What I Want My Loved Ones to Know

Print Your Name

Birthdate



Meet Our Physician: Suma Dondapati, M.D.

Dr. Dondapati is at the Nancy Van Vessem, M.D., Center for Healthy Aging

Suma Dondapati is board-certified in internal medicine and is practicing as a Primary Care Physician (PCP) with the Nancy Van Vessem, M.D., Center for Healthy Aging at the Metropolitan Health Center.

Dr. Donapati was born and grew up in Delhi, India, where she became a graduate of Lady Hardinge Medical College in 2006. In 2010, she completed her residency at Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo, NY, and is currently working with patients enrolled at the the Nancy Van Vessem, M.D., Center for Healthy Aging.

Her personal health care philosophy is for her patients to take control of their own health and be well-informed. When she is not practicing medicine, Dr. Dondapati can be found spending time with her family, traveling ,and reading a good book.

The Center for Healthy Aging was designed specifically with older adults in mind. For this work, the Center for Healthy Aging has been recognized as an **Age-Friendly Health System – Committed to Care Excellence**. The physicians at the Center for Healthy Aging are early adopters of the philosophies of this movement, which provides care for older adults based on four essential elements, called the 4Ms Framework: what matters, medications, mentation, and mobility.

How To Select a PCP

One of the most important health care desicions you will ever make is selecting your PCP. If you would like to select Dr. Dondapati or any other PCP in our network currently accepting new patients as your PCP, please follow these steps:

- View our Provider Directory at capitalhealth.com.
- On the Provider Directory, use the drop-down menu in the category labeled Accepting New Patients and select Yes.
- Next, use the drop-down menu in the category Primary Care Physicians and select Yes.
- Click on the green Apply button.
- Review the list of PCPs accepting new patients and choose the one you would like to have as your health care partner.
- Notify Capital Health Plan Member Services by calling with your decision so we can update your records.



Questions?

850.383.3311
or 1.877.247.6512

8:00am - 5:00pm,
Monday - Friday

Medicare members, please call:
850.523.7441 or 1.877.247.6512

October 1 – March 31:
8:00am – 8:00pm, seven days a week

April 1 – September 30:
8:00am – 8:00pm, Monday – Friday

TTY 850.383.3534 or 1.877.870.8943

State of Florida members, please call:
1.877.392.1532, 7:00am – 8:00pm, Monday – Friday



Telehealth: What Options Are Available

James Cade, MD, discusses CHP's new telehealth capabilities and how to make the most of your visit

A telehealth visit is similar to an office visit – except you don't have to come into the office. Many Primary Care Physicians (PCP) and specialists in the Capital Health Plan network are scheduling telehealth visits. Capital Health Plan's Urgent Care Center at the new Metropolitan Health Center is also offering telehealth visits. Please contact your doctor or call the CHP Urgent Care Center at 850.383.3382 to discuss if a telehealth visit is right for you.

Here are some tips and general steps to help ensure your telehealth visit is successful.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

- Review the directions for accessing your provider's telehealth visit and have their office number nearby in the event you are disconnected.
- Ensure that your device is fully charged, the camera is on, and the microphone is working.
- Find a quiet space with proper lighting and dress comfortably.
- Create a list of your current medications and doses to share with your provider.

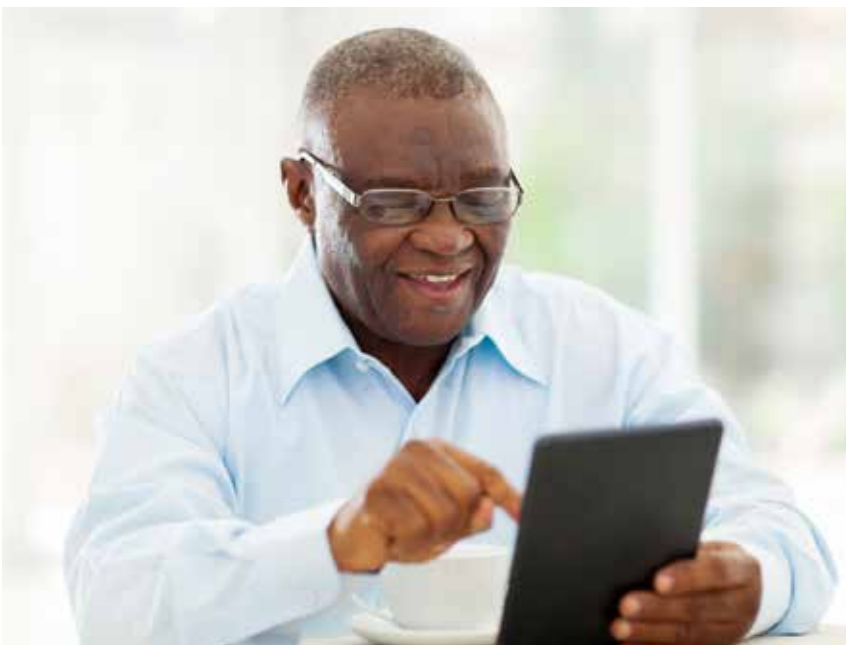
DURING YOUR VISIT

- Speak clearly be sure to provide information about your symptoms.
- Answer your provider's questions as clearly and to the point as possible.
- Make notes of the provider's recommendations and be sure to ask questions if something is unclear.



- Determine how you should follow up after your visit, if necessary.

Your doctor will determine if further consultation, testing, or treatment is needed. This may include scheduling for an in-person consultation, ordering lab tests or imaging, or providing a prescription to your pharmacy.



Important Member Announcements

Stay Up to Date with CHP's Member Announcements on our website

Annual Spring Survey

We need your help! Recently, a short survey about your health care was sent to a random sample of Capital Health Plan's membership. If you received one, you can help us improve the services we provide by responding to the survey.

The survey is a part of a national project by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), a nonprofit group that helps the public learn more about health care plans around the country. The Center for the Study of Services (CSS) is an independent research firm that is helping us conduct the survey. No one but the staff at CSS and NCQA will see your answers. Your answers will not have your name on them and will be part of a pool of information from others like you.

Because we are asking only a few people to take the survey, it is very important that you fill out the survey and return it right away. Thank you for helping Capital Health Plan continue our service to you!

Attention State of Florida Members

Capital Health Plan has recently updated your plan benefit documents. These documents are available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at capitalhealth.com/state.

Network Directory

The Network Directory is an online tool where you can search to find network primary care physicians, specialty physicians, hospitals, and other facilities where medical care is provided. Visit capitalhealth.com/directories/provider-directory.

Programs/Procedures and Medication Center

Under the Providers section, you can review CHP's health care decision-making processes, our affirmative statement about incentives, an explanation of appeal rights, how we evaluate new technology, how to reach us with specific questions about coverage issues, and information about your medications. Visit capitalhealth.com/providers.

CHPConnect

Through CHPConnect, our secure online web portal, you can view your member handbook and summary of benefits. These documents outline how to receive services for primary/specialty care, how to receive care in an emergency, how to submit a claim or a complaint, how to appeal a decision made by us, copayments and other costs, benefits that are excluded from the plan, and information on restrictions outside of the CHP provider network. Visit capitalhealth.com.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Learn how to obtain language assistance from CHP, as well as how to obtain care after normal office hours, when outside the service area, and in case of emergencies. Visit capitalhealth.com/fag.

Case Management Program

The Capital Health Plan Case Management Program is a service offered to all CHP members. Our case managers can offer assistance to those who have experienced a critical incident or have multiple complex conditions and need help navigating their care. Participation in case management services is voluntary and you can discontinue participation at any time. Members are encouraged to work closely with their physician in determining if these services are appropriate in their individual circumstance. Members or caregivers may also self-refer by contacting Capital Health Plan Member Services.

Important Member Announcements

Stay Up to Date with CHP's Member Announcements on our website

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

The Physician Group of Capital Health Plan (PGCHP) has received limited amounts of the COVID-19 vaccine. In keeping with the Federal and State of Florida guidelines, the doctors will seek to vaccinate patients of the PGCHP that meet current criteria. If you fall within this group and as supply allows, your PGCHP Primary Care Physician's (PCP) office will be contacting you to schedule an appointment.

If you are a patient of another physician group, please contact your PCP to inquire about receiving the vaccine or contact your local Florida Department of Health for further instructions on scheduling an appointment for an upcoming vaccine clinic.

We encourage you to continue checking our website for the most up-to-date information at capitalhealth.com/covid.

Your CHP Dollar

Administrative costs represent less than 4% of our total revenues, one of the lowest levels in the nation. Capital Health Plan's overhead has been below 5% of revenues for over 25 years.



Women's Health & Cancer Rights Act, 1998

In compliance with this act, mastectomies and related reconstructive surgery are covered benefits for Capital Health Plan members. Coverage includes reconstruction of the surgically altered breast, as well as surgery and reconstruction of the other breast for a symmetrical appearance. Coverage is also available for breast prostheses and for the physical complications of mastectomy, including lymphedemas. If you have any questions, please call Capital Health Plan Member Services.

Medicare National Coverage Determination (NCD)

From time to time, the federal agency that runs Medicare announces new or revised information about coverage under the Medicare program. Capital Health Plan is required to notify its Medicare members of this information on our website and in our member newsletter.

To review new or revised coverage rules, access Original Medicare's coverage policies at www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/reports/national-coverage-whats-new-report.aspx or contact Capital Health Plan Member Services to request additional information.

Federal Non-Discrimination Notice

Capital Health Plan complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-877-247-6512 (TTY: 1-877-870-8943).

ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 1-877-247-6512 (TTY: 1-877-870-8943).

To view the full notice, please visit capitalhealth.com and select the link in the footer of the homepage.



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PREVENTION INFORMATION

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Join Capital Health Plan on our social channels
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Capital Health Plan invites you
to keep up with your local trusted
health care plan!

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-  bit.ly/3rfx5sD
-  linkedin.com/company/capital-health-plan

capitalhealth.com

LOCAL. TRUSTED.

