

Members ski free!

Great news for FCHP members this coming winter season! We've expanded our It Fits! program to **reimburse for ski lift tickets, season passes and ski lessons!**

It Fits! also reimburses families up to \$300 (individuals up to \$150) each calendar year for membership at a fitness center or in Weight Watchers®, or for aerobics, Pilates and yoga classes taught by certified instructors. Sports programs and lessons for all ages are reimbursable, too. Best of all, members are immediately eligible. ■

Benefits may vary by employer group and plan.
Weight Watchers® is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc.

Did you know?

FCHP has an option for employees who don't "fit" into its Select Care or Direct Care networks.

When it comes time for your next renewal, you might want to consider this option, particularly if you have a few employees who live/work out of state. Fallon Preferred Care, our PPO product, gives members access to a network that includes more than **500,000 providers** both regionally and nationally.

Our Fallon Preferred Care members get the coverage they want with maximum flexibility, including the option to seek care from any



provider they wish (they pay more for out-of-network coverage), no requirement to designate a primary care physician and no referrals for specialty care. Fallon Preferred Care members also enjoy our It Fits! and Oh Baby! programs, as well as the \$0 routine in-network physicals for all ages!

In most cases, Fallon Preferred Care can be offered alongside any of FCHP's other product offerings, including our HMOs—FCHP Select Care and FCHP Direct Care. ■

Benefits may vary by employer group and plan.

FCHP ad campaign reinforces benefits

We've been conducting a steady advertising campaign in 2008 to spread the word about Fallon Community Health Plan's extensive network and plan options.

"More you" is our theme for advertising that is appearing throughout Massachusetts. More you is an evolution of FCHP's brand that's all about health insurance made simple. We propose to make health insurance more relevant to all our customers and invite our members and partners to become more involved in their health. We're offering more choice, more value, more of what fits your business best.

You'll likely see our TV commercials on a variety of programs, and hear comparable radio spots, along with our sponsorship of the Red Sox Injury Report. Our print ads appear predominantly in business publications. Our billboards are appearing in nearly two dozen locations throughout our service area. We hope you like what you see and hear. ■

More: \$0 copays for annual physicals

MORE YOU



1-866-617-FCHP

fchp.org

"If we don't change,
we don't grow. If we
don't grow, we aren't
really living."

– Gail Sheehy

Business Buzz

COBRA and Mini-COBRA how-to guidelines

COBRA and Mini-COBRA are the federal and state laws, respectively, that allow employees and their dependents to elect to continue group health insurance and pay group rates for certain time periods after termination from your company. COBRA applies to employers with 20 or more employees; Mini-COBRA applies to employers (but not self-funded plans) with two to 19 employees. The laws are straightforward in concept but more complicated to execute.

Generally, it's the employer's responsibility to notify employees and their eligible dependents of their rights under Mini-COBRA within 14 days of the qualifying event (termination, death, divorce, etc.).

Fallon Community Health Plan suggests you follow these guidelines for both Mini-COBRA and COBRA transactions:

- *If the subscriber chooses at the time of the qualifying event to remain on the group coverage, nothing needs to be done.* The subscriber will automatically remain on your FCHP group coverage. Please note that it's the employer's responsibility to collect premium payments from the former employee and forward them to FCHP. (Employers may add up to 2% to the group premium rate as an administrative charge.) When a termination from COBRA or Mini-COBRA is requested, it must be forwarded to FCHP's Service Operations Department within 30 days of the requested termination date.
- *If the subscriber does not choose to remain on the group coverage or if no immediate election is made, you should remove the subscriber and dependents from your group.* A termination form should be forwarded to the Service Operations Department within 30 days of the requested termination date.
- *If the subscriber chooses COBRA or Mini-COBRA coverage after FCHP receives a termination form, a Membership Transaction Form requesting reinstatement of the subscriber must be forwarded to the Service Operations Department as soon as the employer receives payment from the employee.* Please include a notation in the remarks section stating the reason for reinstatement. COBRA or Mini-COBRA coverage would be effective as of the date of termination.

These guidelines are based on FCHP's interpretation of these regulations. Consult your appropriate business adviser to determine your obligations. For more details, please consult your FCHP Administrative Handbook or call your account manager at 1-800-333-2535. ■

Why choose FCHP?

1. Our networks work for you.

With FCHP, you can offer one, two or all three of our networks to your employees to maximize their satisfaction and your savings. Our products mirror our networks and are priced based on their size and efficiency. They can usually be offered together for an attractive package.

You can choose among a more customized, cost-efficient network (FCHP Direct Care—more than 11,400 providers) and a more expansive network (FCHP Select Care—nearly 18,000 providers) within the Commonwealth, plus a national and regional network comprised of hundreds of thousands of providers (Fallon Preferred Care). See how much you can save!

2. Our people work for you.

Your FCHP account manager goes the extra mile to be responsive to your everyday needs. In addition, we offer another level of service with our Client Service Coordinator(s). If you have issues that require high-level attention, would like to hold a new-member orientation or Q&A session, need guidance related to service or medical care issues, or need clarification about a benefit, we can help. By working one-on-one with the employer and employee, we're able to develop a relationship that takes the burden off the employer if any issues arise.

3. Our programs work for you.

Through Every Day Health, our comprehensive health and wellness program, we'll help you enhance the health of your company and your employees. For example, our Care Services programs help to coordinate hospital, rehab and home care; check on members after they are hospitalized; and support members who have chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and coronary artery disease. Plus, our Wellness Works can bring health programs and information right to your workplace. ■

Massachusetts health care reform in action

State requires minimum coverage in 2009

Beginning January 1, 2009, individuals must be sure to have not just any health plan to be covered under the state law, but one that meets “minimum creditable coverage” (MCC). That means that, at the very least, they must have a plan that includes prescription drug coverage and limits on certain deductibles and out-of-pocket costs.

Most plans offered by Fallon Community Health Plan have prescription drug coverage and cost “caps” that meet MCC standards. FCHP will notify you and your employees if your plans don’t meet the MCC guidelines and will offer you plan alternatives.

FCHP is conducting an **open enrollment from November 15 through December 15**, for an effective date of January 1, 2009, so that members in this situation can change plans if they choose.

If you have any questions, please call your account manager at 1-800-333-2535. ■

Correct address needed for proof of insurance mailing

As you know, residents of Massachusetts now are required to prove they have health insurance for their annual state income tax filing.

We want to remind you that Fallon Community Health Plan will mail its commercial plan subscribers who are Massachusetts residents a 1099-HC form (proof of coverage) in January 2009, in time for tax filings. (This does

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Special Report

Pharmacy face-off: Cost and safety in a demanding market

Part two: Safety

Fallon Community Health Plan stands out from its competitors in aggressively managing pharmacy for cost and member safety. In part one of this series, in our June issue, we explored the cost issues. Now let’s take a look at safety.

Prescription drug safety continues to be a hot topic. Since the recalls on drugs like Vioxx® back in 2004, the news has been filled with warnings for drugs like Celebrex®, Aleve®, Strattera®, Paxil® and Avandia®.

Before new drugs go on the market, they undergo testing by their manufacturers and are then reviewed and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration based on one premise: whether or not the benefits of the drug outweigh the risks. But the FDA realizes that the current process still falls short of identifying all of the risks a drug may have. Clinical trials only test approximately 2,000 to 4,000 people in a short time frame. Unfavorable side effects are more likely to be spotted *after hundreds of thousands of people have taken the drug over many years.*

Alarming, most clinical drug studies are done and written up by the same drug companies that have a stake in their outcomes—often resulting in less favorable data being left out and negative studies not being published. Such was the case with the heavily advertised blockbuster drug Vytorin®, which didn’t fight heart disease any better than an inexpensive generic medication.

Another safety concern arises with the pharmaceutical company practice of creating or exaggerating syndromes and disorders in order to expand the market for existing drugs—as is the case with the Parkinson’s drug Requip® being promoted for “restless legs syndrome,” which very few people actually have. The result? Healthy people take a drug whose side effects can make them sick.

What is FCHP doing?

Our **Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee** exhaustively reviews the data on the safety and effectiveness of each drug before it is approved for addition to our formulary (list of covered medications). The committee also develops clinical criteria to help ensure that drugs are used appropriately. Once a drug is on our formulary, our Pharmacy Services Department continues to follow the literature for safety issues.

Our **New to Market Policy**, which initially excludes a new medication from coverage, helps ensure member safety by allowing adequate time for the development, review and approval of clinical criteria. This provides us a unique opportunity to monitor the drug in the marketplace for unforeseen adverse events, as was the case with the painkiller Vioxx®, removed from the market for its cardiac and stroke risks.

We’ve put other safety checks in place, too. The **prior authorization** we require for some drugs helps ensure that medications are used safely and appropriately. We also place **quantity limits** on certain drugs that have the potential for misuse, abuse or serious side effects. In other cases, we may use **step therapy**, a process that starts a member on tried-and-true medications first, and evaluates alternatives if a member’s condition doesn’t respond.

Medications can save lives and improve the quality of lives, but they shouldn’t be taken lightly. Fallon Community Health Plan is doing everything possible to ensure the safety and affordability of our members’ medications. We know that with prescription medication, as with other medical treatment, the best care isn’t necessarily the most expensive care. We’re proving it every day. ■

proof of insurance

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not apply to Fallon Senior Plan™ members.) The form shows coverage by each month in the year. Then, in turn, the subscriber (and dependents over the age of 18) will use the information on this form to complete state form Schedule HC when filing the 2008 state income taxes.

For the 2008 tax year, individuals without insurance (or an exemption) will pay an income tax penalty equal to half of the cost of the lowest-priced plan available to the individual for each month without coverage. Any gap in coverage of greater than 63 days is subject to a penalty.

Please help us remind your employees that we need their correct address for this purpose. If they plan on moving or changing their address in 2008, they may notify us by logging on to "My FCHP" at www.fchp.org or calling our Customer Service at 1-800-868-5200 (TDD/TTY: 1-877-608-7677), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■

In our corner

■ **FCHP was proud to be named a Champion in Health Care** recently by the *Boston Business Journal*. We were one of only two Massachusetts companies chosen as a "champion" in the employer category. The annual awards recognize local health care organizations and their staff for outstanding achievements. We were chosen for the example we set with our employee wellness programs that focus on smoking cessation, stress reduction and nutrition/fitness, as well as our on-site fitness room—which all have high success rates.

■ Fallon Community Health Plan was the presenting sponsor of the **Canal Diggers 5Km** on September 14 that, for the second year, brought hundreds of athletes and supporters to Worcester's up-and-coming Canal District. Thank you to all who participated in this event.

■ Our third annual **Golf FORE a Goal** tournament was held at Worcester Country Club on September 29. This year's tournament again raised well over \$100,000 that we'll distribute to food pantries and hunger relief programs in the FCHP service area.

■ FCHP has launched a new initiative aimed at improving the health and wellness of children in Massachusetts. **Commit to be Fit** is geared for students in kindergarten through

grade 4. Materials and incentives developed for the program are educating and encouraging children and their families about how to live a healthier and more active lifestyle. In support of the initiative, FCHP also has collaborated with the Massachusetts School Nurse Organization to introduce a fun and educational walking program to schools throughout the Commonwealth.

■ Fallon Senior Plan™ invites seniors and caregivers to attend the **Senior Spectacular expo** on Tuesday, October 21, at the DCU Center in Worcester. Fallon Senior Plan is a presenting sponsor of this free event, which includes workshops, exhibits, health screenings, seminars, exhibits and entertainment.

■ We'd like to **recommend a new Web** site developed by South Shore Medical Center with the help of FCHP's annual Physician Grant. The Web site is an extension of the medical center's Shape Your Future pediatric weight-loss program. It's a fun, informative and interactive site that can help parents talk with their kids about healthy eating and exercise. Visit www.shapeyourfuture.org today—and return often! ■



www.fchp.org

Employer Edge is published quarterly to provide employers with the latest news, trends and marketplace information in health care. Please share this issue with your coworkers. E-mail your comments on *Employer Edge* to Employer.Edge@fchp.org. For information about products or programs, ask for your account manager at 1-800-333-2535.