

Health Matters

Rocky Mountain Rural Health

'Improving Access to healthcare in Park County'

First Quarter 2018

The Future of Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP)

For those of you that have received a letter from the State of Colorado informing you that you're child's CHIP insurance may be ending

GREAT NEWS – IT IS NOT!!!

After much controversy the CHIP program was funded for another 6 years through a continuing resolution passed by the 115th United States Congress.

But what is CHIP?

The Children's Health Insurance Plan was a bipartisan effort passed by the 105th Congress of the United States in 1997. The program is funded by the federal government through an excise tax on tobacco. The latest data shows that for the fiscal year 2015 the federal government collected 15.5 billion dollars through taxes on tobacco products. The taxes collected are then passed onto the states to manage the SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program.) The purpose is to get health insurance to the children of families of modest means; these families make too much money to qualify for Medicaid and a private policy is just too expensive. **Below is the income guideline for CHIP in the state of Colorado.**

Poverty Level	143-156%	157-213%	214 to 260%
Family Size	MONTHLY INCOME RANGE:		
1	\$1,438 - \$1,568	\$1,569 - \$2,141	\$2,143 - \$2,613
2	\$1,936 - \$2,112	\$2,113 - \$2,883	\$2,884 - \$3,519
3	\$2,434 - \$2,655	\$2,656 - \$3,625	\$3,626 - \$4,425
4	\$2,932 - \$3,198	\$3,199 - \$4,367	\$4,368 - \$5,330
5	\$3,430 - \$3,742	\$3,743 - \$5,109	\$5,110 - \$6,236
6	\$3,928 - \$4,285	\$4,286 - \$5,851	\$5,852 - \$7,142
	Enrollment Fee: 1 Child \$25.00 2 or more \$35.00		Enrollment Fee: 1 child \$75.00 2 or more \$105.00

CHIP policies renew annually. If your child is currently enrolled in CHIP you should receive a notice of renewal approximately one year from the date that you applied for coverage.

If your children are not enrolled in CHIP but you believe that your family may qualify you can apply the following ways: online at Colorado.gov/PEAK ; by phone at 1-800-221-3943; or call Rocky Mountain Rural Health at 719-836-2169 for help with the process.

The Thyroid - Setting the Pace

JANUARY is Thyroid Awareness Month. Please read on for a refresher on this little gland that regulates the pace of life.

The *thyroid* is a small, butterfly shaped *gland* located in the base of the neck just below the Adam's apple. Although relatively small, the thyroid gland plays a huge role in our body, influencing the function of many of the body's most important organs, including the heart, brain, liver, kidneys and skin.

Think of the thyroid gland as an engine. The *thyroid*, part of the *endocrine system*, sets the pace at which the body operates. It manufactures enough *thyroid hormone* to prompt cells to perform a function at a certain rate. *Thyroid hormones* influence

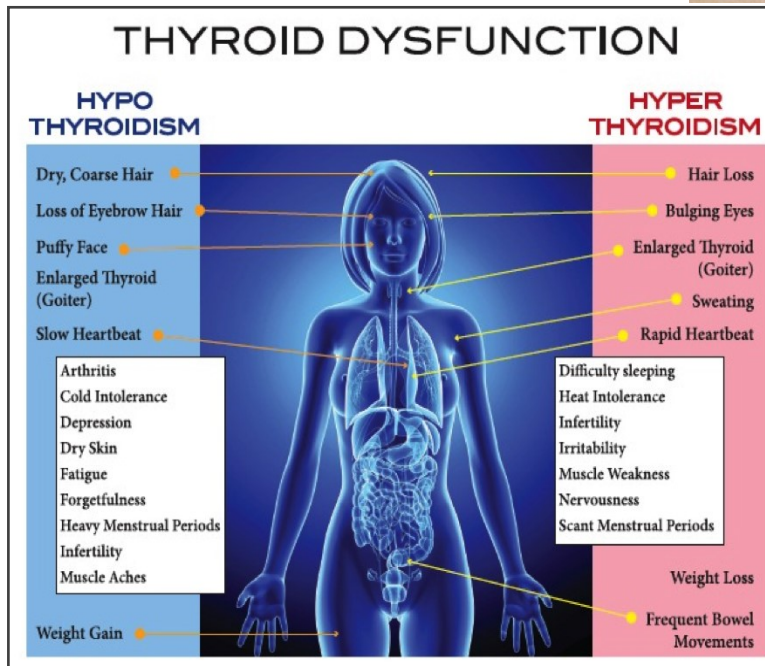
virtually every system in the body telling the organs how fast or slow they should work.

But how is the speed regulated? How fast? How slow? The *thyroid*

receives help from the *pituitary gland* which is located at the base of the brain and is known as the '*master gland*' because the *pituitary* controls the functions of the thyroid and other glands in the *endocrine system*. The *pituitary* sends messages to the *thyroid gland*, telling it how much thyroid hormone to make.

More thyroid hormone = faster pace. Less thyroid hormone = slower pace.

Teamwork at its best!



The thyroid works hard to keep our body functioning in balance at an optimal pace. However, sometimes the thyroid doesn't function properly. When it becomes **overactive** and produces too much thyroid hormone it causes the body's systems to speed up and the condition is known as **HYPERTHYROIDISM**. Or it can become **underactive** and create too little thyroid hormone which causes the body's systems to slow down. This condition is known as **HYPOTHYROIDISM**.

Do you think your thyroid is too fast or too slow? Your primary care provider can help. Schedule an appointment today!

Thank you to Hormone Health Network and Thyroid Awareness for information about the thyroid.

January is National Radon Action Month

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. The EPA and the Surgeon General's office estimate that as many as 20,000 lung cancer deaths are caused each year by radon. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer.

Radon is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. It is found naturally in rocks and soil as part of the breakdown of uranium, thorium and radium. It seeps up through the soil and diffuses into the air. In homes, the greatest concentration of radon in the air is found in the lower levels.

The first step is to test your home's radon level with an easy to use kit which is available through the Park County Public Health Department. Fairplay Office: 719-836-4161 Bailey Office: 303-816-5970

If unacceptable levels of radon are detected, mitigation methods are available. For more information visit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at www.colorado.gov.

HEART FAILURE :

THE OTHER FORM OF HEART DISEASE



Most people know the dangers of coronary artery disease (blocked arteries in the heart) which can cause chest pain and heart attack. Not as many are familiar with a condition called **Heart Failure (HF)** - another common form of heart disease.

HF is a condition in which the heart does not pump as well as it should. This causes the heart to lag behind in its job of moving blood and oxygen through the body. As a result, fluid backs up in the body and the organs and muscles do not get as much blood and oxygen as they

need. This can lead to symptoms such as leg swelling, shortness of breath, and fatigue. HF can be mild or severe - even life threatening.

HF is caused by a disease or condition that damages the heart muscle. The most common causes of HF include:

- ♥ High blood pressure
- ♥ Coronary artery disease
- ♥ Blocked or leaky heart valves
- ♥ Cardiomyopathy (disease of the heart muscle - sometimes from a viral infection)
- ♥ Pulmonary hypertension (high blood pressure in the lungs - often caused by **sleep apnea**)

Although HF is a serious con-

dition, safe and effective treatments are available. If you have any of the symptoms or risk factors for HF, see your primary care provider for evaluation and testing. Treatment can help you feel better

SIGNS OF HEART FAILURE

- ♥ Weakness especially in the legs when exercising
- ♥ Shortness of breath which makes you less active or need to prop your head up with several pillows to sleep at night
- ♥ Rapid heart rate even when resting
- ♥ Swelling of the feet and ankles
- ♥ Feeling abnormally tired or fatigued

Don't Be SAD This Winter



According to the Mayo Clinic, **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)** is a type of depression that is related to changes in seasons. In most cases, SAD symptoms appear during late fall and early winter and go away during the sunnier days of spring and summer. The reduced level of sunlight in fall and winter is believed to be a major cause of SAD.

SAD is seen more often in women than men and more frequently in younger than older adults. **Risk factors for SAD include a family history of SAD; already having depression or bipolar disorder; and living in northern areas with shorter winter sunlight.**

Treatment of SAD may be as simple as getting out in the sunlight every day or use of a special lamp that mimics sunlight. Sometimes medications or psychotherapy are needed. If you suspect you may have SAD see your primary care provider right away.



Rocky Mountain Rural Health is dedicated to improving access to healthcare in Park County. People in our medically underserved communities face many barriers to accessing healthcare. RMRH offers assistance to overcome these challenges through a variety of programs. Please consider making a donation to help us help others. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Please use my contribution for the following:

- TRANSPORTATION**— help someone housebound get to the doctor \$ _____
- BREAST CANCER**—help a wife, mother, sister, friend with diagnosis and/or treatment \$ _____
- EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**—help a family going through a medical crisis \$ _____
- GENERAL OPERATIONS**—help us to serve Park County residents \$ _____

Mail your check to Rocky Mountain Rural Health, PO Box 1600, Fairplay, CO 80440

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RURAL HEALTH is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the full amount allowed by law. If you designate a particular fund for your contribution, 100% of the donation goes to that fund.

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Contact us by phone at 719-836-2169

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