

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RURAL HEALTH

Improving Healthcare in South Park!



Health Matters

Rocky Mountain Rural Health Newsletter

September 2015

Road Map to Better Health

As part of our ongoing Road Map to Health Series, this issue will focus on “choosing the right provider.”

Which Provider is Right for Me?

Choosing the right provider is one of the most important decisions you'll make about your health care, and finding the right one can take a little work. Remember you are looking for a partner you can trust and work with to improve your health and well being, so take your time to think about what you need. Depending on how complicated your health care needs are, you may need more than one type of provider. They may include:

A **Primary Care Provider** is often considered the “quarterback” of health care providers and is the provider you will see for most of your health problems. They will work with you to get your recommended screenings, keep your health records, help you manage chronic conditions and link you to other types of providers if you need them. If you are an adult, your primary care provider may be called a family physician or doctor, internist, general practitioner, nurse practitioner, or a physician's assistant. Your child or teenager's provider may be one of the above or a pediatrician.

A **Specialist** will see you for certain services or to treat specific conditions. Specialists include: cardiologists, oncologists, psychologists, allergists, orthopedist, etc. In some cases, your health plan may require a referral from your primary care provider before you schedule an appointment with a specialist. For some other services, your health plan may require you to first get a pre-authorization - a decision by your coverage or health plan that a health care services, treatment plan, prescription drug, or durable medical equipment is medically necessary. This is also called prior authorization, prior approval, or precertification.

For some services your health plan may also assign a provider. You can usually change providers if you want. Contact your health plan if you have questions on how to do this.



Better Health Begins by Choosing a Provider

Follow these steps to find a provider you can trust and partner with.

- 1. Identify providers in your network by:**
 - Call your insurance company or state Medicaid program or Patient Navigator at Rocky Mountain Rural Health.
 - Look at their websites, or check your member handbook to find providers in your network.
- 2. Ask your friends or family if they have providers they like.**
- 3. Pick a provider and call their office.**
 - Ask if they are accepting new patients and if they take your insurance coverage.
 - Is their location convenient?
 - What are their appointment times?
 - Does the provider speak your language or provide an interpreter?
 - If you have special needs because of disability, can they accommodate you?
 - Which hospital(s) does the provider work with?
 - Is the office staff respectful and helpful?
- 4. Give them a try**

Inside this Issue

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In the Spotlight

*Park County Health Care Alliance Member Authors
Share Their Back to School Tips!*



Back to School Safety

Julia Anderson, PT, Fairplay Physical Therapy

Back to School and it's time for a physical safety check by weighing the "Risks of Backpacks".

If your kids are carrying too much weight on their backs and shoulders, they may stretch or strain their muscles, cause direct injury to the spine and frankly, get really pooped.

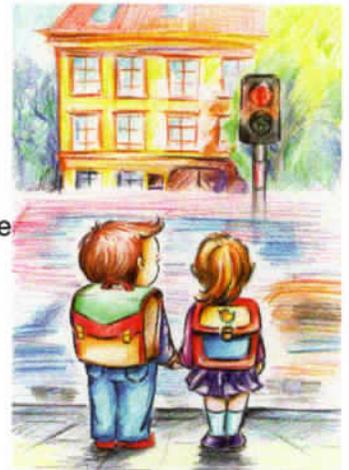
Kids shouldn't carry more than 10 – 15 percent of their weight over their shoulders and on their backs.

You can decrease their risk of injury with these basic tips from Dr. Hank Bernstein of Boston's Children's Hospital:

- Help your child sort through everything before packing up and see what can be left at home that day. Place heaviest items in first; the closer they are to the child's back, the less strain they'll put on those muscles.
- Buy an appropriate-size backpack, one that ends just a few inches above the waist. The backpack should also have soft padded straps to maximize comfort. Make sure that the pack has compartments that help distribute the weight your child will carry. Or better yet, try one of the new models with wheels, that way your child can pull the pack!
- Even though it's hipper to carry a pack over just one shoulder, encourage your kids to carry theirs over both shoulders; this will better distribute the weight on their shoulders and back. Make sure your kids bend their knees when they first lift their packs, to avoid further strain on their back muscles.

- Once the pack is on the back, visually look to see if your child's back is symmetrical. I know you may not think you know enough to tell if their back is even or level, but this is easier than you may think.

If you think there might be an imbalance or you are not sure, we can provide a free consult at Fairplay Physical Therapy – 719-836-1833. We want to make sure your child has a safe and happy school year and would be glad to help out and make sure their backs are in balance.



Contact Us

Give us a call for information about our organization, to volunteer, or to provide a donation.

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www.rmrh.org

The Importance of Vaccines

Kristen Newell, BSN, RN, Park County Public Health

HERD IMMUNITY

Protects those who cannot be vaccinated because they are too young or have a weakened immune system (those who have had organ transplants, cancer or Leukemia).

HELEN KELLER

Became deaf and blind due to Rubella (measles) as a young child.

MEASLES VACCINE

- In the first 20 years, measles vaccine prevented 52 million cases, 5,200 deaths, and 17,400 cases of retardation.
- Just under 82%, CO ranks at the bottom nationally for kindergarteners vaccinated for measles.

Immunizations are essential to prevent many infectious diseases and their costly complications. Vaccination will protect a person from a dozen or so potentially serious diseases. If a person is not vaccinated they are at risk of getting the disease and become sicker. Most diseases that can be prevented through vaccination can have serious side effects such as loss of hearing, sight, limbs, or death.

Vaccination also provides community benefits. In today's mobile society disease can easily spread. The more in a community that are vaccinated, the harder it is for a disease to spread from person to person and cause an outbreak. This is called "herd immunity".

Recent outbreaks in Measles and Pertussis have made national and local news.

Measles - *"From January 1, 2015 - August 1, 2105, there have been 188 people from 24 states and the District of Columbia that contracted measles."*

Pertussis - People with pertussis may have difficulty breathing and vomit because they cough so hard. Pertussis immunizations are recommended for all children and adults but it is especially important for people who have contact with infants. Infants are too young to receive the vaccine and have a higher risk of hospitalization and death due to pertussis. **Unfortunately, parents and other caregivers are commonly the source of pertussis infections in infants.** It is important for these persons to get vaccinated because children who are not vaccinated are more likely to contract pertussis.

Research has shown that outbreaks of preventable disease are more likely to occur in communities with low vaccination rates. Vaccinations not only protect you, they protect your community. **Park County Public Health** has vaccines available for uninsured adults and children, and children that have Medicaid coverage. We also have flu vaccines available for a \$20.00 fee starting in early October. We are unable to bill private insurances but due to the Affordable Care Act most insurance plans cover vaccines 100% under your insurance wellness benefit if you go to your doctor's office. Please contact your doctor or insurance carrier to verify coverage. If you would like to schedule an appointment or have questions about vaccinations please call 719-836-4154 to speak to a public health nurse.

PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough)

- Cases in CO have remained at epidemic portions for several years.
- In 2013, there were 1,432 reported cases - 81% which were children
- CO ranked 45th among states in vaccination rates for children 19-35 months old

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

32nd President of US

Roosevelt served during WWII in spite the need to use a wheelchair, braces or crutches because of Polio he had contracted as a young man.

POLIO

- Also known as Infantile Paralysis
- Before the Polio vaccine was introduced in 1955 there were over 29K cases of Polio in the US. For the past 50 years there have been no recorded cases in US.

Upcoming RMRH Community Health Care Events

Mark Your Calendars for these important health care events:

Breast Cancer Basics
South Park Invitational Volley-
ball Tourney
South Park High School
October 17, 2015
9:00am - 5:00pm

Connect for Health
Open Enrollment begins
November 1, 2015

For more information or to
schedule an appointment,
please call 719-836-2169

Rocky Mountain Rural Health Provides Navigation Ser- vices

Barbie McBee, Patient Navigator

The health care system has changed considerably over the last 20 years. In the past the community doctor often took care of everything for the family. Today client navigators work with patient's that need assistance managing their healthcare. Multiple specialists and services can sometimes be overwhelming when an individual is not feeling well or has a complex medical situation. Figuring out the details of what needs to be done and where it needs to be done can be really challenging. The client navigators at RMRH can help lighten the load of navigating the often complex health care system. Some of the services the RMRH Navigators can provide include finding primary care providers, specialists, testing, and other support services such as travel assistance. Navigators at RMRH can also help clients apply for personal grants for expenses not covered by insurance, such as dentures and hearing aids.

There are generally 4 types of Navigation Services

1. Connecting a client with a primary care provider that takes their insurance.
2. Assistance with finding other types of services such as dental, vision, or mental health
3. Locating specialist care or work with insurance on coverage of medical services and durable medical goods (walkers, wheelchairs, hospital beds, etc.)
4. Helping find alternative sources of payment for needed goods and services not covered by insurance.

...A recent service provided by one of the patient navigators involved a client who qualified for Medicaid. The client was diagnosed with cancer and had been receiving ongoing treatment for the past few months. Despite the medical coverage provided by Medicaid, the cancer and it's treatment limited this persons ability to work and without a regular income they fell behind on their mortgage. In addition, the client is incurring additional travel expenses each and every time travel to Denver was necessary for treatment. RMRH submitted multiple grant applications to various agencies on the client's behalf to help offset these additional expenses. To date RMRH has been able to secure just over \$1,100 in grant funds to assist with the person's illness related expenses.

What is RCCO?

A RCCO is a Regional Care Collaborative Organization which oversees Medicaid services for various regions in CO. Park County is part of Region 7 along with Elbert, El Paso, and Teller Counties. RMRH provides the patient navigation services to Medicaid members in Park County through a contract with Region 7 RCCO.

Questions about Medicaid Services?

Call RMRH at 719-836-2169 and ask to speak to Barbie or Julie.

Rocky Mountain Rural Health has two patient navigators, Barbie McBee and Julie Johnson. In addition, Anne Bresnahan, Administrative Assistant, provides support to the program. Navigation services are available to all Park County residents regardless of insurance status.

Rocky Mountain Rural Health, located at 525 Hathaway Street in Fairplay, is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to improving health care for the residents of South Park. For further information on the services provided by RMRH, please call 719-836-2169 or visit our web page at mrh.org.