

Special points of interest:

- It's not too late to take advantage of additional medical benefits offered by Health Plans
- St. Vincent IPA's Homebound Program brings a health care provider to you
- The risk of death among people with diabetes doubles compared to people without diabetes
- St. Vincent Case Managers make your next hospital stay easier

HealthTalk

ST. VINCENT IPA

Today's Medicare Options

The Annual Election Period (AEP) has come and gone but it's still not too late to enroll into a health plan. You may still be eligible to enroll into a "Like" plan.

Who is Eligible?

To qualify you must currently have a Medicare Advantage with Prescription Drug plan (MAPD), or have Medicare parts A, B and D.

Why should I join a health plan ?

Joining a health plan opens many windows of opportunities to you. One of the great benefits is that you have Access to the St. Vincent IPA network of Primary Care doctors and specialists. The benefit to you is great care and piece of mind knowing that the St. Vincent IPA team will be there for you every step of the way.

Joining a health plan also allows you additional benefits such as transportation, lower medical costs as well as lower prescription drug costs.

What must you consider before joining a health plan?

There are some restrictions you must consider when joining a health plan. The



Seeing your doctor at a lower cost is only a phone call away!

first thing to consider is whether your doctor is part of the network. The second thing you must consider is

that a referral will be required to see a specialist. Although, with St. Vincent IPA, referrals are usually approved in 24-48 hours, it is important to be aware that your primary care physician must make the request for you to see your specialist. Lastly, you must realize that by selecting an IPA you are also selecting a hospital that is affiliated with your selected IPA and doctor. Keep in mind that in case of emergency you should go to the nearest hospital but for non urgent or emergent needs you must go to your affiliated hospital.

How do I find out more about my Options?

Contact St. Vincent IPA member services at 1800-255-5053 x 109 so we may answer any questions.

Can't make it to your Doctor? We can Help.

Many ask, "What is a Nurse Practitioner"? A Nurse Practitioner is a Registered Nurse who has also completed a Masters in Nursing (MN) program. They become board certified by taking a national certification exam and must keep their education current to continue to remain board certified. Similar to a physician, a Nurse Practitioner is trained to diagnose and develop treat-

ment plans for acute and chronic diseases. Nurse Practitioners also specialize in diseases of the aging, gerontology. The care provided is also reviewed with the patients Primary Care Physician to provide a status on their health and to have the Primary Care Physician's oversight in the patient's care.

One of our main objectives at St. Vincent IPA

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More Americans are Being Affected by Diabetes

Diabetes affects over 15 million people in the United States. It is the 7th leading cause of death among Americans. It is important to monitor and control you diabetes to ensure that complications are minimized. Complications from poorly controlled diabetes include: heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, foot sores which may lead to amputation, paralysis of the stomach, chronic diarrhea, peripheral artery obstruction, and kidney failure.

There are several risk factors for Diabetes. Some of them include: Family history, race, age, being overweight or obesity, unhealthy diet, and sedentary lifestyle.



So, what are the symptoms to look for if you suspect you may be at risk for diabetes?

Type 1: frequent urination, increased thirst, excessive hunger, unexplained weight loss, extreme fatigue, blurred vision,

irritability, nausea and vomiting.

Type 2: Same symptoms at type one plus unexplained weight gain, pain, cramping, tingling or numbness in your feet, unusual drowsiness, frequent vaginal or skin infections, dry itchy skin and slow healing sores. If you are experiencing these symptoms it is important that you see your doctor immediately

There are several tests which may be administered by your doctor to determine if you have diabetes. These tests include urine tests, blood tests, glucose-tolerance tests, fasting blood sugar and glycohemoglobin (HbA1c) test.

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Unable to see your doctor?

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is to keep you as healthy as possible. In our Homebound program we provide special help to patients who are in greatest need and unable to easily come to a doctor's office. Instead, we visit you at home, just as if you had an appointment with your physician. It is my role, as a Nurse Practitioner, to facilitate and manage the care of these patients. I am available to them 24

hours a day, seven days a week by telephone.

When patient's transition from the hospital to a Skilled Nursing Facility I work closely with our Hospitalist in the management of your care to bring you back to your prior level of function with rehabilitation and medical therapies. Once you are safe and have met your rehabilitation potential you are discharged home with the support neces-

sary to keep you safe and living to your potential. If you are in need of this type of care, a simple referral from your Primary Care Physician, will initiate my visit. This service is available to you because you are our patient. There are no fees for this type of care, in our group, it is an added benefit.

Be assured we, at St. Vincent IPA, are committed to your health.

Need Blood Drawn?: Making an Appointment is Easy

St Vincent IPA members can now schedule an appointment for their next visit to a Quest Diagnostics Patient Service Center via the Quest Diagnostics website

www.questdiagnostics.com/appointment or an interactive voice response system 888 277-8772. In addition to ena-

bling St.Vincent IPA members to schedule at a time that works for them, the Quest Diagnostics Appointment Scheduling System reminds patients to bring required insurance verification and their physician orders. The system

also will advise patients to follow the fasting schedule recommended by their physician, if applicable.

If you prefer not to make an appointment, walk in patients are always welcome at Quest Diagnostics Patient Service Centers.



More Seniors are Being Affected by Diabetes

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Prevention: Making adjustments to your lifestyle could help in the fight against diabetes. These changes will help prevent, reduce or delay the onset of diabetes.

Exercise regularly: To reduce the risk of diabetes it is important that you exercise regularly. Regular exercise not only helps you lose weight but it also helps lower your blood sugar and increase your sensitivity to insulin. Research shows that aerobic exercises or resistance training exercises can help control diabetes but the greatest benefit comes from incorporating both forms of exercise into your lifestyle.

Nutrition: consume a vari-

ety of foods that are low in fat. Include lots of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds. Also, increase your fiber intake. Fiber may help control diabetes and decrease your risk of heart



Routine checkups could save you a hospital stay.

problems by controlling your blood sugar. Stay away from fad diets and institute a program that is varied and has an emphasis on portion control. Look for foods that are nutrient dense and low in fat.

Screenings: The American Diabetes Association recommends glucose screenings for people 45 or older who are overweight. Also, ask your doctor about testing if you're younger than age 45 and overweight with one or more additional risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Remember, prevention is your first line of defense.

Have questions?: Talk to your doctor about your risk for diabetes.

Case Management Makes Your Next Hospital Stay a Little Easier

St. Vincent IPA is a leading organization in today's Managed Care Industry. Our innovative Case Management Department provides patients with opportunities and choices in their medical care. We activate a support system for patients and their families helping to guide members through choices in selecting

healthcare services, providers and procedures. The Case Management team provides individualized care to members during their hospitalization and offers support for their discharge needs. We attempt to identify barriers that members may face, so that they may be overcome. Our primary goal is to

build a trustworthy relationship with our members to ensure a pleasant stay throughout their hospitalization.

Body Mass Index: What it Means to you

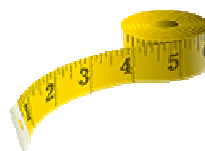
Body Mass Index is the measure of one's weight in relation to height. This test is used by researchers and doctors to determine whether someone is overweight or underweight. A good body mass index (BMI) score is between 18.5 and 24.9.

Your BMI is a good indicator of total body fat, which is related to the risk of disease and death. It

is not perfect, however. A negative aspect to the body mass index is that it does not distinguish between muscle mass and fat mass. It also does not take into account the person's bone density and body structure. Therefore, a person with above average

lean muscle would have a high BMI result. Based on current BMI standards, this individual would be considered overweight or obese.

Questions? Ask your doctor about your BMI and how it relates to your health.



St. Vincent IPA

17215 Studebaker Rd.
Cerritos, Ca. 90703

Phone: 800-255-5053
Fax: 562-207-6508
E-mail: cvidea@pdtrust.com

www.stvincentipa.com



*Together, we will achieve the
extraordinary*

We are an Independent Practice Association (IPA) comprised of over 90 primary care physicians and more than 140 specialists located throughout the Greater Los Angeles area. All of our doctors are in private practice and enjoy the benefits of independence. We are dedicated to quality care and excellent customer service when it matters most. We are affiliated with St. Vincent Medical Center and California Hospital. St. Vincent IPA has been serving the community for over a decade and providing prompt, quality medical services to all of its patients. Whether you are in need of a check up, or you need the care of a specialist, St. Vincent IPA can provide the help and guidance that you need. We work with all of the major commercial health plans, including: Aetna, Anthem Blue Cross, Blue Shield, Cigna, Health Net and PacifiCare. For our Senior Population, our insurance carriers include: SCAN Health Plan, Health Net, Secure Horizons, EverCare and Blue Cross.

If you would like more information about our services or would like assistance selecting or switching to one of our quality physicians, please contact our member service department at (888) 255-5053. You can also visit our website at www.stvincentipa.com.

MD NEWS AND UPDATES

As part of SCAN Health Plan's (SCAN) ongoing efforts to develop and improve their quality based initiatives, St. Vincent IPA PCPs who currently have SCAN membership, were recently invited to participate in a Geriatric Assessment Program (GAP). As part of the Program, physicians were provided a Diagnosis Evaluation Report for each patient and instructed to contact members and schedule them to be assessed. Each clinician was asked to make the diagnosis and accurately document the conditions in the medical records. Submission of encounter data was also required. We'd like to extend our thanks to those providers who were trained at last



year's PCP Surplus Distribution meetings for this Program and who then assessed the patients for the GAP. We, at St. Vincent IPA, want to ensure that our providers are provided with the necessary tools needed to comply with CMS guidelines and positively impact your risk

adjustment scores. We will continue to assist you in every way possible by giving you information and updates on various documentation and coding initiatives offered by our contracted Plan partners.

Again, thank you for your participation and continued partnership with St. Vincent IPA.