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Quality Corner

Controlling High Blood Pressure CQI Project Results Exceed NCQA Benchmark!

According to the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) *State of Managed Care Quality*, approximately 50 million Americans have high blood pressure. National data suggests that only about 27% of persons with hypertension actually have their blood pressure controlled within the normal range. The NCQA's aggregate data for Commercial

managed care members results show that only 39% of members with hypertension currently have the condition adequately controlled.

The CCHN Quality Management staff recently completed a medical record audit of adults ages 46 – 85 with a diagnosis of hypertension who were seen during the period of July 2000 – July 2001. The objective was to assess whether blood pressure was controlled for patients seen at our Community Clinics. To deter-

mine whether the patient's blood pressure is adequately controlled, the reading from the most recent visit in the measurement year was used. Both the systolic and the diastolic BP must be under the threshold 140/90.

We are pleased to report the Network Score for the hypertension CQI project was 49% of the patients with hypertension had their condition adequately controlled. This is above the NCQA benchmark of 39%.

Mark Your Calendar!



There are several events coming up in the next couple of months that you should be aware of:

April 1-7 is National

Public Health Week. The theme for 2002 is "Healthy People in Healthy Communities." Visit <http://www.apha.org/news/press/nphw.htm> for more information including the 2002 National Public Health Week Planning Guide.

May 11-16, Seattle Washington hosts "Emerging Health Information Solutions Conference - Creating the Pathway to Electronic Health Care." Visit www.tepr.com for more information.

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A Little Fun For Our Clinicians and Closet Clinicians!

Flex your mental muscle and practice a little medicine that requires no malpractice insurance.

ER Sim is an online emergency room simulator. It delivers fun, interactive medical game experiences on the internet. So, slip on the scrubs and snap on the gloves. Its time to diagnose patients in ER Sim!

www.ersim.com

Dental Safety Net Update

Dr. Francisco Ramos-Gomez, who conducted a training course for the Oral Health Safety Net (OHSN) in November entitled "Early Childhood Caries Prevention in Primary Care", is returning after rave reviews to present a course limited to Dentist. The purpose of the training is to increase the comfort level of the dentist in working with small children under the age of five. Based on the results of the survey of dentist in the Safety Net, areas identified to be included in the update are: behavior and management techniques, oral diagnosis, prevention, pulp

therapy and the Atlas of Pediatric Dentistry Overview. The Atlas of Pediatric Dentistry Overview, from the University of Washington, is an interactive computer accessible complete book of pediatric dentistry with 3500 pages and 2500 photos, radiographs, images, etc -- with quizzes, lab manuals, photo banks, and a scrollable index. "Update on Pediatric Dentistry" by Dr. Ramos-Gomez is a two-part course with lecture and interactive computer program held on Friday, April 12 from 2-5 pm, and Saturday April 13 from 9 am to noon. Food and beverages will be provided. The San

Diego County Children and Families Commission has graciously funded this event. Continuing Education Credits are offered in cooperation with Scripps Dental Education. This course is limited to 10 dentists. Please call Betty Pate at (619) 265-2100 ext. 315 or email at bpate@ccc-sd.org for reservations.

Early intervention phase of the OHSN began in Children's Dental Health Month (February 26th) at Operation Samahan in

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This Just In!



The Medi-Cal Policy Institute reports that the

Governor has recently proposed a package of current and upcoming fiscal year spending cuts totaling \$5.2 billion. As the second-largest component of the state General Fund, the Medi-Cal program will undoubtedly be im-

pacted by these budget cuts.

Two new publications from the Medi-Cal Policy Institute address this issue. *The Medi-Cal Budget: Cost Drivers and Policy Considerations* provides an overview of the Medi-Cal budget and its cost drivers, and discusses the four elements that shape Medi-Cal spending: eligibility/enrollment, bene-

fits, service use, and provider rates.

The Impact of the Proposed 2002-03 Budget on Medi-Cal and Healthy Families provides a summary of the specific program changes proposed by the Governor.

For more information, visit the Medi-Cal Policy Institute Web site at: <http://www.medi-cal.org/>



CMS Quality Conference This Month!

This is a reminder to sign up for the annual CMS Quality Conference, which will be on April 18th in San Diego. CEUs (Continuing Education Units) are available (4.5 units for the day long session).

The Registration Form and Agenda can be found at the following web site:

<http://www.iceforhealth.org/library/default.asp?CurrentCategoryID=93#category93>





Dental Safety Net Update, (Cont.)

National City. Twenty-Four Children under the age of five were screened and 22 received fluoride varnish. The screening and fluoride varnish were made possible with collaboration from Health Steps of San Ysidro Health Center, Southwestern College Dental Hygiene Program, San Diego County Dental Society and Dr. Waiel Y. Puturs, D.D.S.

March 21 the second mobile

van dental screening and fluoride varnish was completed at Imperial Beach Health Center in collaboration with Health Steps of San Ysidro Health Center and Dr. Sanvictores of Comprehensive Health Center. Sixteen children received fluoride varnish, screening, oral health education and referral to a dental clinic.

April 2 at Mountain Health

and Community Services the third early intervention mobile van screening and fluoride varnish is scheduled Tuesday from 9 am to 4 pm. Call Kimberly Shepherd or Judy Davis at (619) 337-0028 for more information or to schedule an appointment for a child under the age of five.

Mountain Health is located at 3115 Highway 94 in Campo, CA.



Message Linx Has Changed Their Name!

Message Linx is proud to announce that on January 1, 2002 they changed their name to **Med-ConnectUSA**. In addition, their administrative office number has changed to **619-297-4000**. Please make note of this for your records. All other phone numbers and fax numbers will remain the same and any correspondences you may receive from Message Linx will reflect their new name.

The reason for the name change was so they could be better identified for what they do—provide **medical only** answering services. While most other answering services provide service for plumbers, electricians, tow companies and other non-medical clients, they only provide answering services for medically related offices. This ensures that our pa-

tients/clients will always receive the same quality service and never be put on hold while operators take a call that is non-medically related.

Message Linx has not been sold, and you will still be talking to the same managers, operators and other staff that you have been accustomed to talking with.

Here are just few important reminders to make your answering service experience hassle free:

- Let them know if your office will not be open for the day.
- Let them know when your office will be in late or leaving early.
- When you call patients prior

to the office opening or during lunch, advise them of your hours and when they should return your call.

- Remove phones from forwarding promptly when opening.
- Post a memo in your waiting area about when to call. Many of the calls the answering service receives after hours are not emergencies. They suggest posting a memo in your waiting area explaining what problems would require an after hours call and which problems should wait for office hours. They also suggest that the memo should state what information the answering service needs to complete their call and that it is important to give a number that they will be at for at least 30 minutes.



SB1413 Attempts Sweeping Overhaul of PPS



The California Primary Care Association has been working diligently with our allies to amend the most problematic components of the new Prospective Payment System. Senate Bill 1413, sponsored by Senator Chesebro, is a sweeping attempt to rework PPS. Highlights include:

- 1) Clarification that clinics do not need to elect between cost-based reimbursement and “at risk” contracting in order to retain risk pool surpluses.
- 2) An effort to move away from the Medicare Economic Index (averaging 2.2% for each of the past 6 years) toward the California CPI-U (averaging 3.1%).
- 3) Allows for a scope of service change if currently provided services change their type, intensity, duration, and/or amount of service being provided. Includes costs of new services even if they do not require a face-to-face encounter with a provider (such as pharmacy or lab)
- 4) Increases the number of times a clinic can request a rate change from one time per year.
- 5) Defines an FQHC/RHC “visit” to include medical doctor, osteopath, podiatrist, dentist, optometrist, and chiropractor, as well as a 4-hour day of adult day health care.
- 6) Clarifies the circumstances in which multiple visits on the same day are payable
- 7) Allows carve-out of dental, pharmacy, and/or immunizations to be reimbursed instead through Title XIX programs as an alternative to discontinuing them.
- 8) Provides for retroactivity of rate increases to the date a scope of service change application was submitted. Rate decreases would not be retroactive.

According to CPCA’s Regina Boyle, the legislation has a number of strong supporters, giving it a good chance of success. However, we are early in the process, so stay tuned! Full text of this important legislation can be found on CPCA’s website at CPCA.org

Footnote: Regina Boyle’s analysis of SB 1413 contributed significantly to this article.

Council Connections’ Condom Prices Are Catching On!



Ansell is a nationally recognized condom manufacturer and the makers of Lifestyle® condoms. They have made incredible pricing available to those that Council Connections qualifies as a non-profit organization.

Here’s how this great deal works:

- Call Council Connections at 800-640-1662, x305 for a product list or visit our online store at www.councilconnections.com to view a list of the products for sale.
- Since organizations must be qualified as non-profit, the prices cannot be listed on our web site, so you MUST call for pricing and ordering.
- There is a \$125 minimum order.
- Shipping is free on orders over \$200.
- You may pay by check or credit card.
- Your order will be placed when

payment is received.

If your organization provides condoms to the public, you owe it to yourself to take advantage of this tremendous offer. On a recent price comparison done for a member clinic, it was shown that they could save 26% by using this contract! Call a Council Connections representative today to see how you can save a significant amount of money on Lifestyle® condoms at 800-640-1662, x305.