



HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

A Publication for Hometown Health's Senior Care Plus Members

Senior Care Plus 

SUMMER 2018

UNDERSTANDING THE OPIOID CRISIS

Dr. Richard Rosen Explains What It Means To Senior Care Plus Members

What is the crisis?

For those of our members who may not be fully aware, there is a national opioid drug abuse crisis. This crisis affects us personally in northern Nevada. This has resulted in a rapidly escalating drug overdose death rate. Examples of opioids include Oxycontin, Norco, Morphine, hydrocodone, Tramadol, codeine, and Duragesic (fentanyl).

In the United States ⁽¹⁾:

- 124 people die every day from a drug overdose, resulting in more than 45,000 deaths yearly
- 11.5 million people have personally misused narcotic medication
- More than 2 million people have an opioid use disorder
- \$504 Billion – the economic cost to the U.S. as a result.

How did this crisis happen?

Prior to 1980, narcotic pain medication was used to treat cancer and trauma-related pain. Between 1980 and 1990, there was a growing idea that providers were hesitant to treat their patient's pain. Beginning in 1990, the pharmaceutical industry, along with pain management professionals, began pressuring providers to prescribe more pain medication. They even suggested there was no evidence that narcotics were addictive. Legal action against providers was threatened for not prescribing more pain medication. As a result, providers prescribed narcotics more freely, more often, and for more reasons, including for less severe pain.



What do we know about the opioid crisis?

Almost one-third of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them. Approximately ten percent of opioid users will develop an opioid use disorder. About five percent of patients who misuse prescription opioids will transition to heroin. Opioid overdoses have increased by over thirty percent from 2016 to 2017, and continue to rise.

How does this crisis affect Hometown Health and Senior Care Plus members?

As a result of this public health crisis, federal and state governments have embarked on an aggressive strategy to address the crisis. These include improving access to recovery treatment services and promoting the use of overdose-reversing drugs. There is also a focus on improving public health education and increasing research on pain and addiction. Most importantly,

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MANAGE YOUR HEALTH WITH PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS

You Don't Have To Be Sick To See A Doctor!

The idea of 'managing your health' or 'staying healthy' often translates to eating healthy and regular exercise, while going to the doctor is associated with being sick. This is not true! In fact, visiting the doctor regularly for preventive care is an important part of staying healthy. Regular screenings are important; the earlier a doctor can diagnose and treat a condition, the easier and more effective treatment generally is. The following is a list of the preventive screenings recommended by the US Preventive Services Task Force:

Annual Wellness Exams:

Your annual wellness exam is an opportunity to discuss your current health concerns, your health history and any questions you might have. Your provider may ask or counsel you about your lifestyle choices such as drinking, smoking, nutrition, or physical activity. Your provider may also discuss important issues with you such as fall prevention, mental health, and bladder control. This is also the opportunity to get your annual screenings completed.



Colonoscopy:

A colonoscopy screens for colon polyps, tumors, and areas of inflammation or bleeding in the inner lining of your large intestine. During this procedure, the doctor removes any abnormal tissue. This screening enables doctors to identify possible problems very early on and can significantly reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. It is recommended that men and women age 50 to 74 have a colonoscopy every ten years. Earlier and more frequent screenings may be needed, based on a family history of colorectal cancer.

Mammogram:

A mammogram is an early detection and diagnostic tool for breast cancer. It is an x-ray picture of the breast that screens for tumors or deposits of calcium that can form in the tissue. These exams are important because many forms of breast cancer are much more treatable if detected early. It is recommended that screenings start for women around the age of 40, depending on risk and health history.

Bone Density:

A bone density test screens for osteoporosis (the loss of bone mass), which is most common in older women. It uses X-rays to measure how much calcium and other bone minerals are present in a segment of bone. Screenings are recommended for men and women over the age of 65, unless you experience a fracture, or have a higher risk due to family history.

Vaccines:

Vaccines are especially important for older adults. As you get older, your immune system weakens, and it can be more difficult to fight off infections. As a result, you're more likely to get diseases like the flu, pneumonia, and shingles, and to have complications that can lead to long-term illness, hospitalization, and even death. Important vaccines to have include:



- **Influenza:** Influenza vaccines are recommended each year from October to March. The earlier you get this vaccine, the less likely you are to catch the flu.
- **Pneumococcal:** There are two different pneumococcal vaccines that are recommended once you turn 65. You should get 1 dose of PCV13 and one dose of PCV23 at least one year apart. If you have other chronic health conditions, your primary care provider may recommend that you start this series sooner.
- **Shingles:** There are 2 types of zoster vaccine. You should get 2 doses of RZV at age 50 years or older (preferred), or 1 dose of ZVL at age 60 years or older, even if you had shingles before.

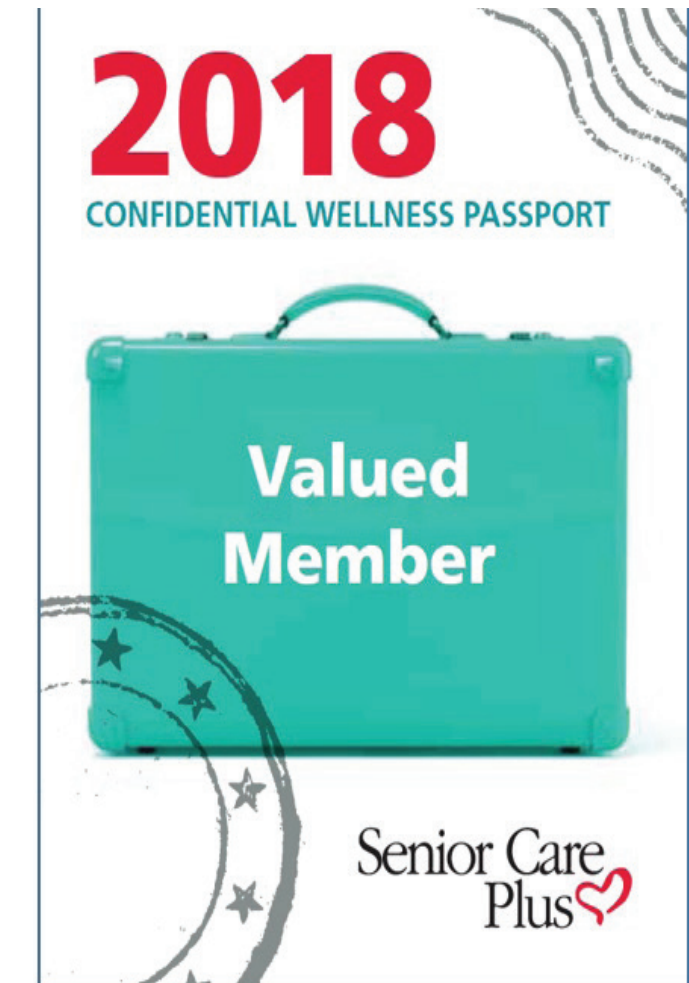
Diabetes Annual Screenings:

Hemoglobin A1c: An A1c lab test shows how well you are controlling your blood sugar levels over a 3-6 month period. Most people with diabetes should generally aim for an A1C result of less than 7%. Some people may have a higher recommended target. Your doctor will help decide what your target should be. Higher A1C numbers generally means that your blood sugar is higher, and that you may be more likely to have complications from your diabetes.

Retinal Eye Exam: An eye doctor should check your eyes every year to screen for retinopathy; a type of damage that can result from diabetes. If you have eye problems because of diabetes, you will probably see your eye doctor more often than once yearly.

Nephropathy (Kidney) Screening: Once a year, you should have a urine test that looks for a protein called albumin. Your doctor will also have you take a blood test every year that measures how well your kidneys work.

Foot Exam: Your provider should check the pulses in your feet and your reflexes at least once a year. Your doctor should also look



for calluses, infections, sores, and for loss of feeling anywhere in your feet (peripheral neuropathy).

Put Your Wellness Passport To Work For You!

We are almost half way through the year. Have you started stamping your Wellness Passport with these important screenings? Senior Care Plus wants you use this very important tool to help stay healthy and manage your care.

Believe it or not, Senior Care Plus WANTS you to use your benefits! We WANT you to stay healthy, out of the hospital, and in the comfort of your own home. That means regular visits with a medical professional, completing recommended preventive screenings, and having those important conversations with your provider.



WELCOME TO THE CLUB!

Senior Care Plus Club is a monthly gathering of Senior Care Plus members to mix and mingle and have fun! As a valued Senior Care Plus member we invite you to join us for activities, health and wellness information, and an all-around good time!

Since January, Club members have been treated to a movie and popcorn, a healthy cooking demonstration, wine and chocolate and so much more.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming Senior Care Plus events:

Senior Care Plus Club Reno Meeting

"Fun Things to Do This Summer!"

When: Wednesday, May 9 — 11:00am – 1:00pm

Where: Hometown Health Building
10315 Professional Circle, Reno, NV 89521

Minden / Gardnerville Meeting

"Health & Fitness Day"

When: Wednesday, May 30 — 11:00am - 1:00pm

Where: Minden Park, 1601 6th St., Minden NV 89432

RSVP for either event by calling 775-982-3191 or visit the website at SeniorCarePlus.com and click on Senior Care Plus Club Events.



Senior Care Plus Club



SENIOR CARE PLUS CLUB IN FALLON!



In March, the Senior Care Plus Club went on the road to Fallon!





BLADDER CONTROL ISSUES ARE TREATABLE

Don't Be Embarrassed —Talk To Your Doctor!



Question: Do you wear boxers or briefs?
Answer: It Depends! Ha, Ha, Ha, but Urinary Incontinence is not a laughing matter for those of us that have to deal with it. Bladder control problems can be embarrassing, but understanding what causes incontinence can improve your chances of getting it under control.

What is urinary incontinence? People of all ages can have difficulty controlling their bladders, men and women. Urinary incontinence occurs when the muscles in the bladder that control the flow of urine contract or relax involuntarily.

Is there more than one type of urinary incontinence? There are several different types:

- Stress incontinence is when the bladder leaks small amounts of urine as a result of physical stress or pressure on the muscles supporting the bladder caused by coughing, sneezing, laughing, lifting or any sudden physical exercise such as running or jumping.
- Urge incontinence is the inability to control a strong urge to go without advance warning limiting the time needed to get to the bathroom.
- Overflow incontinence occurs when the bladder does not empty properly. As a result, over time, large quantities of urine are stored, causing the bladder to overflow (this is more common in men and is often the result of an enlarged prostate blocking the bladder opening.)

Are there any tests that can determine the cause and type of incontinence? Your doctor may have you track your fluid intake and output in a Bladder Diary. A urinalysis can be checked for infection, traces of blood, or other abnormalities. Blood tests can look for chemicals and substance that may relate to contributing causes. Other testing may be an ultrasound, cystogram or post voiding residual measurement.

How is urinary incontinence treated? Exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles or retraining the bladder to hold on for longer. Medication can relieve and control the troublesome symptoms. If there is an infection an antibiotic is used. Surgery can repair weakened muscles or remove blockage. Special products such as pants, pads, collection devices, and chair and bed protection may be needed if the problem cannot be controlled.

What can I do to help control incontinence? Watch your weight, practice pelvic floor exercises, eat plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and fiber to prevent constipation. Most importantly, TALK to your doctor regarding incontinence issues!



ADVANCE DIRECTIVES WORKSHOPS

Planning now for your future care just makes sense!

Have you ever thought about the healthcare treatment and care you would want if you were unable to speak for yourself? Have you written down what type of care you would want if you were suddenly unable to communicate because of a serious illness or injury? Advance directives are your statement of:

- Whom you want to make healthcare decisions for you when you can't make them
- The kind of medical treatment you want or don't want
- How comfortable you want to be
- How you want people to treat you
- What you want your loved ones to know



Upcoming Advanced Directive Workshops at Renown Regional Medical Center:

05/11/2018

05/17/2018

06/04/2018

06/08/2018

06/12/2018

06/21/2018

Workshop times vary, call 775-982-7787 or visit Renown.org to learn more.

UNDERSTANDING THE OPIOID CRISIS

Opioid Crisis, Continued from page 1

states are taking action to improve standards for prescribing and monitoring pain medication. Nevada has quickly responded to this mandate with the passing of Assembly Bill AB474. This bill put into place new regulations regarding prescribing guidelines. These include new rules on how our providers screen patients before prescribing pain medications and assess risk for misuse. There are also rules regarding medical records keeping which includes proof of benefit, informed consent, tracking of prescriptions, and possible random drug screenings.

Please understand that these new regulations have put new and intrusive barriers between providers and patients. This can make it appear that your provider is being unfairly judgmental and insensitive, when in fact they are being compliant with new regulations. These new regulations are anticipated to help reduce addiction, misuse, and overdose related deaths.

~ Richard Rosen, M.D. is Hometown Health / Senior Care Plus Medical Director.

Legend: [1] National Institute on Drug Abuse; revised 3-18 HHS. GOV/OPIOIDS/ABOUT THE EPIDEMIC

Senior Care Plus Club

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website at SeniorCarePlus.com and click on Senior Care Plus
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May 12 is Senior Care Plus Night At Aces!

Show Your Senior Care Plus Card and receive 1/2 off select tickets!

Visit the box office at Greater Nevada Field to claim your
discount!



A Publication for
Hometown Health's
Senior Care Plus
Members

SUMMER 2018

NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE
TELEPHONE HOURS!
7:00am - 8:00pm
7 Days A Week!
775-982-3112

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

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Senior Care
Plus 

A Medicare Advantage Plan from Hometown Health.
10315 Professional Circle
Reno, NV 89521

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