

This June, celebrating men's health



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As promised in my last article, this month we will be discussing men's health.

Upon researching this topic, I discovered that in 1994, Congress passed a bill declaring the week leading up to Father's Day (in 2020, June 15-21), as Men's Health Week. The purpose of this week is to heighten awareness about health issues affecting boys and men, and to encourage all males to take some time to consider their health.

According to a national survey conducted by the Cleveland Clinic, approximately two-thirds of men tend to wait as long as possible before seeing their doctor; 72 percent would rather do household chores, like

cleaning the bathroom or mowing the lawn; and 65 percent prefer to self-diagnose. These are a few highlights that I found interesting from the survey, which was released in 2019.

Building on that information, I have a few questions for all the men out there. Have you been to the doctor lately? If not, why? Are you uncomfortable talking about yourself? Are you afraid of what you'll hear? Are you in denial that your health can change over time? Please know, whatever the reason is, you are important, and your family needs you around. So, it's time to put those reasons aside.

Everyone should live a long, happy and healthy life. Scheduling regular check-ups and talking to your doctor is an easy way to ensure you're on the right path for success.

To help you get started, the Plan has many benefits that are paid at 100 percent when you see a PPO provider.

In 2020, we cover the following:

- Routine physical exam—one annually, age 22 or older
- Chest X-ray—one annually
- Basic and comprehensive metabolic panel blood test—one annually
- Biometric screening—one annually
- Colorectal cancer screening for adults age 50 to 75
- Complete blood count—one annually
- Electrocardiogram—one annually
- General health panel blood test—one annually
- High blood pressure screening—as recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force
- Prostate specific antigen test—one annually for men age 40 and older

Mind and body

Unfortunately, the last few months have been a stressful time around our nation for both men and women. Situ-

ations that are out of our control have been prevalent. According to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), nearly one in 10 men reported experiencing some form of depression or anxiety, but less than half sought treatment. At times, we may think of depression as a sign of weakness, and we avoid talking about it because we feel embarrassed or ashamed. Please do not let these feelings stand in the way of seeking help.

Depression may make you feel sad, lose interest in activities that you once enjoyed, pull away from people or have minimal energy. You may even have a hard time recognizing the symptoms, because it can also cause anger and irritability. Remember, mental and emotional well-being are essential to overall health. Positive mental health allows you to realize your full potential, cope with stresses of life and work productively.

If you think you may suffer from depression or anxiety, we are here to help.

If you are enrolled in the High Option Plan, Optum® is a recognized leader specializing in providing behavioral health care and substance use services. With Optum, members have access to more than 203,000 in-network clinicians and 3,000 in-network facilities. You can locate an in-network provider 24 hours a day, seven days a week by either using our online provider locator or calling Optum's toll-free number at 877-468-1016.

If you are enrolled in the CDHP or Value Option Plan, you can call 855-511-1893 to locate an in-network clinician who can best meet your needs. The Cigna HealthCare OAP Network includes more than 264,000 mental health clinicians and 5,600 mental health facilities to provide quality mental health and substance abuse services.

Don't wait; June is Men's Health Month. Schedule an appointment today.

There also are many other ways we can take better care of ourselves, including eating healthier, exercising more, wearing sunscreen, reducing stress or quitting a nicotine habit (we can help with that, too). I understand that it can be overwhelming, so take one small step at a time. Before you know it, all the little steps will add up to a healthier you.

This is only a summary of some of the features of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Detailed information on the benefits for the NALC Health Benefit Plan can be found in the official 2020 brochure (RI 71-009). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations and exclusions set forth in the official brochure.