



True to Your Health: A Quarterly Wellness Bulletin for Our APS Members

Spring 2021

Spring brings good change

After what seems like an especially long winter, spring has returned. It's a season of regrowth and new beginnings, and I'm pleased to welcome our many new health plan members. We connect our members to the services, programs, and benefits they need to be as healthy as possible – no matter what their state of health is.

If you have a condition like asthma, coronary artery disease, or diabetes, our Care Management team can provide personal support to help you manage it. If you're interested in creating some new healthy habits, such as a mindfulness practice or better nutrition, we have a program for that! Read about one of our True You wellness programs, Better You, on page 3. And we're happy to assist you with anything in between.

I have exciting news to share with you. We will be changing owner-investor partners this year. We are joining Bright HealthCare, a national insurer with more than 500,000 members that offers health coverage in more than 13 states. While our ownership structure is changing, nothing will change for you. You'll continue to receive the same kind of compassionate, quality care and support as always. And we will continue to be called True Health New Mexico.

For us, joining Bright HealthCare means a renewed investment in member health, increased growth opportunities, and ultimately, more affordable health coverage options for New Mexicans.

Thank you for being a True Health New Mexico member.

Mark Epstein, MD, MBA
President and CEO



Your new-member checklist

Even if you've been our member for a while, it can be hard to keep track of everything you need to know. This checklist can help.

- **ID card.** If you didn't receive your ID card within 15 days of your coverage effective date, or if you lost it, call Customer Service at **1-877-210-8339** or email **idcard@truehealthnewmexico.com**.
- **Primary care provider (PCP).** Make sure your PCP is in-network or find one who is. Visit **truehealthnewmexico.com**. Under *Find a Doctor* near the top of the page, select *Online Provider Search Tool*.
- **Member portal.** At **truehealthnewmexico.com/members**, select the "LOG IN" link to register and log in. The portal is a gateway to many TRUE resources, programs, and services; plan documents; and claims status.
- **Health risk assessment (HRA).** Log in to the portal and take your HRA via Better You, our new wellness platform. With the HRA, you can pinpoint areas where you're doing well and where you can improve.
- **Care management.** Our care management team can help you manage chronic or complex medical conditions, guide you to the most appropriate services, and more. Visit **truehealthnewmexico.com/care-management**.
- **Wellness programs.** Interested in starting a mindfulness program, stepping up your fitness level, or improving your eating habits? Our True You programs are for you! Visit **truehealthnewmexico.com/truemyou-program**.

No out-of-pocket cost for COVID-19-related healthcare

You do not have to pay any copay, deductible, or coinsurance for COVID-19 testing, treatment, or vaccination. All of these services are covered under your True Health New Mexico plan. Learn more at truehealthnewmexico.com/covid-19. There you'll also find current information on the vaccine, in-network testing locations, and more.

Colorectal cancer: Your questions answered

Not counting skin cancer, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the U.S. for both men and women. But as common as it is, how much do you know about it?

Here are answers to four frequent questions about colorectal cancer. What you learn might save your life:

Q: How does colorectal cancer develop?

A: Colorectal cancers usually begin as noncancerous growths called polyps. It can take years before polyps turn into cancer.

Q: Who's most at risk?

A: About 90% of all cases of the disease occur in people 50 and older. Risk rises with age. Your chance of developing colorectal cancer also increases if you have an inflammatory bowel disease, such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis; a personal or family history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer, or a rare inherited condition, such as Lynch syndrome.

Being overweight, not getting enough exercise, and eating a diet that's high in red meat may also raise your risk.

Q: What symptoms should I look for?

A: Warning signs of colorectal cancer include:

- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea or constipation.
- Bright red or very dark blood in your stool.
- Stools that look narrower or thinner than normal.
- Stomach discomfort, such as frequent gas pain, bloating, and cramps.
- Unexplained weight loss.

Symptoms often appear only after colorectal cancer has spread and is more difficult to treat. That's why getting screened for the disease is so important.

Q: What should I know about screening?

A: Screening can find colorectal cancer early, when treatment often works best. Regular screening can also often prevent colorectal cancer by finding and removing polyps before they become cancerous.

Screenings for colorectal cancer can be divided into two main groups: Stool-based tests and visual exams.

Stool-based tests look at your stool for possible signs of polyps—growths that sometimes turn cancerous—or for colorectal cancer itself. You collect samples of your stool that are then sent to a lab for analysis. These tests don't require the kind of colon preparation needed for a colonoscopy. But you need to do them more often—sometimes every year. Any abnormalities found on stool-based tests require follow-up with a colonoscopy.

The most common **visual exam** is a colonoscopy where a doctor uses a camera on the end of the scope to look for precancerous polyps or signs of cancer.

But no matter which you choose, the most important thing is to get tested. The American Cancer Society advises starting screening at age 45 for most people. Talk with your doctor about which test is right for you and when—and how often—to get screened.

Sources: American Cancer Society; American Society of Clinical Oncologists; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Challenge yourself and earn rewards with Better You

It's exciting to commit to a healthier life. But it also can be daunting if you don't know where to begin. **Better You** can help.

Better You is our new online wellness program. It offers more than 400 activities for physical activity; nutrition; social, emotional, and financial health; and purpose. When you complete challenges, screenings, and university courses, you'll earn points. Redeem your points for gift cards to retailers like **Target, The Home Depot, Walmart, Whole Foods**, and others.

Remember, when you participate in Better You activities, you can also log those points in the overarching **APS Employee Wellness Incentive Program** for additional rewards to local businesses.

Better You is available at no cost to you and your covered dependents who are at least 18 years old. Go to truehealthnewmexico.com/better-you, learn more, and get started today!

Help is available in many languages

Our Customer Service Center has Spanish- and Navajo-speaking representatives to help callers. We also offer translation and interpretation services for more than 200 other languages. If you would like to use these services, please call Customer Service at **1-877-210-8339**. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Your telehealth options

Telehealth (also called telemedicine or virtual care) allows you to seek non-emergency services from an in-network provider who can treat and diagnosis medical conditions, mental disorders, and other conditions without an in-person office visit, urgent care visit, or emergency care visit.

Your regular provider(s) may be offering telehealth visits as a safe option for receiving non-emergency care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Contact your provider(s) to learn if telehealth visits are an option for you. True Health New Mexico covers these visits at the same benefit level as in-person visits.

You can also call our **Care Connect Nurse Advice Line** 24/7 at **1-844-308-2552**. Experienced registered nurses will talk with you about your symptoms and situation. If appropriate, the nurse will refer you to our Virtual Clinic for a telephone consultation with a board-certified, in-network MDLIVE® doctor.

Your mental health is important, too. If you already have a behavioral health provider, ask about telehealth options.

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline offers 24/7 support through online chat at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>. You also can call the Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**.
- If you are having a mental health crisis, you can receive 24/7 support via the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line at **1-855-662-7474**.

Numbers you need to know

- Customer Service: 1-877-210-8339 or aps@truehealthnewmexico.com
- Care Connect Nurse Advice Line: 1-844-308-2552
- Express Scripts®, your pharmacy benefit manager: 1-866-563-9297

Visit our site just for Albuquerque Public Schools members

truehealthnewmexico.com/aps

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Why masks and more still matter

Once you've received your COVID-19 vaccine, you can take off your mask and stop social distancing, right?

Not quite yet. Health experts are urging that everyone continue taking precautions not to spread the virus, even after they've received their shots.

Why is that? It may take a while before everyone has had a chance to get a vaccine. In the meantime, people are still vulnerable to the virus. And because no vaccine is 100% effective, you may still be at risk too. So we need to continue using every tool we have to fight the spread.

When can I stop wearing a mask?

We don't know enough about the vaccine or the virus yet to predict when it'll be safe to stop wearing a mask or social distancing. But at least two things need to happen first: A large number of Americans need to get the shot, and we need to be sure the vaccine offers long-term protection. Once those things happen, we may begin to see herd immunity.

Getting to herd immunity

Herd immunity occurs when enough people are protected against a virus that it's unlikely to spread widely anymore.

It's not yet clear how many people will need to be vaccinated before we reach herd immunity. But once we do, we should be able to stop wearing masks and socially distancing. Until then, help keep your community safe by masking up and staying 6 feet from others.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Johns Hopkins University

