

Belgrade Health Center

HEALTH BEAT



News from the Belgrade Regional Health Center

Winter 2011



To Our Patients:

I am truly pleased to be able to address you from the pages of our first Belgrade Regional Health Center Newsletter. It was suggested to me by a staff member that this might be a good venue in which to explain to you what we mean by “our grant” and “federally-qualified health center,” terms that you hear at least annually when we ask you to fill out paperwork. Many of you ask why we need such detailed information about income levels, race, ethnic origin, and now preferred language. Our answer is always, “we need it for our grant because we are a federally-qualified health center.”

We are a federally-qualified health center (FQHC) that is designated a Community Health Center. We, along with Community Health Centers nationwide, were established to bring primary health care to the underserved/underinsured/uninsured. We serve persons regardless of their ability to pay. We charge many of our patients according to our sliding fee scale (Affordable Care Program) that is based on a patient’s family size and household income. In return for this service, we receive a cash grant from the federal government to help us support our endeavor to bring health care to local residents who otherwise could not afford it.

Belgrade is extremely fortunate to have a local Board of Directors comprised of truly dedicated local residents representing Belgrade and many of the surrounding towns. Some of the members are also patients of the Health Center. They work tirelessly supporting our staff in our effort to deliver to you high quality health care.

I hope this explains to you Community Health Center, FQHC, and local Board of Directors. No matter what terminology is used, our 5 providers, our nurses, front desk staff, and I are all here to be a part of your health care team. We’ve enjoyed serving you over the years and look forward to many more.

Deborah Rocque, Practice Manager



Belgrade Regional Health Center is now accepting new patients. Our caring providers wish you and your family a healthy and happy winter!

Back from left: Megan O’Brien, FNP, Amy Madden, MD, Vickie Chapman, APRN.

Seated: Matt Colaluca, PA, Jessica Hopkins, LCSW

Patient Advisory Committee

This winter, the Belgrade Regional Health Center will be forming a “Patient Advisory Committee.” This is a group of patients and family members of the health center who will advise our health center staff on patient needs to improve how we deliver our care to you. Similar groups occur across the country in a variety of medical settings and have had very positive outcomes.

The Belgrade Regional Health Center is part of the Patient Centered Medical Home pilot with key concepts of working with patients and families for improved practice care. Our staff is excited to work with our patients in this capacity and improve on the services provided in our health center. Keep an eye out for future newsletter updates on what the Patient Advisory Committee is doing.

What is a Patient Centered Medical Home?

For the past year, Belgrade Health Center has been part of a statewide pilot project to transform primary care practices into “medical homes.” The project involves 26 primary care practices around the state that are committed to examining how they deliver healthcare to patients. The goal is to create primary care practices that provide easily accessible, comprehensive, quality healthcare, with a primary focus on the patient’s experience of care.

What does this mean to us at Belgrade Regional Health Center? It means that we have been looking at how we do things here – such as finding out how often we’re able to give you an appointment time when you want it, or how long you have to wait in the office before you’re seen. We’ve also been looking at the quality of the healthcare we deliver – such as knowing how often we’re successful in helping our patients with diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol meet

their goals. We’ve hired a behavioral health consultant to help our patients think about and plan changes they’d like to make that benefit their health. And we’re asking you to help us – so that we can make changes at the health center that are important to you.

We’re excited to be part of this pilot project because it gives us a lens through which we can examine our systems and promote changes that will benefit our patients. We hope our newsletter will keep you informed about how we are working to make Belgrade Health Center your “medical home.”

For more information about the pilot project, please visit: www.mainequalitycounts.org/major-programs/patient-centered-medical-home.html.

There When You Need Us...

One of the difficult realities of getting sick is that it can happen at any time, and it’s not something that we can plan. Sometimes, there’s no doubt that a trip to the Emergency Department is necessary. Most of the time, however, we know we don’t need emergency care but we’re not sure what the best option is. We understand that it can be difficult to know what to do when you don’t feel well, whether it’s early Tuesday morning or late on Saturday night. We want to make sure that you know how to reach us when you need us:

After hours or weekends: Call our office number, 495-3323. We have 24 hour on-call coverage, every day of the week. If you need to be seen when the office is closed, we can help you decide if we should meet you at the office or direct you to the Emergency Department if your condition warrants it.

During the day: Call the office. We keep appointment slots open every day to make sure we can see our patients who want to be seen. Our nurses can also talk to you and help you decide if you need to be seen or if there are strategies you can try at home. Although we can’t always guarantee that you’ll see your primary provider at a same-day visit, our team is ready to care for you whenever you need us.

HEALTHY RECIPE



Splendid Spinach Dip

Per serving: 10 calories, 0gm fat, less than 5mg cholesterol

Ingredients:

- 2 cups plain lowfat yogurt
- 1 package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1/3 cup finely chopped fresh onion
- 2 tablespoons low-calorie mayonnaise
- 1 package instant vegetable soup mix
- Assorted fresh vegetable “dippers”

In a medium bowl, combine yogurt, spinach, onion, mayonnaise, and vegetable soup mix. Mix well. Serve immediately with vegetable dippers or cover and chill to serve later.

Change is never easy

Are you trying to quit smoking? To lose weight? To change your diet so that your blood sugars are lower? We're here to help. In July, our Health Center launched a new service to provide comprehensive care to our patients. Jessica Hopkins, LCSW, began working as a "Behavioral Health Consultant." In this role, Jessica works with each provider to offer patients with physical health conditions and stress the support they need. Rather than a traditional mental health counseling model, visits are brief, lasting 15 to 30 minutes.

Typically patients are seen immediately after visiting with their providers when an issue is identified. The patient can also follow up with Jessica for additional appointments if both agree that is the best treatment approach. The focus of each visit is to identify the most immediate health concerns of the patient and work collaboratively to manage the issue.

This service is open to patients of the health center who would like to talk with someone about problems they are facing related to their health. Many insurance companies, including MaineCare and Medicare, cover the cost of the visit. Check with your insurance provider to see if it is covered. To make an appointment you can call the health center or talk to your provider at your next appointment.



Licensed clinical social worker Jessica Hopkins, left, consults with Megan O'Brien, FNP. All of the Belgrade providers work closely with Jessica to provide behavioral health services to patients.

We're Listening...

Last spring, we asked some of you to help us improve our services by completing a Patient Satisfaction Survey. We received responses from over 300 of you, which was fantastic. As you might suspect, there were many common themes among your responses. We have been working to address many of the concerns that were raised – here is an update on what is happening.



BUSY PHONE LINES: We really don't want you to hear a busy signal when you need to speak with us. We have been in discussions with our phone service provider to see how we can streamline our incoming calls so that we have more capacity to connect with you. We've also made some changes about how we manage our calls, including minimizing "on-hold" time, using voicemail for nursing staff, and tracking the time it takes for us to return urgent and non-urgent phone calls.

PRESCRIPTIONS: With the advent of electronic prescribing by computer and faxing prescriptions to pharmacies have come some issues with prescriptions not arriving at their destinations. We are working with our central office in Waterville to reach out to area pharmacies so that we may improve this system. We want to be sure your prescriptions arrive at their appropriate destination on time. If your prescriptions need to be refilled, you can often call your pharmacy directly to have this refill processed. We will be happy to help you with any prescription refill issues you may have.



BELGRADE REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER

4 Clement Way
Belgrade, ME 04917
(207) 495-3323

www.BelgradeCHC.org

A proud member of
HealthReach Community Health Centers

FIGHT THE FLU IN 2011

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are 3 actions that can be taken to fight the flu.

1 TAKE THE TIME TO GET A FLU VACCINE.

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as your first defense in protecting yourself against the flu virus. The 2010-2011 flu vaccine will protect against:

- Influenza A H3N2 virus
- Influenza B
- The 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.



2 TAKE PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS.

• Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away in the trash after you have used it. ALWAYS wash your hands after you have touched your nose or mouth.



- If you do not have a tissue handy, cough into your arm. DO NOT use your hands to cover your mouth/cough. When children and adults use their hands to cover their coughs, they are highly likely to wind up coating every surface in a room they touch with germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way as well.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people if able. If you or family members are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to seek medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

3 TAKE FLU ANTIVIRAL MEDICATION IF YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER PRESCRIBES IT.

- If you get the flu (influenza), antiviral medication can treat your illness.
- Antiviral medications are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder), and are not available over-the-counter.
- It is very important that antiviral medications be used early (within the first 2 days of symptoms) to treat people who are very sick (such as those who are hospitalized) or people who are sick with flu symptoms and who have increased risk of severe flu illness, such as pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older and people with certain chronic health conditions.



Cold and Flu Symptoms Chart

And don't forget!

Wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands!!!

Cover your mouth/cough with a tissue or arm (then wash your hands again).

Take control and do your part in protecting yourself from the flu.

This health message brought to you by Patricia Fleming, RN

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
fever	rare	characteristic, high (102-104 F); lasts 3-4 days
headache	rare	prominent
general aches, pains	slight	usual; often severe
fatigue, weakness	quite mild	can last up to 2-3 weeks
extreme exhaustion	never	early and prominent
stuffy nose	common	sometimes
sneezing	usual	sometimes
sore throat	common	sometimes
chest discomfort, cough	mild to moderate; hacking cough	common; can become severe