



# KACO CONNECTIONS

## Welcome Note: Richard Martin, MD, FAAFP



### CMO Keystone ACO

Welcome to Keystone Accountable Care Organization’s summer newsletter. Accountable care organizations work with Medicare to provide high-quality, safe, and appropriate care for Medicare beneficiaries.

We are interested in assisting you to enjoy good health, by providing you with pertinent information such as healthy diet, advice on activity and exercise. It is also important to obtain timely and appropriate health screening testing such as colonoscopies, mammograms, and monitoring of blood sugar and cholesterol. We strive to provide the best possible care for all chronic medical problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis, and so on.

We encourage all Medicare beneficiaries to select a primary care physician whom they visit at least once a year to receive an annual wellness exam. This type of visit will help you to get to know your primary care physician and staff, and it will serve as a timely reminder to obtain screening tests and provide for an opportunity to call attention to any healthcare concerns that you may have.

In each of our newsletters we will address common health concerns and present education about prevention, recognition, and treatment when such problems occur. In this newsletter, we would like to begin by discussing a common and annoying problem: urinary tract infections.

Other topics to read about in this issue include:

**Healthy eating.** Your appetite and diet change as you age. A diet higher in fruits and vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables, provides many benefits as we get older. Please see page 3 to learn more.

**How to take control of your health.** Most of us are busy working and raising our family throughout our younger days and sometimes we take our good health for granted. As we get older we need to pay special attention to ourselves in regard to activity and exercise, having regular medical checkups, and being accountable for our own good health and well-being. Please turn to page 8 to learn more about how we can and should remain in charge of our own health.

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### To Contact Medicare

For additional information on accountable care organizations, please contact Medicare at 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227) and ask for the Medicare ACO Department. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You may also visit [www.medicare.gov/acos.html](http://www.medicare.gov/acos.html).

# How does Keystone ACO benefit you?

## What is an ACO?

An accountable care organization (ACO) is a group of physicians, hospitals and other healthcare providers that voluntarily collaborate to provide efficient, high-quality and coordinated care to patients with Medicare Fee-For-Service as their insurance. If these providers reduce costs and improve specified quality metrics in a certain timeframe, they are eligible to receive financial rewards called “shared-savings” from Medicare. It’s important to note that the healthcare providers mentioned above have chosen to join the ACO. Patients who see these providers for their healthcare services have not jointed the ACO, but rather are served by the ACO. Our ACO is the Keystone Accountable Care Organization, LLC., often referred to as KACO. KACO has been in operation since 2013 and now serves over 78,000 Medicare beneficiaries primarily in central and northeastern Pennsylvania and surrounding states (NY, NJ, MD). Our network of healthcare providers includes 9 hospitals, 18 physician group practices and a combination of 3,856 primary care physicians, specialty physicians, certified registered nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.

## What are the goals of the ACO?

The goals of ACOs are nicely summarized in something known as “the triple aim,” which was first articulated by Donald Berwick, MD, former acting CMS administrator. The three aims are (1) improving

the experience of care, (2) improving the health of populations and (3) reducing the costs of healthcare. To achieve “the triple aim,” ACOs require a robust network of primary care physicians to manage the health of a population. Some of the main goals behind ACOs are improved care coordination, enhanced preventive care delivery and the reduction or elimination of duplicative services.

## Do my Medicare benefits change if I’m served by an ACO?

No. Your Medicare benefits and the cost of your coverage are not changed. You still have the right to choose to receive care from any doctor or hospital that accepts Medicare at any time.

In the next several issues of the KACO Newsletter we will continue to educate you on how KACO is working to serve you and help you live a healthier life. This newsletter will feature articles on eating right, exercise, and stress prevention, as well as healthcare tips and strategies to help keep you healthy. KACO looks forward to serving all of your healthcare needs.

Sincerely,

Tony Reed

Chief Administrative Officer—Keystone ACO

## UTI Symptoms

- Cloudy or dark urine, or urine with blood
- Urine with a strong odor
- Frequent need to urinate
- Pain or burning during urination
- Lower abdominal pain
- Fever
- Flank pain

## Additional UTI Symptoms in Elderly

- Confusion
- Listlessness
- Agitation
- Loss of coordination
- Dizziness
- Falls
- Unusual behavioral changes

## UTI Prevention & Treatment

Bladder pressure, burning, going frequently: All of these are signs of a common problem called bladder or urinary tract infection (UTI). These infections are fairly common — and fortunately, if treated quickly, they are rarely serious. If left untreated however, these infections can get into the kidneys or bloodstream and cause more serious illness.

Bladder infections are generally caused by bacteria that enter the urinary bladder from the outside. The skin and mucous membranes on our perineal area are colonized with certain bacteria that, if they remain on the skin, are harmless — but if they enter the bladder they can cause symptoms.

The first step is to recognize symptoms of UTIs as mentioned above. Other symptoms can be lower abdominal pain, fever, flank pain, and sometimes changes in mental status like confusion or listlessness. If the symptoms occur in seniors, you should seek medical attention from your primary care physician, or at a Geisinger Careworks site or similar urgent care center. The sooner you start taking appropriate antibiotics, the more quickly the infections will resolve and your symptoms will go away.

At Keystone Accountable Care Organization, we find that there are a large number of emergency department visits for UTIs. If you recognize the symptoms and seek care early, antibiotics can be started, a urine culture can be obtained, and a long wait in the emergency department can be avoided.

We have put in place a protocol to enable rapid treatment for urinary tract symptoms. The protocol begins, however, with a phone call to your primary care physician.

If you have had a UTI, you know how uncomfortable it can be. In order to avoid future UTIs, good hydration (6 to 8 glasses of water per day), going to the bathroom when you feel the urge (not holding it) and good personal hygiene are all important. If you have had more than one infection recently, you may discuss further strategies for prevention with your primary care physician.



**Grilled Pineapple-Chicken  
Foil Packs by  
Betty Crocker Kitchens submitted  
by Clinical Nutrition**

- Prep time — 20 minutes
- Total time — 40 minutes
- Servings — 4

**Ingredients**

- ½ C pineapple preserves
- 2 Tbsp packed brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts  
(cut into 1½-inch cubes)
- 1 medium green bell pepper  
(cut into 1½-inch cubes)
- 1 C pineapple chunks
- ¼ tsp salt

**Steps**

Heat gas or charcoal grill. In small bowl, stir together pineapple preserves, brown sugar, soy sauce and crushed red pepper.

Cut 4 (24 x 12-inch) sheets of heavy-duty foil. Divide chicken, bell peppers, pineapple chunks and pineapple preserves mixture among foil sheets. Sprinkle with salt. Bring up 2 sides of foil so edges meet. Seal edges, making tight ½-inch fold; fold again, allowing space for heat circulation and expansion. Fold other sides to seal.

Place packets on grill over medium heat. Cover grill; cook 6 minutes. Using tongs, carefully turn packets over, taking care not to puncture foil. Cook 10 to 12 minutes longer or until chicken is no longer pink in center and vegetables are crisp-tender.

**Nutritional Facts**

- Serving Size: 1 Serving
- Calories: 300    Calories from Fat: 35
- Total Fat: 4 g
- Saturated Fat: 1 g
- Trans Fat: 0 g
- Cholesterol: 70 mg
- Sodium: 450 mg
- Total Carbohydrate: 38 g
- Dietary Fiber: 2 g
- Sugars: 31 g

*Grilled Pineapple-Chicken Foil Packs by Betty Crocker Kitchens submitted by Clinical Nutrition*

## Healthy Eating as We Age

As we age, our bodies need fewer calories. Our metabolism naturally slows down, decreasing even more if we become less active. This may make it difficult to maintain a healthy weight. Most women who have an average level of activity need to consume approximately 1,800 calories daily and men with the same activity level about 2,200 daily. Of course, calorie goals should be adjusted to fewer if activity level is sedentary or greater if you tend to be more active. If your goal is to lose weight, try reducing your calorie intake by 500 calories per day. Over the course of a week, this can result in approximately 1 pound per week weight loss.

Aging also affects our digestive system. As we age, the digestive process slows down and the body may not get enough nutrients. While planning appropriate meals, remember to incorporate foods packed with nutrients and drink plenty of fluids without added sugars or caffeine.

Incorporate whole grains into your diet. They are full of fiber and nutrients. Some great choices are brown rice, whole grain cereals (fortified with vitamin B12), and whole wheat bread. Other sources of high-fiber foods include raw fruits and vegetables. These all aid in digestion and are good for your heart! Try adding fruit to a vegetable salad for some more flavor. Strawberries, apples, grapes or any kind of berry are all great options.

Don't forget to include lean proteins such as chicken, fish, lean meats, beans, nuts and eggs. Protein helps maintain our muscles as we age.

Calcium is extremely important for healthy bones. We absorb less calcium from our diet as we age. Make sure to include low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, other low-fat dairy products, as well as dark green leafy vegetables and fortified cereals and fruit juices. Speak with your healthcare professional if you feel you may need vitamin and mineral supplements to meet your needs.

Enjoy food by making healthy choices!

Kim Segiel, RDN, LDN - Clinical Dietitian II

### Stress Management Tips

- Meditate
- Exercise/walk
- Experience nature—get outdoors
- Spend time with friends
- Eat healthy
- Avoid sugar
- Take time to relax
- Practice positive thinking
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Get organized
- Find a hobby
- Volunteer
- Garden
- Stay active
- Set positive goals

## Ask a Provider—How can you best prepare for your medical appointment?

1. Develop a concise list of your concerns and the current status of these concerns. Show this list to a friend or loved one, seeking any revisions.
2. Write or print your best version and share this with the staff who bring you into the exam room.
3. Keep and bring along a list of your current medications with doses and the frequency you take them. Include concerns of side effects or excessive costs.
4. If you have seen another medical practitioner about your problem or for something else, be prepared to share information gained including tests or other procedures you have had done.
5. For many visits, bring a friend or loved one along to hear and record what the medical practitioner decides is best.
6. Prepare to work out a plan of care with the medical practitioners. Be sure you understand and agree with the plan given or that the practitioner adjusts the plan to something you both are satisfied is appropriate.
7. Most practices give you a printed summary of the care plan. Take time to read this and highlight major areas agreed upon.
8. Follow the plan. Be sure to keep a good record of benefits as well as problems you experience.
9. Understand how to best contact the medical office should there be problems prior to any scheduled follow-up visit. Electronic contact through computer portals is becoming an efficient way to contact your practitioner, allowing you to give and receive accurate information.
10. Always keep in mind that you and the team of medical practitioners working with you are working together to make your health the best possible!



James Redka, MD

## Stress Management

All too often we find ourselves dealing with stressful situations, whether they be financial difficulties, declining health or any of the many other reasons that cause us to worry. Though it's not much comfort, know you're not alone. Stress affects everyone differently and while there are many suggestions for stress management, what works for one may not work for another.

It's important to take care of yourself and be sure to eat properly, avoid sugar and get plenty of sleep at night. If possible, carve some time out of your day to explore the outdoors, get some fresh air and sunshine and experience nature. Take advantage of this time to go for a walk or visit with a neighbor or friend. Staying social can help to take your mind off your worries and remind you that you're not alone.

Find a hobby or get involved in a new activity. Games, puzzles or exploring your creativity all require a great deal of concentration which can offer a useful distraction. Staying busy will provide you with a much-needed break to view your issues from another angle. Think positively, and when you try to find solutions, think about what has worked for you in the past. Stay organized and write your thoughts down.

Learn to accept that some things cannot be controlled, but you can learn to be flexible and adapt by dividing larger tasks into smaller ones. Recognize that it's fine to say no to a task or situation that you know may cause you stress and learn not to demand so much of yourself.

Finally, take time for yourself to relax, whether you read, play with your pet, meditate, or just sit and reflect on a positive time or situation. Find what works for you!

**Word Search Stress Management Tips - "Puzzle made at [www.puzzle-maker.com](http://www.puzzle-maker.com)"**

acts of kindness	deep breathing	meditation
biking	exercise	puzzles
camping	gardening	reading
cleaning	golf	volunteer
cooking	healthy eating	walking
crafting	hiking	yoga
dance	laugh	

A H H D A N C E F Q S F R E B T D F  
 C E M E A Z X J L X C C S S B E E H  
 T Z G G A T P U A S R F I I S N E E  
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## Gardening Safety Tips

- \* Work in short sessions.
- \* Ensure work area is free of trip hazards such as hoses, branches or exposed roots.
- \* Avoid standing on ladders, chairs or overturned buckets.
- \* Wear comfortable, stable footwear.
- \* Place chairs in a nearby shaded area for periodic rests.
- \* Work early in the morning or early evening to avoid heat and extreme sun exposure.
- \* Use lightweight garden tools with soft grip handles.
- \* Carry a phone so you can call for help in an emergency.
- \* Stay hydrated with plenty of water.
- \* Wear sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses.
- \* Wear a lightweight long-sleeved shirt and pants to protect from insects.
- \* Wear insect repellent.
- \* Wear gardening gloves.
- \* Take breaks often.
- \* Be careful not to overdo it. Accidents happen when you're tired.
- \* Be cautious of overexposure to heat and the elements.
- \* Treat all insect bites and minor cuts or scrapes immediately.



## The Healthy Benefits of Gardening for Seniors

I've recently had the opportunity to work on a garden project and it's made me reflect on my childhood and summer visits with grandparents. These visits with both maternal and paternal grandparents always ended up with a tour of their vegetable and flower gardens. They took such pride in their work and simply beamed at the showing of their accomplishments of a thriving crop of rhubarb and tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers and so much more. I certainly enjoyed the rhubarb custard pies and tomato sandwiches my grandmother made!

It seemed to me that these were some of the happiest and healthiest I've ever seen my grandparents. It would make sense, as there are many benefits to seniors that gardening can provide — from physical and psychological to nutritional and many more.

- Psychological — Gardening can help to relieve stress by lowering anxiety and the cortisol levels in your brain. If you have too much cortisol, your blood pressure and glucose levels may fluctuate. Spending time in nature may lessen pain and keep your mind off worries while providing a sense of community as you develop friendships with others who share the same interest. Fresh air can also positively influence your mood! I remember my grandmother sending us out to "get some fresh air." We returned with a refreshed feeling and a little burst of energy. I'm sure she regretted that when all 11 of us were visiting at once!
- Physical — Vitamin D is essential, has been shown to help prevent osteoporosis and improve overall mood, and can be obtained naturally from the sun. The sun also increases serotonin levels in your brain, which improves your mood with a calming effect. Dirt also contains *Mycobacterium vaccae*, which causes cytokine levels to increase, boosting serotonin levels and improving your mood. While gardening is not a cardiovascular exercise for most, it can be a source of moderate daily low impact exercise that can improve endurance, strength and flexibility.
- Nutritional — Often people who garden will include more fruits and vegetables in their diets and adopt healthier lifestyles by incorporating foods they grow and harvesting themselves into new recipes. This encourages the desire to maintain a

healthier diet and to be more aware of what they eat.

- Brain stimulation — There are some studies that have found gardening to have a positive effect on mental health. It may even reduce dementia significantly by offering activities that include problem-solving, endurance, dexterity and sensory awareness.

There are many types of gardens. If you don't have space for a traditional garden, plant a raised bed or container garden. You can also start small with some indoor plants or a windowsill herb garden. The benefits are all rewarding!

Invite your grandchildren or a relative or friend to join you! I promise someday they will appreciate it!

Happy gardening!



## Physician Groups

- AOP Inc.
- Capital Anesthesia LLC
- Digestive Disease Institute Inc.
- Enteron Inc.
- Evangelical Medical Services (Lewisburg & surrounding communities)
- Family Practice Center PC
- Geisinger Clinic
- Geisinger Jersey Shore Foundation Inc., Jersey Shore
- Geisinger Lewistown Hospital Family Health Associates
- Jackson Siegelbaum Gastroenterology Ltd.
- Pennsylvania Gastroenterology Consultants PC
- Spirit Physicians Services Inc.
- The Wright Center Medical Group (Scranton & surrounding communities)
- Ultra Care Urgent & Family Care
- Urology of Central Pennsylvania Inc.
- Valley ENT Sinus and Allergy
- Wayne Memorial Community Health Centers
- West Shore Endoscopy Center LLC

## Participating Hospitals

- Evangelical Community Hospital, Lewisburg
- Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital, Bloomsburg
- Geisinger Community Medical Center, Scranton
- Geisinger Holy Spirit Hospital, Camp Hill
- Geisinger Jersey Shore Hospital, Jersey Shore
- Geisinger Lewistown Hospital
- Geisinger Medical Center, Danville
- Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, Wilkes Barre
- Wayne Memorial Hospital, Honesdale

## Resources

Senior Medicare Patrol—Pennsylvania Senior Medicare Patrol (PA-SMP)

Senior Medicare Patrols are groups of volunteer organizations who are available to provide education to you, your families, and caregivers on how to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, errors, and abuse. There are also resources available which include personalized counseling, evaluating complaints, local community events, and volunteer opportunities.

Please take an active role in protecting yourself and Medicare from fraud and abuse. Visit the website [www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org) and click on “Find Help in Your State.” You will then be provided with several contact options.

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State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP) — Provide local, in-depth, and objective insurance counseling and assistance to Medicare-eligible individuals, their families, and caregivers. Visit the following websites for additional information.

<https://www.shiptacenter.org/> - HOME

<https://www.shiptacenter.org/about-medicare/regional-ship-location/pennsylvania> - SPECIFIC TO PA

# Taking Charge of Your Health

Do you remember the carefree years when you were active every day with work and play? Perhaps you coached your children's sports team or participated in sporting activities yourself or were active at work, walking thousands of steps daily? You woke up feeling refreshed from a good night's sleep and there were no aches and pains.

That all changes as we age and we are not nearly as active. Many of us are no longer working, sleep gets disturbed, and arthritis sets in. We must make an active effort to maintain our mobility, get regular exercise, develop good sleep hygiene, and tend to our achy joints. In most cases, your physician and healthcare team can only advise you about these activities. It is up to you to take control of your own health and well-being.

Here are a few tips:

Set aside 30 minutes daily for some exercise. Walking is fine. If you are not accustomed to any sort of exercise, start slowly and gradually increase time and distance. A walk around the block is a good start, but 10,000 steps is fantastic! Find a safe and level place near home, in a shopping mall, at a school or other public place, or join a gym if you can. Using light arm weights can be a great addition. Modifying your diet as outlined in our article on page 3 is also advisable.

If you have a chronic illness and your healthcare provider has given you advice about diet and exercise, please follow it. The initial treatment for many chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, and heart disease, is rooted in appropriate diet modification and exercise. If medications are prescribed for your illness, please take them as directed. If you cannot for any reason, please be honest with your healthcare provider so that alternative treatments can be recommended.

Be sure to see your primary healthcare provider on an annual basis for a Medicare wellness visit. This visit provides certain screenings and preventative services that are recommended and covered by Medicare.

***Only you can be responsible and accountable for your own personal well-being! Healthcare professionals can advise and guide you along your path to wellness.***

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