Summer is finally here, and that means lots of outdoor activities for Vermonters. Yardwork, gardening, and just plain soaking up the sun are on everyone’s minds. But even during this busy season, it’s important to remember to take care of your healthcare needs. And an important part of doing that is making sure that your health coverage is current.

For Medicaid members, one of the most important things you can do to ensure your coverage remains current is to pay close attention to the notices you receive in the mail. Those notices often contain critical information about your coverage—so please be sure to read them! Medicaid eligibility is regularly renewed for certain individuals, and so you may receive notices from time to time explaining the steps you need to take to keep your coverage in force. If you don’t respond to your notices, it’s possible that your coverage could end. And if you move, please be sure to let us know of your new address, so we can send your notices to the right place. In addition to reading your notices, it’s also a good idea to check with your doctor’s office, well in advance of any scheduled appointment, to make sure you are still covered. If your coverage has ended, don’t despair! Medicaid enrollment is year-round, so you can reapply at anytime. Simply visit [www.greenmountaincare.org/apply-online-health-insurance](http://www.greenmountaincare.org/apply-online-health-insurance) for more information.

### Improving Individual Health to Create Healthier Communities Statewide

As we seek to create more connected, supportive and healthier communities in Vermont, we want to ensure that you are aware of workshops available to you, free of charge, throughout the State, that teach individuals how to manage chronic conditions while also fostering peer support to promote strengthened, healthier communities. The programs currently offered are:

- The Stanford Chronic Disease, Diabetes, and Chronic Pain Healthier Living Workshops (HLW)
- Copeland Center Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)
- YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program (YDPP)
- Vermont Quit Partners, also known as Freshstart® (in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health)

These programs represent evidence-based, preventive, and proactive interventions that address behavioral components and empower participants to take a proactive role in their own health and wellness through learning self-directed management of behaviors and conditions. The intent of the program design is to foster peer interactions as these interactions are essential for achieving the overall program goals to improve the health and wellness of individuals, families and communities. Do you have an established group that would like to participate together and learn more about one of the topics listed above? Are you interested in meeting new people who want to learn how to manage chronic conditions? If so, please contact your local regional coordinator for more information or visit this website: [http://myhealthyvt.org/](http://myhealthyvt.org/)

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This information is important. If you need help understanding it, call 1-800-250-8427.

Este información es importante. Si usted necesita ayuda para comprenderla, llame al 1-800-250-8427.
A Healthy Smile for your Young Child: First Dental Visit by First Birthday

Even before your baby’s teeth come in you can begin taking care of his or her smile! Baby teeth are very important. Children need healthy teeth to help them chew and speak. They also make space for adult teeth. Babies and young children need to have their teeth brushed. Before they have teeth you clean their gums with a clean, damp wash cloth to remove harmful bacteria or germs.

Medicaid/Dr. Dynasaur covers dental visits beginning at birth. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that a child go to the dentist by age 1 or within six months after the first tooth appears in the mouth (usually when a baby is around six months old). When you visit the dental health care provider, they will check your child’s teeth and share with you about how to keep your child cavity free. If they see any signs of dental decay (cavities) they can help stop it from getting worse. Germs that cause tooth decay can pass from your mouth to your baby’s mouth, so be sure to brush and floss and see your dentist regularly too! If you need help finding a dentist in your area for yourself or your child, call Medicaid customer service (1-800-250-8427) or ask your doctor to help you. If you participate in WIC, the WIC program can also help you get connected to a dentist in your area.

Reminder of Notice of Privacy Practices

This is to remind you that the Agency of Human Services (AHS) has a Notice of Privacy Practices concerning health information we receive from you or others when you apply for or receive services from AHS. The notice tells you about how we may use or share your health information and when we may not do so. It also tells you about your rights.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices, you may request one by calling the AHS Privacy Officer at 1-802-241-0189. You can also find the notice on the AHS website, http://humanservices.vermont.gov/privacy-documents

Physical Activity and Nutrition

People who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and some cancers. There are many reasons people become overweight or obese – but these conditions are best prevented by:

Eating healthy foods. People of all ages should eat at least five fruits and vegetables a day, limiting fat, sugar and salt.

Being physically active. Adults should have at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity such as brisk walking every day. Youth should have at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical every day.

For more tips on staying healthy, visit: www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/physical-activity-nutrition
The Three Things All Members Should Know

In today’s world of health care, it is even more important than ever that you understand three key things about your health:

1. What is the overall game plan for your health (as developed with your primary care provider);
2. Why do you take the medications you do and;
3. When should you call your doctor?

Yes, it’s as simple as knowing the 3 W’s of your healthcare: what, why and when!

It’s so simple and obvious that many patients actually never take the time to write down the answers or to re-view them with their PCP’s. And doctors often believe that their patients know this stuff already. But in practice it’s just not so.

So why are these three factors so crucial to your healthcare? Let’s look at each one more closely.

**The overall medical plan for your health.**
The key here is how willing you are to follow the recommendations of your healthcare provider. The more you understand what the overall goal is, the more likely you will adhere to the plan. Especially if you have decided your life goals and shared them with your provider. After all, they are there to help you achieve the health and well-being that aligns with your overall life plan. Take the time to discuss with your PCP what your priorities in life are so they can better help you achieve them in the healthiest way possible.

**The medications you take.**
The number of times that medication errors take place is surprising. Keeping track of all the medicine you take, both prescribed and over-the-counter, can be difficult. It is crucial that you make sure all your doctors know what other medicine you are taking. Don’t assume they know.

**When to call your PCP**
Ever hear of “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”? That was from Benjamin Franklin. Or hear your PCP say “You should have called me!” The truth is that many life threatening situations start with symptoms that seem innocent enough. And if caught early enough often can be prevented or at least minimized. You need to sit down with your PCP or their staff and write out an action plan for every medical condition you have. This way you can get medical attention before something more serious happens. For example: you have diabetes and high blood pressure and you begin to get jaw pain when you climb a flight of stairs. But it goes away after you get to the top and you think nothing of it. The thing is that it could be the sign of an impending heart attack. Or it could be nothing BUT you should know to call your doctor to be sure. We all know the more common red flags of when to go to the emergency room but knowing the yellow flags of when to call your PCP that may appear days earlier can be the difference between a good outcome and bad. Get to know what the ‘yellow flags’ are of all your medical conditions from your PCP and review them with your family on a regular basis. You’ll be glad you did!
We Know It’s Tough Being a Smoker

You’ve heard the lectures. You’ve seen all the signs. You know all the money it costs you. But that doesn’t change the fact that it’s hard to quit smoking.

But you can do it. And 802Quits is here to help by providing free patches, gum or lozenges, plus text messaging support, online chat, phone coaching and in-person help – all at no cost from VT Quit Partners.

This can be the year you, or a loved one, quits for good. Call or visit 802Quits today.

1-800-QUIT-NOW
802Quits.org

Green Mountain Care Member Services
1-800-250-8427 (TDD: 1-888-834-7898)
Preventive care is important for your health and well-being. Talk with your doctor about preventive health services and maintaining your health. Vermont Medicaid and Dr. Dynasaur will pay for preventive care for adults and children.

Here are some things you can do for preventive care.

- See your doctor for well visits. Get annual physical exams for adults, children and adolescents.
- Get immunizations for adults and children. Vaccines can prepare your body's immune system to help fight diseases.
- See your dentist for regular professional cleanings and oral exams.
- Take your children to a dentist to receive oral health risk assessments by 6 months of age. Your children should also visit their dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams.

The sun can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. Here are ways you can protect yourself and your family.

- Stay in the shade when possible.
- Cover up - wear a t-shirt or beach cover up. A t-shirt has a lower rating of protection then sunscreen with 15 SPF – so sunscreen is still needed.
- Hats with a wide brim to shade your face. Protect your ears if you wear a baseball hat.
- Sunglasses will help protect your eyes
- Use sunscreen.
  - The higher the SPF the more protection
  - Reapply every 2 hours
  - Check the expiration date

Screening tests are another way to help you stay healthy.

Breast Cancer Screening/Mammograms
- Age 50-74 should have a screening mammogram done every 2 years.
- Ages 40-49 should talk to your doctor about how often to have breast exams.
- Mammograms can help to reduce your risk of dying from breast cancer.

Colorectal (Bowel) Cancer Screenings
- Begin screenings soon after you turn 50.
- Continue to get screened regularly.
- If you have a close relative with colorectal polyps, colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease or other genetic syndromes, you may need to be tested earlier than 50.
- Discuss the screening method with your doctor.

Cervical Cancer Screening for Women
- Ages 21 to 29 should have a Pap test every 3 years.
- Ages 30 to 65 should have a Pap test plus an HPV test every 5 years.
- Teenage girls through age 26 and teenage boys through age 21 should receive the HPV vaccine. It is important to receive all three doses to protects against HPV infection and HPV-related diseases).