

Rocky
Mountain

health

Summer 2014

40 years of serving you

In 1974, physicians and community leaders in Grand Junction dedicated themselves to the notion that all Coloradans deserve access to high-quality health care. They founded Rocky Mountain HMO in order to pursue this belief. Soon, Rocky Mountain HMO (now Rocky Mountain Health Plans, or RMHP) had its first Members. In the ensuing years, we expanded throughout the state, never forgetting our roots on the Western Slope. We grew with a

straightforward, strong foundation: Broad access to high-quality care can create healthier communities and lower costs.

Fast forward to 2014, and RMHP is celebrating its 40th anniversary! These days, our country faces many challenges to attain affordable, high-quality health care. The key to the RMHP system—validated by Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom, PBS, *The New Yorker*, and others—is an unrelenting focus on our Members. It's why some employer groups have been with us since the 1970s, and why others—like the Denver Broncos—have

chosen us more recently as their health insurance provider. Through it all, our Members have remained our foremost concern. “We understand Colorado. We understand you.” is not just a marketing slogan. It's a mission. We consider it an honor to serve you, and we thank you for trusting us to be a partner in your health care.

With gratitude,
Steve



Steve ErkenBrack,
President and CEO

RMHP in the community

Save
the
date

Summer is in full swing, and we are out enjoying the sun in your communities.

July 12: Team RMHP bike race in Longmont.

July 25: Colorado Rapids game in Commerce City.

July 26: Hike MS in Keystone.

Aug. 2: Colorado Rapids game in Commerce City.

PBS FunFest in Grand Junction.

BigDogBrag Mud Obstacle in Colorado Springs.

Aug. 23 to 29: Senior Games in Grand Junction.

Aug. 29 to 31: Grand Junction Off-Road in Grand Junction.

Sept. 6: Amazing Aging Expo in Denver

Are you ready for some football?

RMHP is excited to announce we are once again the proud health insurance provider of the Denver Broncos.

Brainy ideas for summer fun

Ah, those lazy, hazy days of summer. Think vacations. Think school breaks. It seems like a good time for the entire family to just chill and not do any heavy mental lifting.

As tempting as that may sound, however, maintaining good brain health is a year-round activity. Here are a few fun and easy ways to help keep everyone's brain healthy this summer:

Get physical. Head outside with the kids for some hiking or biking—aerobic exercise gets the heart pumping. And that helps keep the brain fed with a healthy supply of blood and oxygen. It can even spur production of new brain cells, according to the Alzheimer's Association. One large study linked fitness in midlife with a reduced risk for dementia in older age.

Just make sure all bike riders wear a helmet—it helps protect the brain from trauma in case of an accident or fall.

Be a brainiac. Read a book while lounging at the beach. Break out word games for family game night. Forcing yourself to think can add new brain cells and solidify their connections.

Serve some food for thought.

Summer is the perfect time to head to your local farmers market for foods high in brain-friendly antioxidants. Look for:

- Dark-colored vegetables, like kale, spinach, broccoli, and beets.
- Berries—blue, black, and red.
- Cherries and plums.

Also, when firing up the grill, throw on some salmon, trout, mackerel, or other fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, which are good for the brain.

And, finally, don't forget that all-time favorite summer food—corn on the cob. It's a brain pleaser too. Don't slather it with butter, however. Eating too many foods high in cholesterol and saturated fat, like butter, may raise the risk for Alzheimer's disease.

Are your kids 'e-dicted'?

The aroma of pizza fills the house—but your kids don't notice. They're too busy with phones, laptops, tablets, TVs, and video games.

Are they addicted to their screens? And should you be concerned?

Screen-time health risks

Kids' use of modern media has been linked to greater stress and higher risk for asthma, diabetes, depression, and obesity. Too much screen time can prompt unhealthy snacking. It may limit physical activity and deprive kids of sleep. Plugged-in kids also risk exposure to cyberbullying and predatory adults.

When kids are spending an unhealthy amount of time with screens, they may:

- Skip meals.

- Gain or lose weight.
- Stay up too late.
- Neglect schoolwork and get lower grades.
- Withdraw from friends.

If your child shows these signs of media addiction, talk to your doctor.

What you can do

Parents can promote balanced media use by:

- Limiting noneducational screen time to no more than two hours per day.
- Keeping screens out of kids' bedrooms.
- Organizing media-free family times. You might play board games, take a hike together, or help an elderly neighbor.

Sources: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; American Academy of Pediatrics

Kids are whizzes with modern media. But, they need guidance to keep from spinning out of control.

Back to school with a smile

Have you started back-to-school shopping yet? Have you bought the books, pencils, new clothes, and the backpack? Your kids are almost ready for school. Or are they? What about an appointment to see the dentist?

Back-to-school time is the perfect opportunity to make a trip to the dentist, because kids' oral health can affect more than just their smile.

More than 19 percent of children ages two to 19 have untreated cavities, which can lead to pain, trouble learning, and poor performance in school. According to a 2012 study in the *American Journal of Public Health*, students without access to dental care missed school three times more often than those with access. And children who said they had

tooth pain were four times more likely to have a low grade point average compared to children without oral pain.

So, take time to make sure your child's smile is ready for school so he or she can be ready to learn. Here are some tips for healthy teeth:

- Have your child brush his or her teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Limit sweets and sugary sodas.
- Make sure to take your child to the dentist regularly for a professional exam, cleaning, and sealants.

Rocky Mountain Health Plans is a proud partner with Delta Dental. For more information about dental insurance and oral health, go to our valued dental partner's website: deltadentalco.com.

New behavioral health and substance abuse services administrator

Rocky Mountain Health Plans (RMHP) will transition from Life Strategies to Value Options as the administrator of our behavioral health and substance abuse services effective July 1, 2014.

Value Options is the nation's largest behavioral health care and wellness organization and brings over 30 years of experience, as well as a Colorado-based Care Management solution, to RMHP. Value Options will manage all preauthorizations, inpatient discharge planning, Care Management, and outpatient coordination of care.

You will still need to see your RMHP provider for behavioral health and substance abuse services. Your provider will work directly with Value Options on your behalf.

Beginning July 1, RMHP will begin processing behavioral health claim payments and providing benefit information for these services. We intend for this to be a seamless transition. If you have questions, please call our Customer Service team at **970-243-7050** or **800-346-4643**.



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Melanoma

Guard *against skin cancer*

As the largest organ of your body, your skin is a lot more complex than it looks. It's made up of multiple layers with specialized cells for all the different jobs your skin does—like keeping out germs, protecting internal organs, and controlling body temperature.

Melanoma is a cancer that's related to one kind of these specialized cells—the melanocytes. These cells produce melanin, a pigment that gives skin its color. Melanocytes are found in the outer layer of the skin. Their normal function is to release melanin when your skin is exposed to the sun, making skin tan or brown to protect deeper layers of skin from sun damage.

For reasons that aren't clear, sometimes melanocytes become cancerous and begin to grow uncontrollably, taking over other cells nearby. This is known as melanoma.



Learn more about skin protection by visiting our recent articles on the blog: rmhp.org/blog.

Signs to look for

Although anyone can develop melanoma, certain factors can increase your risk, reports the American Academy of Dermatology. These include:

- Tanning or any skin exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. UV rays come from the sun or tanning lamps or beds.
- Fair skin, red or blond hair, or blue or green eyes.
- More than 50 moles.
- Unusual or irregular-looking moles.
- A close relative with melanoma.

Melanoma can vary in color. Talk to your doctor if you have a mole where there wasn't one before or if you have a mole that seems to grow or change shape or color.

Early detection is essential

When melanoma is recognized and treated early, it can almost always be cured, reports the American Cancer Society. But if allowed to go untreated, it can grow deeper into the skin and into blood vessels and lymph nodes.

From there, it can spread throughout the body, causing life-threatening illness. That's why it's important to detect melanoma when it's still on the skin's surface and easily treated.

If your doctor suspects melanoma, he or she will biopsy the area to test for it. If the disease is found in its early stages, it will be surgically removed, which usually completely cures the cancer. Deeper melanoma, however, may require treatments such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Skin protection may help reduce your risk of developing melanoma. When headed outdoors, apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. Wear a wide-brimmed hat and clothing to help block the sun's rays. And take care to avoid the sun during the brightest time of day—from about 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.