

FITTING ALL THE PIECES

Central Michigan District Health Department
HIV/AIDS Case Management Program

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CHOOSING A PROVIDER

Choosing a physician is an extremely important but daunting task. With a little research and self-exploration, this can be made much easier. The first step when considering choosing a doctor is to decide what type of physician is best for you. There are several types of primary care physicians. The first is a family practice doctor. These people handle the overall care of you and your family. Not all of these folks are M.D. or D.O. some are Physician Assistants and/or Nurse Practitioners. These providers can be extremely knowledgeable and are usually affiliated with a local primary care physician who oversees their practice. Internists handle adult illnesses and can provide general health care. Pediatricians, on the other hand, only treat infants, children and sometimes teenagers. Gynecologists treat only women's health issues. There are also specialists who only treat a specific type of illness or diagnoses.

Once you have decided what type of doctor you need, you must assess your personal needs. For example, your state of health at the present time, family history, insurance coverage, and your personal feelings toward a physician's gender, age, race, etc.

Now that you have narrowed your search down to a handful of doctors, it is important to research the education and experience of these doctors. You can do this by contacting your health plan representative, or your state medical licensing board. You will also want to be aware of any complaints or disciplinary actions in regards to the doctors that you are considering. To do this simply call your state medical board and ask for information regarding any past or pending disciplinary actions. You may also check with the county clerk's office in your area to discover any malpractice lawsuits. Friends, family members, co-workers, etc. can also sometimes recommend a physician for your needs.

Your handful of doctors is becoming smaller. Now is the time to contact physicians' offices to ask questions and to possibly set up an interview with the doctor. There are many questions to consider when



Catrina's Corner

Everything sure is falling into place. We have the first clinic and the first support group under our belt and are now planning for the future. For those of you who attended the first clinic, I would like to give a sincere thank you for your patience. It wasn't perfect, but it sure was a learning experience for everyone. The next clinic will be that much more smooth as a result.

Our first support group was great! Although our numbers were small, our vision was huge. There were so many great ideas shared. I can't wait to begin incorporating them. I believe some friends were made as well and I hope that the friendships continue to grow. Please know that, others who are HIV positive are welcome to attend this group, so spread the word to those you know. Since the group went so well, we've extended our time together. We will now be meeting 5:30pm - 7:00pm. Speaking of support group, a representative from the Social Security Office will be speaking about Medicare at this month's group. Please come prepared with any questions or concerns you may have. This will be a great opportunity to clarify some of those questions that we all have.

Accepted insurance plans, like Medicare, are one thing to look at when choosing a provider, but there are also many other things to consider when you're trying to find a provider. Read this newsletter to learn more about this important topic.

Clinic Dates

June 27, 2008
9:00am—4:00pm

July 25, 2008
9:00 am—4:00pm

August 22, 2008
9:00am—4:00pm

Clinic is located on the 2nd floor of the courthouse in Harrison. Look for the Family Planning clinic sign

Enjoy the summer weather!
Remember to use sunscreen
and/or stay in the shade and
drink lots of water.

Commitment To Change

Ready.

Willing..

And Able...

Making Health A Priority

CHOOSING A PROVIDER...continued

deciding whether to possibly set up an interview with the doctor. One issue that can be very important for most people is the doctor/patient relationship. Do you want your relationship with your doctor to be a partnership with you being an equally heard teammate or do you prefer to allow your doctor to make the decisions regarding your care. Whichever you decide, it is important that the doctor you choose feels the same way.

There are many questions to consider when speaking with a member of the office staff or the doctor himself. It is important to be

aware of the office's days and hours of operation, after-hours and emergency procedures, typical waiting time and office visit, and **acceptable insurance coverage**. If you have a pre-existing condition, it is important to know if the doctor has experience treating it. Also ask if the doctor will give telephone advice or prescribe medications over the phone. If you would like, you may also ask how long the doctor has been in practice and if he/she is taking continuing education classes.

Finally, sit and think about how you felt speaking with the doctor and his/her staff.

You should feel **comfortable** talking to the doctor and staff. It is important that all personnel were helpful and friendly and didn't make you feel unwanted. Also evaluate whether the doctor allowed enough time to explain all information to you.

After your thorough research, you will hopefully be left with a doctor who can meet every aspect of your



I'VE GOT THE PROVIDER...NOW WHAT?

The patient/doctor relationship can be very complex. Here are a few tips to help you have a successful relationship.

1. Come with a written list of your questions and give a copy to your doctor.
2. If you have lots of questions or concerns, let the receptionist know ahead of time. That way you can be scheduled for a longer block of time.
3. Be honest with your doctor. He/she needs

the whole picture to get a clear view of how to best help you.

4. Bring a list of your medications or your prescription bottles so that your doctor knows exactly what you're taking. This will prevent any potential drug-to-drug interactions.
5. Keep a daily journal of any side-effects of new medications and when they seem to occur.
6. Give your doctor a list of all your providers so that he/she can coordinate your care with

those other individuals.

7. Don't over-book yourself the day of your appointment. Your appointment may be delayed if the doctor needs to spend extra time with another patient ahead of you. Just remember that next time it may be you that he/she spends extra time with.
8. Be as punctual as possible for your visit. Running late will make you feel rushed and may not give you as much time with your doctor as you would have liked.

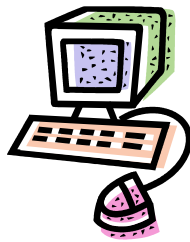
Support Group

June 18, 2008	Medicare
July 21, 2008	To Be Announced
August 18, 2008	DNR Order and Durable Medical Power of Attorney
September 15, 2008	To Be Announced
October 20, 2008	To Be Announced

Support Group meets 5:30-7:00pm. Call Catrina at 989-539-6731 ext. 21 for location and directions

Websites

www.thebody.com
www.cis.state.mi.us/free/default.asp
www.michigan.gov/mdch



Contact Information

Physician Referral Services

St. Mary's of Michigan Standish Hospital
800-786-2797

MidMichigan Medical Center-Clare, Gladwin, and Midland
800-999-3199

Central Michigan Community Hospital
989-772-6773

Spectrum Health-Reed City Campus
616-391-5999

Mercy Hospital-Grayling
800-533-5520