



CHOICE
Health Plans

Member News

VNSNY CHOICE SelectHealth Member Newsletter

Summer 2019

More Rewards for Taking *Steps to a Healthier Life!*



New! More Rewards for You!

We've improved our *Steps to a Healthier Life* program with more rewards than ever!

As you know, seeing your doctor and getting the recommended screenings is the best way to care for your health. That's why we created *Steps to a Healthier Life* – a program that tracks your health progress and rewards you for completing health activities! These activities can include having an undetectable* viral load count, preventative screenings or other important health assessments.

IN THIS ISSUE

2

**In the Know:
High Blood Pressure**

**Well-Child Visits are
Important**

3

**Working to End the
Epidemic – A SelectHealth
Success Story**

Here's what is new in 2019

♦ Earn up to \$400 every year for viral load suppression

Members who are living with HIV can earn \$100 per quarter for achieving and maintaining an undetectable viral load!

Earn even *more* rewards for completing health activities

All members can earn anywhere from \$10 to \$25 for completing health activities such as getting a dental checkup or an eye exam! Depending on your health needs, you may be eligible for total rewards of \$500 or more every year!

What's next?

As a member of SelectHealth, you're automatically enrolled in the Steps program. This means there's a good chance you've already started earning rewards for this year! We'll be sending you more information soon about how the program works – keep a look out for it in your mailbox.

* Defined as viral load of less than 200 copies/ml for adult 18+ living with HIV

In the Know: High Blood Pressure

What is high blood pressure?

With high blood pressure, your heart works harder to pump blood, but you may not feel any symptoms. It can cause heart and kidney disease, eye damage—even a stroke.

A healthy blood pressure is between 120/80 and 140/90. Stress, too much salt, and some medications can cause it to be high. A diagnosis is made when your blood pressure is over 140/90 several days in a row. If that's the case, your doctor may order other tests to check for signs of heart disease.

You can prevent high blood pressure or manage it by:

- Eating a low-salt diet and exercising regularly.
- Getting enough sleep and controlling stress.
- Limiting alcohol and not smoking.



If You are Living with HIV

People living with HIV are more likely to have high blood pressure compared to those without the virus and should note the following:

- Monitor your blood pressure regularly as part of your HIV care.
- Talk to your doctor about how HIV drugs can interact with other medicines to affect blood pressure.

High blood pressure may mean taking medication if lifestyle changes don't bring it into the normal range. Talk to your care manager or doctor if you have any questions.

Sources: www.aidsmap.com
www.mayoclinic.org

Well-Child Visits are Important

Health experts agree that you should take your child to the pediatrician, even if they are well, to check on their development as a regular part of your child's health care.

Benefits of well-child visits:

- **Prevention**—Your child's doctor gives vaccines to prevent illness, advice on nutrition and safety in the home and at school.
- **Tracking growth and development**—Noting changes in height and weight since the last visit can show if there is a problem. Discuss your child's physical, mental and social milestones and whether they're on target.
- **Raising concerns**—Bring up anything that worries you. Make a list of things you want to talk about like behavior, sleep or eating.



Schedule of well-child visits:

- At birth and 3 to 5 days after birth.
- At 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 24 months.
- After age 2, a child should have a well-visit every year until age 5 and then every 1 or 2 years until 18 years old.

Well-child doctor visits are important ways to give your child a great start at a healthy, happy life. Is your child up-to-date?

Working to End the Epidemic – A SelectHealth Success Story

At VNSNY CHOICE SelectHealth, we urge our members to embrace U=U by doing everything we can to help you take your medicine as prescribed and lead a healthy lifestyle (eating well, exercising and not smoking). By doing this, there's a good chance you can keep your viral load undetectable¹. Then, *you have no risk of sexually passing the virus to someone without HIV.*

How does SelectHealth connect with hard-to-reach members to help them stay healthy? One way is through our End the Epidemic (ETE) Peer team². We think that when you feel supported, you're better able to take care of your health, which in turn also protects your partner's health.

A True Story

Recently, the CHOICE SelectHealth ETE Peer team reached out to Jose (not his real name), a heterosexual man whose viral load was quite high (in the *detectable* range). The team learned that because he was homeless and used drugs, he rarely saw a doctor or took medicine to control his HIV.

The VNSNY CHOICE SelectHealth ETE peer team stepped in and gave Jose one-on-one health education sessions. With their help, he began to see a doctor regularly and most importantly, started to take medication to control his HIV. The ETE team suggested other places where



In 2017 the Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced the success of the U=U (undetectable¹ equals untransmittable) campaign. "When living with HIV, if people take their antiretroviral medicine as prescribed and then achieve and maintain an ¹undetectable viral load (for at least 6 months), they have no risk of sexually transmitting the virus to an HIV-negative partner!"

he could get help with his drug use and feelings of sadness and also worked to find him housing. Jose's life was changed for the better, and he is now undetectable and more in control of his health!

¹Defined as viral load of less than 200 copies/ml for adult 18+ living with HIV.

²These services are not a regular plan benefit.

VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans complies with Federal civil rights laws. VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

ATENCION: si habla español, tiene a su disposicion servicios gratuitos de asistencia linguistica. Llame al 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711).

Let Your Voice Be Heard — Join the SelectHealth Member Advisory Committee (MAC)

MAC meetings are informal gatherings where you can share a meal and talk to other SelectHealth members and VNSNY CHOICE staff about how your health plan is meeting your needs. We respect your personal views and opinions and are interested in hearing what's working and how we can make it even better. Why not join us for the next SelectHealth MAC meeting to share your experiences with us? We want to learn from you how we can improve. We'll even provide transportation to the meeting. Call Member Services for information.



Mark Your Calendars!

Wednesday, September 18

National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day

Sept. 18 is the annual observance of the National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day (NHAAAD) to bring to light the challenges that the aging population faces in regards to HIV/AIDS.

For more info, go to www.hiv.gov/events/awareness-days/aging

Friday, September 27

National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness

Sept. 27 is the annual observance of the National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and is an opportunity to focus on the impact of HIV/AIDS on gay and bisexual men.

For more info, go to www.gmhc.org

Yummy Vegetable Recipe

The summer months bring warm breezes, sunshine-filled days and plenty of flavorful herbs and healthy vegetables.

Here is a nutritious and easy vegetable recipe.

Crowd-Pleaser Green Beans

- Snap the stem ends of 1 lb of green beans (or use 16 oz frozen).
- Heat 2 tbs of olive or canola oil and sauté 2 cloves of minced garlic and one chopped onion for about 2 minutes.
- Add 1 cup chicken broth and ½ cup chopped red bell pepper.
- Cook until the liquid is almost gone and the beans are soft, yet still a bit crisp – about 8–10 minutes.
- Add salt and pepper to taste and parmesan cheese (optional).



If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us.

VNSNY CHOICE is committed to finding and stopping fraud, waste, or abuse in our health care plans.

Anonymous Reporting

VNSNY CHOICE Compliance Hotline: 1-888-634-1558.
File an online report at: vnsny.ethicspoint.com.
Learn more at: vnsnychoice.org/for-our-members/member-rights/compliance-program.

Member Services

1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711)

8 am – 6 pm, Monday – Friday

www.vnsnychoice.org



CHOICE
Health Plans