



NEWS

from the Consumer Health Action Network
April 2007

✓ Check to Make Sure You're Getting the Tests You Need

Experts from the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality have developed a checklist of important screening tests that you should ask your doctor about during regular check-ups. The experts recommend that you can also stay healthy by: not smoking; being physically active; eating a healthy diet; staying a healthy weight; and taking preventive medicines if you need them. Visit <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/ppipix.htm> for more information.

Below are some common screening tests that can help doctors detect diseases early.

MEN

- ✓ **Obesity:** Have your body mass index (BMI) calculated.
- ✓ **High Cholesterol:** Have your cholesterol checked regularly starting at age 35. If you are younger than 35, talk to your doctor.
- ✓ **High Blood Pressure:** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years.
- ✓ **Colorectal Cancer:** Have a test for colorectal cancer starting at age 50.
- ✓ **Diabetes:** Have a test for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- ✓ **Depression:** Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your doctor about being screened for depression.
- ✓ **Sexually Transmitted Infections:** Talk to your doctor to see whether you should be tested for gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, or other sexually transmitted infections.
- ✓ **HIV:** Talk to your doctor about your risk of HIV infection and about being tested.
- ✓ **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm:** If you are between the ages of 65 and 75 and have ever smoked, you need to be screened once for abdominal aortic aneurysm, which is an abnormally large or swollen blood vessel in your abdomen.

WOMEN

- ✓ **Obesity:** Have your body mass index (BMI) calculated.
- ✓ **Breast Cancer:** Have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years starting at age 40
- ✓ **Cervical Cancer:** Have a Pap smear every 1 to 3 years if you have ever been sexually active or are between the ages of 21 and 65.
- ✓ **High Cholesterol:** Have your cholesterol checked regularly starting at age 45. If you are younger than 45, talk to your doctor.
- ✓ **High Blood Pressure:** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years.
- ✓ **Colorectal Cancer:** Have a test for colorectal cancer starting at age 50.
- ✓ **Diabetes:** Have a test for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- ✓ **Depression:** Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your doctor about being screened for depression.
- ✓ **Osteoporosis:** Have a bone density test beginning at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis. Talk to your doctor about your risks.
- ✓ **Chlamydia and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections:** Ask your doctor whether you should be tested.
- ✓ **HIV:** Talk to your doctor about your risk of HIV infection and about being tested.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter in Spanish, call us toll-free at 1-888-873-4585.



Plans to Cover Connecticut's Uninsured

Stay informed! Several different proposals been offered this legislative session with options for Connecticut's growing uninsured population. Here is a summary of some proposals and what they might mean for you.

- The **Governor's Plan** plans to offer coverage to any CT resident who has been uninsured for six months. Consumers will still have to pay for this plan however (\$250 a month and a \$1000 deductible) and there no state administration or oversight. HUSKY would not change. Not everyone would be covered.
- The **Single state plan** offers one comprehensive state program to cover every Connecticut resident who has lived in the state for more than 6 months. This plan would be paid for through income taxes on employer fees, and individuals would still have a choice of insurers. This plan will result in no change or costs for HUSKY members.
- A State **Insurance Pool** has been also been proposed to cover everyone who has lived in the state for more than 6 months. This plan allows for multiple private plans. The cost to consumers would be based on income, and the cost and coverage for HUSKY members would not be affected.

- The **Senate Democrats** plan to focus first on expanding HUSKY to about 34,000 more people spending \$450 million more on the program.
- The **Insurance Committee** has offered a plan for uninsured individuals and small businesses that uses health savings accounts and high deductible plans among the options. Costs would be based on income. Not everyone would be covered.
- **House Republicans** have proposed a plan that would offer barebones insurance plans. This plan includes a requirement that everyone must have insurance, and tax credits will be offered to individuals and businesses to help afford insurance.
- The **Municipal Employees Health Insurance Program (MEHIP) Plan** offers to extend the health benefits that state employees receive to municipal workers and possibly non-profits and small businesses. This could be a platform for covering everyone in the future.

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|--------------------|----------------|
| Senate Democrats | 1-800-842-1420 |
| Senate Republicans | 1-800-842-1421 |
| House Democrats | 1-800-842-1902 |
| House Republicans | 1-800-842-1423 |
| Governor | 1-800-406-1527 |

The Consumer Health Action Network is not endorsing any plan at this time, but you are encouraged to call your legislators and tell them you support covering Connecticut's uninsured!

Help is available – Check out our tip sheets or call our helpline

Trying to get health care in Connecticut can be frustrating. We have tip sheets to help. Visit our website at www.cthealthconsumer.org or call us to receive a copy in the mail. If you need more help accessing care, please call our helpline toll-free at 1-888-873-4585 or email us information@cthealthpolicy.org.

- ✓ Are there ways to reduce my health care bills if I don't have insurance?
- ✓ What can I do about hospital debt?
- ✓ How can I negotiate my bill with my doctor's office or clinic?
- ✓ I'm pregnant, now what do I do?
- ✓ I need help getting dental care
- ✓ How can I cut my prescription drug costs?
- ✓ What's an HSA (health savings account)? Would it help me?
- ✓ What is COBRA?
- ✓ How does worker's compensation work?
- ✓ What are medical discount cards?
- ✓ I need help applying for HUSKY
- ✓ What are limited benefit plans?
- ✓ How can I be a better caregiver?
- ✓ I don't qualify for Medicare or Medicaid. What are my options?
- ✓ I'm not uninsured. So it doesn't affect me, right?

All tip sheets are available in English or Spanish.
Be sure to let us know which you prefer.



STAND UP FOR HEALTH CARE!

MAY 5, 2007

11AM TO 1PM

Bushnell Park
Hartford CT

**Show Up
Be Counted
It Matters**

For more information or to tell your
story please go to

www.healthcare4every1.org.

Or call
203-639-0550

Great New Resource for Women in Connecticut!

Have you ever wondered why no one has bothered to put together a simple and comprehensive handbook on the health care resources available to you? Well now someone has! The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), a part of the Connecticut state legislature, has released their "Guide to Women's Health Rights in Connecticut." This easy-to-read and extremely useful information resource covers the laws and your rights, as well as where to get information on topics related to women's health, including:

- General information about insurance (including HUSKY)
- Reproductive Health
- Pregnancy, Delivery, and New Mothers
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings and Treatment
- Violence against Women and Girls
- HIV Testing and AIDS
- Behavioral Health
- Oral Health
- Services and Rights for Women with Disabilities

The Guide is available online on the PCSW website at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/pcsw/>. You can also call them and request a free copy at (860) 240-8300.



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