

close friends

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2011-2012

Annual Notice for Our Members

This issue of Close Friends contains important information about the benefits, programs and services Neighborhood offers you and your family. We want to make sure you understand and are happy with our services. We hope this newsletter clearly explains your health care coverage.

All this information is also available in your Neighborhood Member Handbook or on our website at www.nhpri.org, under "For Members." Please call us at 1-800-459-6019 (TTY 1-401-459-6690) if you have any questions or would like hard copies of any information on our website.

Thanks for being a part of Neighborhood and stay well!

Finding a Doctor Is Easy!

Your Neighborhood Provider Directory lists all the providers in our network. That includes primary care, specialty care and behavioral health doctors, as well as hospitals and urgent care centers. The directory gives you details on each one of Neighborhood's doctors and hospitals. This information can help you choose where to get the care you need. Go to www.nhpri.org or call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 for our most recent Provider Directory.



Attention Members with Extended Family Planning (EFP) Coverage

Members with EFP coverage have limited services that are covered by Neighborhood. They include exams, family planning visits and family planning prescriptions. The community health centers provide these services as well as those primary care services not covered under this benefit.

Save this issue
to refer to all year.

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Your Doctor is Your Partner in Health

Your personal doctor is the doctor who knows you best. He or she works with you to keep you healthy. Your personal doctor is also called a primary care doctor or primary care physician. This is the doctor you chose when you enrolled with Neighborhood. Your primary care doctor's name and phone number are on your Neighborhood member ID card.

Call your primary care doctor—or another doctor in the same practice—when you need the following:

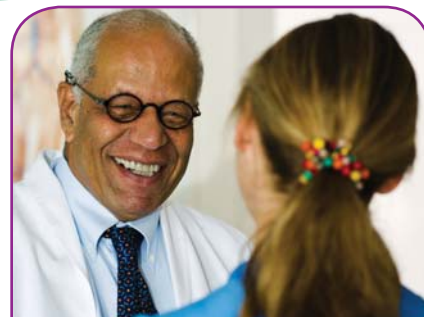
- Help deciding what to do when you or your child has a medical problem
- Prescriptions or tests
- Annual checkups and other visits
- Coordination of your health care services and visits to other doctors
- Advice and answers to questions about your health care

Your doctor wants to help you stay healthy. Be sure to tell him or her about your medical concerns, visits to other doctors, trips to the hospital or emergency room and any injuries or sicknesses you have. You can call your doctor's office 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If no one answers when you call, there will be an answering service or an answering machine. It will give you instructions for emergencies and for leaving a message. It will also give you directions for reaching your doctor or another doctor who can help you.

You can change your or your child's primary care doctor at any time. Your Neighborhood Provider Directory lists all the providers in our network. This information can help you choose a new primary care doctor. Go to www.nhpri.org or call Neighborhood Customer Service. You also can ask for a copy of this information by calling us at 1-800-459-6019.

If Your Primary Care Doctor Leaves the Network

Neighborhood will send you a letter to inform you of this change. You can choose another primary care doctor from the Neighborhood network or you will be assigned to one near your home. Please call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 if you need help choosing a new primary care doctor.



Continued Care and Treatment

In special circumstances, Neighborhood will temporarily allow you to continue receiving services and care from your primary care doctor or specialty care doctor even if she or he leaves our provider network. Some special cases might be if you are being treated for an ongoing condition or if you are pregnant. This is because your relationship with your doctor is important. We will work with you and your doctor to ensure a safe and comfortable transition of your health care to another doctor. Please call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 if your doctor decides to leave the network and you need to continue seeing him or her for awhile.

Breast Health – The Importance Of Mammograms

Breast health is important. Here are some things you can do.

- Have a clinical breast exam every year with your doctor or nurse practitioner, who uses his or her hands to feel for lumps or other changes
- Talk with your doctor about your family's history of breast cancer, when you should have your first mammogram and how often you should have mammograms
- Have your doctor or nurse practitioner show you how to check your own breasts for lumps or other unusual changes. This is called a breast self-exam (BSE).

What is a mammogram?

- A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast and is used as a screening test for breast cancer or to find out more about a lump that is felt
- Your doctor may order a mammogram based on your age, your health and your family's health
- Mammograms can help doctors find breast cancer early

The best thing to do for breast health is talk to your doctor about what is best for you.

Accessing Specialty Care

A specialty care doctor, or specialist, is a doctor who cares for a specific part of the body or a specific disease. Specialty care doctors have extra training and education in their chosen area.

Your primary care doctor is responsible for your regular care and annual checkups. Sometimes he or she may decide you should see a specialist. Your doctor will give you a referral to a specialist when you need one.

What Is a Referral?

A referral means your doctor recommends a specialist to diagnose and treat your condition. Your primary care doctor will contact the specialist and let that office know you will be scheduling an appointment. Make sure you give your doctor enough time to call the specialist before you make an appointment.

Sometimes—but not very often—you will need approval from Neighborhood before you see a specialist. After your doctor recommends a specialist, the specialist will contact Neighborhood to get permission to care for you. If you have questions about this process, please call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019.

Do I Always Need a Referral?

For some services, you can do a self-referral. A self-referral is when you make an appointment at a specialty care office without talking with your primary care doctor first. If you self-refer to a specialist, choose one who is in Neighborhood's provider network. Make sure you tell your primary care doctor about the visit.

Here is a list of doctors Rlite Care members can make an appointment with or services you can obtain without calling your primary care doctor or Neighborhood first.

- Emergency services
(both in Rhode Island and outside of Rhode Island)
- Urgent care services at a facility or walk-in clinic
- Behavioral health services (mental health and substance abuse services)

- OB/GYN (pregnancy and women's care) for routine visits and exams and medically necessary follow-up care and services
- Routine eye exams every 24 months for members ages 21 and older
- Diabetic eye exams every year
- Childbirth education and parenting classes
- Programs to help you quit smoking (not for Extended Family Planning members)
- Family planning, counseling or birth control visits*
- Sexually transmitted disease treatment through the Rhode Island Department of Health*

**Available to Rlite Care members including members with Extended Family Planning coverage*

Can I See a Specialist Who Is Not in the Network?

Sometimes it may be necessary for you to see a specialist who is not in the Neighborhood provider network. Your primary care doctor must get permission from Neighborhood before you receive services from anyone who is not in our network. If you receive services from a doctor who is not in our network and you do not get approval from Neighborhood first, **you may have to pay for the services.**

If I Disagree with a Doctor, Can I Get Another Opinion?

As a Neighborhood member, you have the right to receive a second opinion. This means you can get another doctor's opinion if you do not think you should have a treatment or surgery your doctor recommends.

If the doctor you would like to see is not in our network, you will need approval from Neighborhood first. This is called prior authorization. Prior authorization is not required when you seek a second or third opinion from a doctor in our network. Call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 to find a doctor for a second or third opinion.

What if I Refuse to See the Specialist I'm Referred To?

If you refuse to see one of the specialty doctors you were referred to, it will not affect your future treatment. You can also refuse the treatment a specialty doctor recommends. If you refuse a referral or treatment, call your primary care doctor to discuss other options. You can also call Neighborhood Customer Service for the names of more doctors.

When Should You Go to the ER?

An emergency is a situation that is life-threatening, very painful or seriously harmful to your body or your health if you do not receive treatment right away. Here are examples of emergencies:

- Broken bones
- Swallowing something poisonous or dangerous
- A drug overdose
- Very bad pain or pressure
- Bleeding that will not stop
- Severe trouble breathing
- A change in level of consciousness
- A bad head injury
- Seizures or a change in the pattern of seizures
- Pregnancy complications, such as bleeding that will not stop or extreme pain

If you experience one of the signs of an emergency listed above, here's what to do:

- Go to the nearest emergency room (ER) or call 911. You do not need a referral for emergencies. The hospital does not need to be in Neighborhood's network.
- Call your primary care doctor the next day. Tell him or her about your ER visit.

If you are not sure it is an emergency, call your primary care doctor immediately. The number is on your Neighborhood member ID card. You can call your doctor's office 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You will receive instructions on whether to go to the ER, make an appointment with your doctor or take another action for treatment.

If you cannot reach your doctor's office, go to the ER and show them your Neighborhood member ID card. A doctor will examine you, tell you what is wrong and tell you what treatment you may need. For most members, this exam does not cost anything. After your ER visit, call your primary care doctor to arrange for treatment at his or her office.

When to Go to an Urgent Care Center

Sometimes you or your child might need care quickly or within 24 hours, but it is not an emergency.

This type of care is called urgent care. Here are examples of problems that need urgent care:

- Sore throat
- Skin rash
- Pinkeye
- Low fever
- Ear infection

If you or your child needs urgent care, call your primary care doctor's office. Say you need to schedule a "sick visit." Your doctor should give you an appointment within 24 hours. Or he or she will direct you to an urgent care center in Neighborhood's network.

Search the Neighborhood Provider Directory online for a list of urgent care centers in our network.

You can also call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 to learn more about urgent care centers in your community.

We Can Help You in Your Language

If you need help understanding this information in your language, please call us at **1-800-459-6019** and ask for Customer Service.

Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta información en su idioma, por favor llámenos al **1-800-459-6019** y pida hablar con el Departamento de Servicio al Cliente.

Se precisar de ajuda para entender as informações em seu idioma, ligue para **1-800-459-6019** e peça para falar com o departamento de Serviço ao Consumidor.

Для того чтобы получить информацию на своем языке, обратитесь в отдел по работе с клиентами (Customer Services) по телефону **1-800-459-6019**.

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You Can Get Care Away from Home or Out of Network

You might need health care services when you are “out-of-area.” This means you are too far away to get care from a doctor in Neighborhood’s network, but you are still within the United State and its territories (such as Puerto Rico). Emergency services are always covered when you are out-of-area. **All other out-of-area care needs to be approved by Neighborhood.** If you are experiencing an emergency, call 911 immediately or visit the nearest emergency room. Call your primary care doctor when you return home to let him or her know what happened.

If you receive a bill for out-of area emergency services, send it to Neighborhood Customer Service. All other covered benefits, care and services provided out-of-area need to be approved first by calling 1-800-459-6019.

Sometimes you may need care from a local doctor or hospital clinic that is not in Neighborhood’s provider network. This provider is “out-of-network.” To see an out-of network provider, get approval from us by calling Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019. The Medical Management Department at Neighborhood will review your request for services. Limited requests for nonemergency care from doctors who are not in Neighborhood’s network are considered if one of the following is true for you:

- The services you requested are not available in Neighborhood’s network.
- Doctors with the same expertise are not available in Neighborhood’s network.
- You are getting treatment for an acute medical condition or a chronic condition, or you are in your sixth to ninth month of pregnancy, and your doctor leaves the Neighborhood network.
- You are getting follow-up care from emergency services.
- You have an established ongoing relationship with a primary care or specialty care doctor.

Inpatient vs. Outpatient Care

Sometimes you may need services that are provided in a hospital. These might be outpatient or inpatient services. Outpatient services do not require you to stay at the hospital. Examples of outpatient services are lab tests and X-rays. Your primary care doctor or specialist will give you a written copy of the outpatient tests or services that you will need from the hospital. You should bring this with you and show it as soon as you check in at the hospital.

Inpatient services are when you stay in the hospital, such as when you are hospitalized for an illness or to deliver a baby. If you need to go to the hospital for services that require an overnight stay or longer, the hospital will ask Neighborhood if it is OK. This is called an admission to the hospital.

If the doctor who admits you to the hospital does not participate in Neighborhood’s network, call your primary care doctor within 24 hours of being admitted. If you cannot call, ask a friend or family member to call for you. **You should only go to the hospital when you need emergency care or your doctor recommends you go.** Questions about hospital services? Call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019



Get Approval Before a Scan

Neighborhood has partnered with MedSolutions Inc. for preauthorization of some outpatient radiology services. This means your provider needs to ask MedSolutions for approval for MRI, CT and PET scans, and for nuclear cardiology tests, before you get them.

You cannot be billed for these radiology services. If you have questions, call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 or visit www.nhpri.org.

Your Mental Health and Substance Abuse Benefits

Services for mental health and substance abuse are called behavioral health services. Behavioral health services are part of your benefits with Neighborhood. They are managed by our partner, Beacon Health Strategies.

If you think you may need behavioral health services or if you would like more information about BH services, call Beacon at 1-800-215-0058. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your call is confidential.

Choosing a Provider

You can pick any of the behavioral health providers listed in the Neighborhood Provider Directory. Our directory will tell you where providers are located, what area they specialize in, and if they see adults or children. You can also find a provider on Beacon's website, www.beaconhealthstrategies.com.

When to Get Authorization

For outpatient services, you do not need prior authorization for the first 12 counseling sessions or any medication visits from a Neighborhood provider. Simply call the behavioral health provider's office and schedule your appointment. Prior authorization is required for inpatient hospitals, acute residential treatment and day and evening program participation. Your provider will need to call Beacon at 1-800-215-0058.

You Have Benefits

As a Neighborhood member, you are eligible for many behavioral health services. These include hospitalization, day and evening programs, and individual, family or couple's counseling.

Call Beacon at 1-800-215-0058 with questions about getting behavioral health care for yourself or a family member. This number is also listed on your Neighborhood member ID card. Someone is available at this number 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A Beacon representative can help you find the right provider and answer your questions.

A Note for Parents

Children younger than 18 who need inpatient mental health care are required to have an emergency service evaluation through Kid's Link. Parents can reach Kid's Link 24 hours a day at 1-866-429-3979.

Numbers to Know

In an Emergency, Call 911

Neighborhood Customer Service

1-800-459-6019 or
1-401-459-6020
(TTY 1-401-459-6690)

Beacon Health Strategies

1-800-215-0058

Communicable Diseases

1-401-222-2577

Department of Human Services Adults in Managed Care Helpline

1-401-784-8877

Department of Human Services and Rite Care Info Line (English and Spanish)

1-401-462-5300
(TTY 1-800-745-5555)

HIV/AIDS and STDs

1-401-222-2320

Kid's Link Rhode Island

1-866-429-3979

Legal Services (Rhode Island)

1-401-274-2652

Poison Control Center

1-401-444-5727

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

1-800-742-4453

Rhode Island Department of Health

1-401-222-2231

Services for Children with Special Needs

1-401-462-5300

Victims of Crime Hotline

1-800-494-8100

WIC Program

1-800-942-7434

Neighborhood has a Member Advocate

Call our trusted, confidential, problem solver Jackie Dowdy at 1-401-459-6172 to learn more.

Our Case Managers Can Help You

Neighborhood's case managers and disease management teams are here to help you manage your health conditions. They can also help with environmental or social barriers you face that make it difficult to get healthy.

Our Case Managers

Case managers can help you with sudden illnesses or injuries, multiple hospitalizations, complex health needs and chronic conditions. Check out all that our case managers can do for you:

- We can teach you, in meetings and on the phone, how to prevent or control your chronic disease or health issue. We will teach you easy steps you can take every day to stay well. We will help you achieve your goals.
- We will discuss with you the benefits and services available to you, your family members and your doctors.
- We will talk with your doctors to coordinate your health care needs.
- We will work with you to get you the community resources, pharmacy prescriptions and doctor appointments you need.
- We are available to talk with you or your family when you need us.
- We will provide you with a written summary of your Case Management Plan of Care upon request.

Members may self-refer to our case management programs. This means you do not need to speak with your doctor about joining Neighborhood's case management programs. You can call 1-800-459-6019 to see if Neighborhood's case management services are right for you.

Beacon Health Strategies, our behavioral health partner, provides behavioral health case management services. Members may self-refer to Beacon's case management programs. You can call Beacon directly at 1-800-215-0058 to learn more about their services.

For more information about the flu shot, call your doctor or visit www.health.ri.gov/flu

Our Disease Management Team

Neighborhood's disease management team can help you take care of a chronic condition, such as asthma or diabetes. We will tell your doctor about the help we are giving you.

Here's what you can do in our disease management programs:

- Learn more about your condition and what you need to stay healthy.
- Receive mail about having special tests, taking medications and other steps you can take to be healthy.
- Get news about how to take care of your condition in our Close Friends newsletter.

Members may self-refer to our disease management programs. This means you do not need to speak with your doctor about joining Neighborhood's disease management programs. Call us at 1-800-459-6019 to see if our disease management services are right for you.

Make Your Wishes Known Now

You have the right to make decisions about your health care. You can refuse treatment or procedures at any time. But one day, you may be unable to make or voice your decisions.

These documents help make your wishes known:

- A living will is a set of instructions. It says what should happen if you become seriously ill and are unable to communicate.
- A durable power of attorney lets another person make health care decisions for you. You choose this person. It could be your spouse, a family member or a friend.
- Advance directives explain the treatment you want if you become seriously ill or injured. Advance directives can be written or spoken.

Ask your primary care doctor about these options. You can find related forms on the Rhode Island Department of Health website at www.health.ri.gov/lifestages/death/about/livingwill.

10 Reasons to Call Customer Service

Call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019, Monday through Friday, 8:30AM to 5PM, for the following reasons.

1. You need urgent care. If it's an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. If you need care quickly but it's not an emergency, Customer Service can help you see your doctor or find an urgent care center.

2. You receive a bill or need to submit a claim. Doctors and hospitals in our network should send bills directly to Neighborhood. Members do not pay these bills. If you receive a bill or pay for covered services, we will help you resolve the issue. This includes emergency services received out-of-area. Neighborhood will reimburse you when appropriate. Send the receipts to Neighborhood Customer Service Department, 299 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908.

3. You need to find a provider. Search our Provider Directory online at www.nhpri.org or call to get a copy of it if you need to find a provider or change primary care doctors. We can help you find a provider near you who speaks your language. We can answer questions about a doctor's background and certifications. This information is also on the Department of Health website: www.health.ri.gov/hsr/professions/license.php.

4. Your family size changes. If there is a change in the number of people in your home, such as a new baby, call Customer Service. Also call the Department of Human Services or your local case worker. We can give you your case worker's phone number if you do not know it.

5. You need transportation. Neighborhood will arrange taxi or van transportation for RIte Care members to appointments at a doctor's office or health center in certain cases. These cases include when your doctor does not want you to ride the bus for health reasons and when you live more than ½ mile away from a bus stop and your doctor's office and have no way to get there. Call Customer Service to learn more. Bus transportation is also available. RIte Care members may get up to 10 one-way RIPTA bus passes every month for themselves and their children. Rhody Health Partners (RHP) members are not eligible for taxi rides but may be eligible for a RIPTA No Fare ID pass. The fee for this pass is \$10. RHP members may also obtain transportation services provided by the state but arranged for by Neighborhood Customer Service. RHP members may also contact Logisticare directly at 1-401-784-3899 or www.logisticare.com.

6. You are moving. We need your most up-to-date contact information so that we can send you our newsletter and call you about important changes. Tell us if your address or phone number changes, or if you move out of state.

7. You are covered by more than one plan. Coordination of benefits is a way to decide how medical, dental or other types of care will be paid when you are covered by more than one health plan. The primary plan must pay its part of the claim first. The secondary plan pays the balance. To receive coverage for services, you must follow the rules of coverage in your Member Handbook. This is true even if Neighborhood is not your primary plan.

8. You have questions about your plan. Customer Service can help you understand the benefits and services available to you. We can also answer questions you have about Neighborhood.

9. You have a complaint. If you experience difficulty or are dissatisfied with the services you or a family member received, call us. We will work to resolve the issue. You also can contact us if you need help filing an appeal.

10. You suspect fraud or abuse. Fraud happens when a member or doctor does something dishonest to get a benefit. Abuse is when rules are broken and Medicaid has to pay extra money. Tell us if you notice fraud or abuse. Call the Neighborhood Compliance Hotline at 1-800-826-6762 or Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019. Your call is free and will be kept private.



How We Look at Quality

We want to make sure you have access to high-quality health care services. We check the quality of care you receive through our Quality Improvement Program.

The goal of our Quality Improvement Program is to make sure you have:

- Easy access to high-quality medical and behavioral care
- Health management programs that meet your needs
- Help with any chronic conditions you have
- Support when you need it most, such as after a hospital stay
- High satisfaction with your doctors and with Neighborhood

One of the ways we measure quality of care is through HEDIS®. HEDIS stands for Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set. It was developed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. The data help us track important health information, such as how often our members see their primary care doctor, take their asthma control medications or have important health screenings.

Neighborhood also wants to make sure you are satisfied with the services you get from your doctor and from us. To do this, we look at CAHPS® data. CAHPS stands for Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems. This survey asks questions to see how satisfied you are with the care you receive.

Neighborhood looks at the results of HEDIS and CAHPS. We share these results with your doctors and other health care providers. We work with them to make sure the care they give you and the services we give you add to your health care in a positive way.

To learn more about our Quality Improvement Program and what we do to improve your care, go to www.nhpri.org and look at the information under "About Us / Our Commitment to Quality." To request printed copies of information on quality improvement, call 1-800-459-6019.

CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

Tips for Using Your Pharmacy Benefits

Neighborhood offers prescription and over-the-counter drug benefits. You can go to almost any pharmacy in Rhode Island to get your prescription filled. Many of the pharmacies in our network are open 24 hours a day.

The prescription drugs your health plan covers are listed in your formulary. There are many medicines in Neighborhood's formulary. A small number of them need approval from Neighborhood before we will cover them. Your doctor can call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019 to get approval. Our formulary booklet describes how we approve medicines. It also has other information about our pharmacy services.

Neighborhood covers many over-the-counter products, too. These items, such as ibuprofen, are on the shelf at your pharmacy. They still require a prescription from your doctor.

Some members have to pay copayments for medications. Copayments are usually \$1 for generic prescriptions and \$3 for brand-name prescriptions. If you have copayments, the amount you must pay is on your Neighborhood member ID card. Look on the front side of the card, at the bottom near "Rx."

Neighborhood encourages the use of generic medications. Neighborhood members very often are required to try a generic medication first, before receiving the brand-name version. For a complete list of formulary medications or covered over-the-counter medications, visit www.nhpri.org or call 1-800-459-6019.

If you believe that it is medically necessary for you to take the brand name drug, you must contact your doctor or other practitioner that prescribed the medicine. They are aware of the criteria and the process to request approval of brand name drug coverage.

In addition, to make your pharmacy visit a safe and successful one, follow these steps:

- Bring your Neighborhood member ID card. Make sure you have the card of the family member who needs the prescription, if it's not you. Show your card to the pharmacist.
- Give your prescription to the pharmacist.
- Ask the pharmacist how to take the medicine, if you are not sure.
- Take all your medicines as prescribed. Tell your doctor if you experience any side effects.
- Do not share medicines with family members.
- Put your medicines in a safe place and keep them away from children.

If you have any problems at the pharmacy, call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019.

Complaints and Appeals: Commonly Asked Questions

Neighborhood wants you to have quality health care services. These services should meet your needs. They should happen in a timely and respectful manner. To better serve you, Neighborhood has a process for complaints and appeals.

Complaints and appeals may be about

- Bills received
- Benefits coverage
- Medical services that were denied or found to be unnecessary
- Medical services you were unhappy with
- Access to appointments
- Quality issues
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Any issues that cause dissatisfaction

What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is when you let someone know you are not happy about something. It is about the care or services you receive as a Neighborhood member. Complaints may be submitted in writing or over the phone by Neighborhood members or their authorized representative. An authorized representative is a person you choose to act for you, such as a relative, friend or legal counsel.

We encourage you to tell us if you have a complaint about access to services, the quality of care received, transportation issues, coverage decisions (including nonpayment of a claim) or any health care experience that left you dissatisfied.

If you need help filing a complaint, call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019. We can help you. Copies of our complaints and appeals process are also available.

Send written complaints and appeals to
Customer Service: Complaints/Appeals
Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island
299 Promenade St. Providence, RI 02908

What Happens When I Submit a Complaint?

Neighborhood will contact you within 30 calendar days after receiving your complaint. Sometimes we might ask you for more information. Once we make a decision, we will let you know what it is. We encourage members to share both good and bad experiences with us. This input helps us improve.

If you aren't happy with Neighborhood's decision, you may file a formal complaint or grievance with Customer Service. The complaint may be written or verbal. We will evaluate the complaint and tell you what Neighborhood's decision is within 30 calendar days of receiving it.

What Is an Appeal?

Neighborhood might make a decision about your benefits, your coverage or your relationship with your health plan that you are not satisfied with. You or your authorized representative (such as a relative or friend) has a right to appeal decisions that Neighborhood makes. You can ask Neighborhood to look again at the care or services that were denied or the decision that was made.

You can submit an appeal in writing or by calling Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019. You have the right to request access to and copies of all documents related to the appeal. You may add information about the appeal to your file in writing or in person.

You can also contact Neighborhood's member advocate, Jackie Dowdy (1-401-459-6172), who can answer your questions and help you with the appeals process.

How Does Neighborhood Handle Appeals?

Qualified health plan staff decide on appeals that are not about medical issues. Appeals on medical issues are decided on by qualified health care professionals. Neighborhood will make a fair decision about medical appeals within 15 calendar days of your first request.

If you file your first appeal and you are not satisfied with the decision, you may submit a second appeal. Different health care professionals, in the same or similar specialty as the doctor who recommended your care, will make a decision. Second appeals are also decided within 15 calendar days.

How to Get Authorization for Services

Some of the health care services you or your doctor requests will require review by a Neighborhood Medical Management nurse or physician reviewer.

Our Medical Management staff can answer your questions Monday through Friday, 8:30AM to 5PM. If you call after hours, leave a message and we will return your call the next business day.

Our nurse or physician will gather the appropriate information as quickly as possible from your doctors and other health care providers to determine if the services requested are “medically necessary.” Medically necessary services are ones that are required for the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of a health condition.

The Medical Management team will make a decision before the scheduled date of service or within 15 calendar days of when the request is received, whichever comes first.

If more information is needed to help Neighborhood make a decision, you will be notified that the decision time frame was extended. Requests for scheduled services that are urgent are responded to within 24 hours of receipt of the request and all required information.

Call us at 1-800-459-6019 if you:

- Would like information on the status of an authorization request
- Have questions about Neighborhood’s Medical Management process
- Have questions about services that have been authorized or denied

Neighborhood Customer Service will make sure you are able to speak with our Medical Management team if you have questions about care.

Reviewing New Technology

Neighborhood pays attention to medical advances to see if a new technology would benefit members. A committee of staff and doctors evaluates the technology and recommends if Neighborhood should cover it.

Requests to review new technology or new applications of existing technology that aren’t presently included in the benefits package may be submitted by members (or family members acting on their behalf); network providers; Neighborhood staff members on behalf of a member; and Neighborhood case management, utilization management, physician advisers or other staff. Requests are researched and reviewed within 90 days. Faster reviews are available for emergencies. Call Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019.

Our Medical Review Team

Neighborhood has a special team of nurses and clinical staff. This team reviews requests for hospital admissions and other treatments. The process is called utilization management (UM). Our UM decisions are based on what is right for our members. We want to make sure you receive the best health care possible!

Neighborhood does not reward anyone who makes UM decisions with money or other incentives for denying or limiting services to members. Neighborhood does not give financial rewards for UM decisions that result in fewer services or less care. If you have questions about how Neighborhood makes care decisions, call us at 1-800-459-6019.

YOUR RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Neighborhood's Notice of Privacy Practices

Please review the information below very carefully. This information describes how health information about you may be used and shared and how you can get this information.

When does Neighborhood share my health information with others?

We share your health information with others, without your approval, to:

- Assist in your treatment, by talking with the doctors involved in your plan of care to decide what's best for you.
- Determine whether we will pay for the services provided to you, such as deciding if a health care service is medically necessary.
- Conduct our health care operations, which include things like quality improvement programs.

When may Neighborhood share my health information with others?

We may also use or disclose your information in the following situations without your consent:

- To public health authorities for the purpose of controlling disease.
- To authorities allowed by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect. In addition, we may disclose to these authorities if we believe you have been a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- To appropriate organizations to assist in disaster relief efforts.

- To health oversight agencies that license health care professionals, and that conduct investigations and inspections of health care professionals.
- To a person who may have been exposed by you to a communicable disease.
- To report adverse reactions to medications, product defects, and other information, if required by the Food and Drug Administration.
- In the course of any legal action, in response to a court order or, sometimes in response to a subpoena, as long as you have been duly notified or attempts to notify you have been made according to law and the subpoena has not been withdrawn.
- To law enforcement authorities, as long as all applicable legal requirements are met.
- To a medical examiner, such as for identification purposes or determining the cause of death.
- To prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public if we believe that the disclosure is necessary.
- To comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar programs.

- To you and the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services ("Secretary") to investigate or determine our compliance with the federal privacy regulations.

In an emergency, we may also share your health information without your approval when we are required by law or public health authorities to do so.

Does Neighborhood need my approval before it shares my health information with others?

Except for the purposes listed above and those permitted or required by the government, Neighborhood will not share your information without your written approval. Even when you have given your approval, you can change your mind as long as you do so in writing before we have shared your information.



What are my health information rights?

You have the right to:

- Get a paper copy of this notice if you ask for it.
- Ask us to limit the way we share your information, although we are not required to agree to what you ask.
- Look at and get a copy of the health information we have about you, as provided by law.
- Ask us to change information we have about you in our member file. You must ask us in writing and tell us why you are asking for the change, although we are not required to agree to the change.
- Ask us to contact you in an alternative way. For example, you may ask us to contact you at work only.
- Take back your approval that we share your information. However, you can only do that if the information hasn't already been shared.
- Receive an accounting of when we shared your information, except if it was for payment, treatment or operations, or with your approval.

What are Neighborhood's duties?

Neighborhood uses many methods to protect your oral, written and electronic health information from illegal use or disclosure. We are required by law to:

- Keep your health information private.
- Provide you with this notice and follow the rules listed here.
- Let you know if we cannot agree to limit how we share your information.

- Agree to reasonable requests to contact you by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- Get your written approval to share your health information for reasons other than those listed above and permitted by law.

Not only do all the physicians and providers in our network know that your information is private and confidential, but Neighborhood's employees know that too. We use training programs for our employees and policies and procedures supported by management oversight to ensure that our employees know the procedures they need to follow to make sure that your information—whether in oral, written or electronic format—is secure and safeguarded. Additionally, we have other vendors sign Business Associate Agreements that clearly outline their requirement to protect your information and our expectations concerning protecting your oral, written or electronic health information.

Neighborhood reserves the right to change its privacy practices. If our practices change, we will revise this notice and send it to all Neighborhood members. The new practices would apply to all of the health information we have, including the health information we already have about you.

What if I have questions or need help with this?


If you need help understanding this notice or you want to exercise any of your rights stated within this notice, please contact Neighborhood Customer Service at 1-800-459-6019.

What if I think Neighborhood shared my information incorrectly?

You may complain to the Neighborhood Privacy Officer by calling 1-800-963-1001 and asking for the Director of Organizational Development and Human Resources, or by writing to: Chief Privacy Officer, Attn: Director of Organizational Development and Human Resources, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, 299 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.

You also have the right to complain, in writing, to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Please ask us if you need help doing that. Your benefits will not be affected if you make a complaint. Here is the address and phone number: Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, JFK Federal Building, Room 1875, Boston, MA 02203, 1-866-627-7748.

You can also contact Neighborhood's Compliance Hotline (1-800-826-6762) if you have a complaint.



Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island

close friends

Close Friends is published by Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island for its members. The information is intended to educate its members about subjects pertinent to their health and is not a substitute for consultation with their doctor.

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