

HOUSE CALL

KelseyCare Advantage
Celebrating 10 years

July 2018

ARE YOU HURRICANE-READY?

It may be hard to believe, since so many of us were affected or knew someone affected by Hurricane Harvey, that the Atlantic Hurricane Season started all over again on June 1. KelseyCare Advantage and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security urge all seniors to be hurricane-ready, especially since they are among the most at-risk groups when disaster strikes. That means planning and preparing BEFORE the first storm even forms.

- **Create a contact sheet** containing a complete medical history and important information for emergency/rescue personnel. Be sure to always keep a copy on hand. If you must evacuate, leave an extra copy with the senior(s) you're caring for in case you become separated. Having a detailed medical history at the ready can help medical professionals provide faster treatment and care during an emergency.
- **Medications.** If you or the elderly person in your care has a medication schedule or

must take special medications, make sure that information is included in your disaster plan. Do you have a complete list of medications, dosages and times they should be taken? Do you have copies of prescriptions to show emergency/rescue personnel? Do you have someone designated to monitor the dosage schedule and administer medications?

- **Travel Arrangements.** In an emergency, you sometimes have no option but to move to a shelter, another city, or even leave the state. If you or the elderly person you're caring for has special mobility needs, traveling can pose challenges you need to consider. What special travel arrangements will you need to prepare for? Will physical exertion aggravate a preexisting condition? Do you have a collapsible wheelchair on-hand?
- **Call 2-1-1 for information** about what transportation services are available during an emergency. It's important to know, however, that 2-1-1 is

NOT a number to call during a storm. You must pre-register for evacuation transportation.

- **Special Equipment.** Many older Texans require the aid of special medical equipment. Some of this equipment may not be available during an emergency because of a power outage or the possibility that the equipment cannot be transported. Does special medical equipment limit the mobility or the distance you can travel? Who will be responsible for bringing along the special equipment should you have to evacuate? Do you have spare parts or materials for the equipment in your supplies?

These are just a few of the issues to consider when making emergency plans involving older family members or friends. For more information, including how to put together a disaster survival kit, visit the American Red Cross website at <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/seniors>.

NEW!

INTRODUCING KCA Transportation

In an earlier newsletter, we hinted at an important change regarding our transportation benefit. We are excited to announce the changes become effective July 1, 2018.

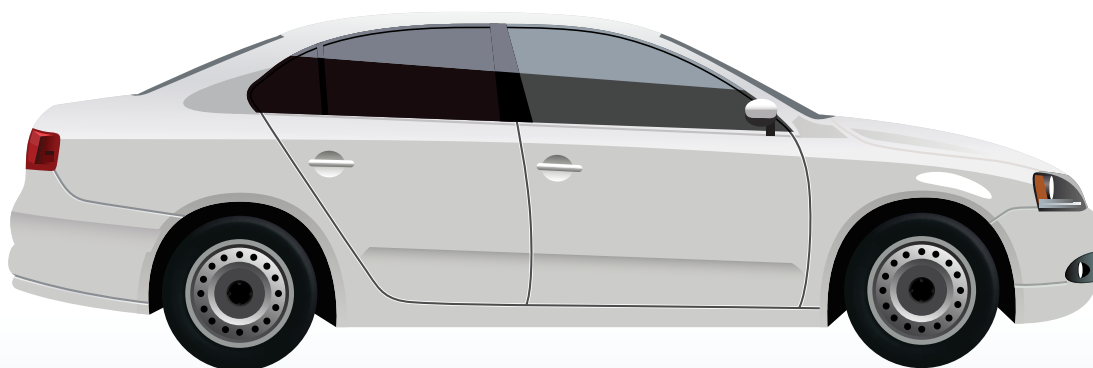
Transportation to and from medical appointments is an important benefit for many members. To improve the service and convenience of your transportation benefit, KelseyCare Advantage is introducing KCA Transportation.

Our representatives will be coordinating and managing the

new transportation functions for all KelseyCare Advantage members using industry leading technology to manage the logistics and transportation throughout the Houston area. To administer this benefit, we're partnering with Circulation Health, a non-emergency medical transportation exchange that coordinates on-demand rides for patients — getting members to and from medical appointments. Circulation partners with several transportation providers, including

Lyft, which is the fastest growing rideshare company in the U.S. today. Through KelseyCare Advantage's partnership with Circulation/Lyft, members can expect a better overall experience, shorter wait times, and improved access to healthcare services.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
[KELSEYCAREADVANTAGE.COM/
TRANSPORTATION](http://KELSEYCAREADVANTAGE.COM/TRANSPORTATION) OR CALL
713-KCA-RIDE (713-522-7433).**



RIDE REQUEST

WE MATCH APPROPRIATE RIDE

RIDE DELIVERED



Online Booking
Desktop; Mobile for
Providers, Patients



Call Center



KEGEL EXERCISES

[EDITOR'S NOTE: contains clinical references to the vagina]

Having trouble controlling your bowels or bladder? Don't be embarrassed! It's more common than you think, and Kegel exercises may help. Pregnancy, childbirth, surgery, aging and weight gain can all weaken your pelvic floor.

The pelvic area is the part of your body containing your hip bones. Below the pelvis, several layers of muscle stretch between your legs. These muscles attach to the front, back and sides of the pelvic bone.

Kegel exercises are designed to make your pelvic floor muscles stronger – the muscles that hold up your bladder and help keep it from leaking.

Kegel exercises are simple clench-and-release exercises. The National Institutes of Health recommends trying one of the following ways to find the right muscles to squeeze:

- Imagine that you are trying to stop passing gas. Squeeze the muscles you would use. If you sense a “pulling” feeling, you are squeezing the right muscles for pelvic exercises.
- Imagine that you are sitting on a marble and want to pick up the marble with your vagina.

Many people have trouble finding the right muscles. Ask your doctor, nurse or therapist to help you. They can check to make sure you are doing the exercises correctly. You can also exercise using special weights or biofeedback. Ask your Kelsey-Seybold medical team about these exercise aids.

Don't squeeze other muscles at the same time. Be careful not to tighten your stomach, legs, or other muscles. Squeezing the wrong muscles can put more pressure on your bladder control muscles. Just squeeze the pelvic muscle. Don't hold your breath.

Repeat, but don't overdo it. At first, find a quiet spot to practice, such as the bathroom or bedroom, so you can concentrate. Lie on

the floor. Pull in the pelvic muscles and hold for a count of 3. Then relax for a count of 3. Work up to 10 to 15 repeats each time you exercise. Keep an exercise log to track your sessions.

Do your pelvic exercises at least three times a day. Every day, use three positions: lying down, sitting, and standing. You can exercise while lying on the floor, sitting at a desk or standing in the kitchen. Using all three positions makes the muscles strongest.

Be patient. Don't give up. It's just 5 minutes, three times a day. You may not feel your bladder control improve for 3 to 6 weeks, but most women do eventually notice improvement.



ARE YOU UP-TO-DATE ON YOUR VACCINES?

No matter how old we are, we all need immunizations to guard against serious and sometimes deadly diseases. Protection from the vaccines we may have gotten as kids wears off over time and can put us at risk of illness if we don't keep up-to-date. Plus, more vaccines are available today to keep us healthy.

TETANUS

Tetanus is an uncommon but very dangerous disease. Caused by a type of bacteria, it is sometimes called “lockjaw” because one of the most common signs is painful tightening in the jaw muscles that can make it hard to open the mouth, breathe or swallow. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis) vaccination for everyone. Vaccines used today against diphtheria and tetanus (DT and Td) sometimes also include protection against whooping cough (DTaP and Tdap). Two of these (DTaP and DT) are given to children younger than seven years old, while two (Tdap and Td) are given to older children and adults. A booster dose against tetanus and diphtheria is recommended every 10 years.

SHINGLES

Shingles is a common disease that causes a painful rash and blisters and can lead to serious complications. The good news is that the new shingles vaccine, called Shingrix, is more than 90% effective at preventing shingles. Adults age 50 and older need to receive two doses

of Shingrix. The second dose must be given two to six months after the first dose. You need to get Shingrix even if you: have already had shingles, have been vaccinated against shingles with Zostavax (an earlier shingles vaccine) or are not sure if you've ever had chickenpox.

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The virus can cause lifelong infection, scarring of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure and death. Fortunately, the hepatitis B vaccine gives more than 90% protection to people who get the vaccine. Two vaccines protect against hepatitis B. The hepatitis B vaccine (given in three doses) protects infants, children, and adults from hepatitis B. The hepatitis A and B combination vaccine protects adults from both hepatitis B and hepatitis A (more common outside the U.S.).

PNEUMONIA

Pneumococcal disease is common in young children, but older adults are at greatest risk of serious illness and death. There are two kinds of vaccines that help prevent pneumococcal disease. The CDC recommends pneumococcal conjugate vaccine for all children younger than two years old, all adults 65 years or older and people two through 64 years old with certain medical conditions. CDC recommends pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine for all adults 65 years or older, people two through 64 years old with certain medical conditions, and adults 19 through 64 years old who smoke cigarettes.

Be sure to talk to your Kelsey-Seybold doctor about any or all of these vaccines to determine what is best for you. You'll also find helpful information on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/vaccines-diseases.html>.



PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE AND ABUSE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has officially called prescription drug abuse an epidemic. Although medication is generally safe when taken as your doctor prescribes, misusing any drug is dangerous. Know the facts about prescription drug abuse:

1. Accidental Prescription drug overdoses have more than quadrupled over the past 16 years
2. People who abuse prescription medication often get the drugs from a friend or relative
3. Having prescription pain

medications in your home increases your risk benefit

In order to do your part, take these steps to protect yourself and family and to prevent prescription drug misuse and abuse from happening in your home.

1. Take medication only as directed by your doctor
2. Lock up medications at risk for abuse such as pain and anti-anxiety medications, sleeping pills and stimulants
3. Keep medication in the original container with the label attached

4. Always store your medication in the same place and keep track of how much you have taken so you know if any is missing
5. Dispose of all unused and expired medications appropriately. Your pharmacist can tell you how!

www.awarerx.org is a website which provides more information about prescription drug abuse and safely storing your medications.

FRAUD ALERT: *Diabetes Testing Supplies*

Recently, we have learned of several attempts of fraudulent activity involving diabetes testing supplies. A growing number of our members are reporting suspicious and persistent phone calls from callers offering “free supplies” that include glucose meters, diabetic test strips, and lancets, as well as items such as heating pads, lift seats, foot aids, or braces. The callers often pose as federal employees or workers representing legitimate diabetes associations, and request Medicare numbers and personal health information. If you have diabetes and are getting a phone call from somebody offering you free diabetes supplies, there is a high likelihood that you’re being scammed.

There are many actions you can take to protect yourself and your family from these scammers:

- Be suspicious of anyone who offers free items or services and then asks for your Medicare or financial information. These calls are not coming from Medicare, diabetes associations, or other similar organizations. While the caller says the items are “free,” the items are still billed to Medicare.
- Do not provide your Medicare number or other personal information. They can be used to steal your identity for financial fraud or to file false claims with Medicare or other insurers.
- If you receive a package from the scammers, you are under no

obligation to accept items that you did not order. Instead, you should refuse the delivery and/or return to the sender. Keep a record of the sender’s name and the date you returned the item.

- Check your Medicare Summary Notice and other medical information to see if you were charged for items you did not order or did not receive. Also, check for items that were billed multiple times, such as glucose meters, diabetes test strips and lancets, and other supplies.
- Report any irregular activity to your health care provider and the Office of Inspector General Hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS or online at <http://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/report-fraud>

TRACKING MEDICATIONS

Help From Your Smart Phone

At KelseyCare Advantage, we understand that keeping track of your medication regimen can sometimes be a challenge. One popular strategy is to organize your medications by using pillboxes, but sometimes this may not be enough. As technology evolves, there are now tools and applications (apps) specifically developed to help you keep track of your medications right from your mobile device (i.e. smartphone, computer, tablet.)

Some features of these applications include:

- Alerts when it is time to take your next dose of a medication
- Alerts to someone else (i.e. spouse, child, caregiver, doctor) when you forget to take your medication
- Alerts when it is time to request a refill from your pharmacy
- Charts that display and monitor your progress over time

As former Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop said, “Drugs don’t work in patients who don’t take them.” Approximately 50% of patients do not take their medications as prescribed which have been linked to more than one third of preventable hospitalizations.

We understand that life can get busy and forgetting to take medications may not be intentional, but using technology may help make remembering to take your medications easier. Check out the app store on your device to see what applications are available. Whether you use a Microsoft, Apple, or Google

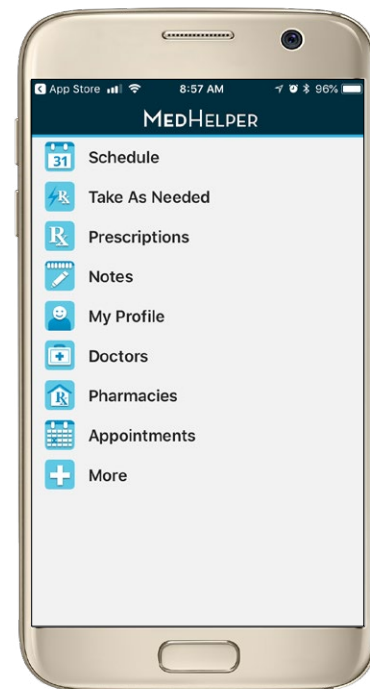
product, there are many different applications to choose from, and the best part is that many of them are free! Keep in mind though that there may be multiple versions of an app available so before you click install, be sure to read if the app requires a fee to avoid any unintended expenses.

Below are a few applications (apps) to help get you started in your search for a tool that may best work for you.

MedHelper: MedHelper allows individuals and caregivers to keep track of and schedule prescriptions, medications, and refills. Alarms can be set to notify you when medications need to be taken or when prescriptions are getting low and need refilling. Available on Android and Apple devices, the free version is called MedHelper Lite.

MedCoach Medication Reminder: MedCoach helps you remember to take your medications and pills at the right time and day. MedCoach can also connect to your pharmacy to refill your prescriptions. Available only on Apple and Android devices, it is free to download.

Dosecast - Medication Reminder: Dosecast reminds you to take your medications and vitamins. Dosecast helps you take doses on a daily, weekly, or monthly schedule, or even every X number of days, weeks, only on certain days of the week, or after a pre-set number of hours or days since the last dose. You also have the option to set a maximum number of doses allowed to avoid dangerous overdoses. Available on Android and



Apple devices, it is free to download.

My Meds: My Meds allows you to track your medications, vitamins, and supplements by setting up reminder alerts or alarms. Six different schedule types are available: fixed, sliding, once or multiple time a day, at meals, or as needed. You can configure dosage amounts to avoid overdoses, and get refill reminders. Available on Apple, Android and Windows Phone, it is free to download.

To download to an Android device, go to the Google Store and search for the app by its name. Click the Install button and the app will be downloaded to your device.

To download to an Apple device, go to the Apps store or iTunes and search by the app name. Click the Install button and the app will be downloaded to your device.

To download to a Windows device, go to the Store and search for the app by name. Click the Install button and the app will be downloaded to your device.

NEED HELP WITH PAYING YOUR OUT OF POCKET COSTS?

KelseyCare Advantage wants to make it easy for you to apply for a Medicare Savings Program – and possibly receive added financial assistance. That is why we have partnered with PremiumAssist, part of a company called Human Arc, national experts in helping people get government-funded healthcare and other benefits through Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Medicare Savings Programs are part of your state's Medicaid program and are available to anyone who receives Medicare and **meets certain income guidelines**. The programs can help pay some, or possibly all, of your monthly Part B

premium. PremiumAssist can also help you enroll in a prescription drug program called Extra Help (also known as LIS), which could help you cover the costs of your Medicare prescription medications, as well.

PremiumAssist will help you determine which programs you are eligible for and will walk you through the application process. They can also link you to other community resources, such as help with utility bills, food and housing.

KelseyCare Advantage is providing this assistance free of charge to you! Your participation is voluntary and will not change your

benefits with us in any way. If you qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, you keep your health plan and existing services and benefits – plus receive additional government-paid health care and more money in your monthly Social Security check, which you can spend any way you wish.

The PremiumAssist team can be reached at 1-877-236-4471, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. (CST). They are happy to answer any questions you have about enrollment. If you are hearing or speech impaired, call the National Relay Service on TTY at 1-877-486-2048, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. (CST).

Important Plan Information