



Start now to Quit For Life

This is a good time of year to begin thinking about new year's resolutions, especially if they involve a decision to kick the habit of tobacco use.



Leave the "cold turkey" in the fridge. Your chances of quitting are best if you make a plan.

As a Carpenters health plan member, you have access to a free program that can help you plan to succeed. Call 1-866-784-8454 and enroll in the **Quit For Life** program. You can sign up even if you're currently using tobacco. What matters is your readiness to quit.

With Quit For Life, you cannot fail. Quit For Life has one of the highest success rates in the industry. And you can enroll as many times as you need to quit tobacco for good.

Offered in partnership with the American Cancer Society, the Quit For Life formula for success combines one-on-one counseling and nicotine replacement therapy for optimal outcomes.

A highly-trained Quit Coach will support you through the steps of an easy-to-follow Quitting Plan. With at least 240 hours of training in behavior counseling, your Quit Coach has the skills to help you identify thoughts and situations that trigger your desire to smoke or chew.

In this issue

Start now to Quit For Life

Wrap up your \$200 gift card by Dec. 31

9 things to know about healthcare quality

Own Your Health for better quality healthcare

Should you create a personal health record?

Ask a Mayo Clinic nurse

Mayo website offers "good medicine, good ideas"

Diabetes program helps carpenters take control

You'll receive as much one-on-one support as you need over the phone. Support also is available through Web Coach, a private, online community where you can complete activities, watch videos, track your progress, and join discussions with other participants.

Nicotine replacement will improve your chance of quitting by taking the edge off physical withdrawals while you're practicing techniques learned from a Quit Coach. You'll receive advice on which

type, dose, and duration of nicotine substitute or medication is right for you, and on how to use it so it really works.

Eligible health plan members pay nothing out of pocket for nicotine-replacement gum or patches. Prescription medication is available without a copay, but you'll need to have your doctor write the prescription.

Quit For Life can help you make a plan to quit tobacco for good. **Start today by calling 1-866-784-8454**, or sign up online at www.quitnow.net/ctww.



9 things to know about healthcare quality

What's wrong with our healthcare system? For 78 percent of Americans, the chief complaint is high cost, according to a November 2011 health and healthcare survey by Gallup.

The high cost of healthcare is sometimes justified by the suggestion that patients are getting the best healthcare in the world. However, credible studies indicate healthcare quality has been on the decline for many years. Here's a summary of what is currently known about healthcare quality in America.

- 1. Care varies.** Across the United States, there are striking variations in the care doctors provide. These differences affect both the quality and the quantity of care you receive.
- 2. More is not better.** Patients in some areas of the country receive more hospital stays, doctors' visits, imaging and tests—but don't end up any healthier. Researchers estimate that 30 percent of healthcare spending—about \$750 billion per year—is for services that may not improve people's health.
- 3. It's a coin toss.** When Americans go to the doctor, adults get the level of care recommended by experts only about 55 percent of the time, and children get it only 46.5 percent of the time.
- 4. Mistakes happen.** Preventable medical errors kill as many as 98,000 Americans each year. They are the eighth-most common cause of death in this country.

5. We get what we pay for. Doctors and hospitals are paid for doing things—like procedures or tests—rather than for doing the right things, like preventing illness and injury.

6. We know what works. Across the country, changes that improve the quality of care are beginning to take hold, such as new rules and checklists to prevent patients in hospitals from getting infections, making sure heart attack patients get the right medications when they arrive in the emergency room, and using technology to remind diabetes patients to get tests and checkups.

7. Technology fuels change. Doctors, nurses, and hospitals are using health information technology to help coordinate and improve care among your different healthcare providers. This way, you don't have to keep repeating your medical history, and they all know which tests and care you've already received.

8. Finding the right fit is key. More information about the quality of healthcare is available than ever before. There are differences among healthcare providers. Finding the right doctor for you could mean better health.

9. You play a role. Healthcare providers, the government, and many other groups like the **Puget Sound Health Alliance** are working hard to improve healthcare quality. When you seek good care, you make an important contribution to improving healthcare quality for you and your community. You'll get better outcomes when you make informed choices, become partners to your doctors and nurses in your care, and follow recommendations.

Source: Care About Your Care (www.careaboutyourcare.org), a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation initiative

Wrap up your \$200 gift card by Dec. 31

There are only a few weeks left to tie up loose ends and qualify for the **Carpenters Rewards** incentive. If you're enrolled in Health Coaching or a Health Management Program from Mayo Clinic, it needs to be completed by 12/31/2012 to qualify for points. Here's a checklist of requirements:

Health Exam/Biometric Screening	75	Deadline: 9/30/2012
Mayo Clinic Health Management Programs	25	Deadline: 12/31/2012
Mayo Clinic Health Assessment	75	Deadline: 10/31/2012
Mayo Clinic Health Coaching/My Coach	25	Deadline: 12/31/2012
Points needed for \$200 gift card:	200	





Own Your Health

Own Your Health for better quality healthcare

Patients are part of the healthcare system and play a significant role in improving quality standards.

Own Your Health is a campaign to empower consumer involvement in improving their health and the quality of their healthcare.

Own Your Health is produced by the **Puget Sound Health Alliance**, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving healthcare quality and affordability in the region. As a member of the Alliance, Carpenters Health and Security Trusts of Western Washington is working with employers, physicians, hospitals, patients, health plans, and others in the region to improve healthcare decision-making.

The Own Your Health campaign emphasizes four ways for patients to influence and improve the quality of care they receive.

1. Use a Primary Care Doctor

An ongoing relationship with a primary care doctor can lead to better outcomes and lower health-related expenses.

Part of that is due to the emphasis on prevention through screenings, vaccinations, and lifestyle changes. It's also due to the primary care doctor's function as your first point of contact when you need medical care, whether it's related to prevention, illness, medication, surgery, or hospitalization.

With a primary care doctor always in the loop, you're positioned to get the most effective treatment and avoid unnecessary procedures and tests.

For tips on finding the right primary care doctor for you, visit ctwww.org/provider.



2. Get the Right Care

Quality care means getting the right care, at the right time, for the right reason. The most expensive care is not always the highest quality care, and simply because your doctor recommends a procedure or medication doesn't guarantee a positive outcome.



Healthcare professionals are generally caring, hardworking people, but they do not provide the same quality of care for all of their patients. Quality varies from one doctor to another. The care from a physician's office is different than the care from an emergency department.

When you own your health, you take responsibility for deciding what care you need and where you get it. It means doing your homework, using reliable sources of information, maintaining a dialogue with your doctor, and working together to make the best decisions about your care.

3. Talk to your doctor

Communication is crucial to getting high-quality care and higher value for your healthcare dollar. Follow these suggestions to make decisions that produce the best outcomes.

- **Be informed.** Research your condition. Read brochures or other written information your doctor provides.



Take notes during your visit so you can refer to them later and make sure you understand. The more you know, the better equipped you are to make the best decision.

- **Be detailed.** Talk openly and honestly about your concerns, even if you don't normally share how you feel. The more details you provide, the better your doctor can advise you on effective treatment options.
- **Ask questions.** Create a list of questions that you can take with you, whether you are getting a checkup, talking about an illness or health condition, or discussing a test, medication, or procedure.

continued on page 4

- **Get answers.** Speak up if you don't understand something. Otherwise, your doctor will assume you understand. If you're sick and not thinking clearly, bring a friend or relative to the appointment. Contact your doctor's office after the appointment if you missed something.

4. Take care of yourself

Doctors frequently express complaints about patients who don't take their medicine. When patients fill prescriptions for medications they don't understand, don't use correctly, or (even worse) don't use at all, they're wasting money and getting poor-quality care.

But medicine isn't limited to pharmaceuticals prescribed by physicians. Medicine is anything



related to the science of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease.

Taking your medicine also means being aware of health issues, keeping an eye on symptoms, and taking action to avoid complications. It means listening to your medical advisors, understanding what you're being told, and following directions. It means doing everything within your control to prevent injuries and illnesses from happening in the first place.

More than anything, taking your medicine means taking ownership of your health and making decisions to get the care you need, whether it's care you provide yourself or with the help of healthcare providers.

Use Own Your Health resources to get better care

To make good decisions about your health, you need access to good information. The **Own Your Health** website puts you in touch with information and tools from credible sources. Here's a shortlist of what you'll find. **Visit the website at www.wacommunitycheckup.org/ownyourhealth.**

Tools and Topics

- Choosing a primary care doctor
- Creating a family health portrait
- Discharge planning checklist
- Diseases, conditions, and treatments
- Effective healthcare
- Evidence-based treatment guidelines
- Finding information and support after diagnosis
- Guide to healthcare quality
- How to find trustworthy information on the Internet
- How to talk to your doctor
- Making the most of your visit
- Medicine tracking and safety
- Quality comparisons for medical groups, clinics, hospitals
- Questions to ask your doctor
- Taking care of yourself when you leave the hospital

- Understanding medical terms
- What doctors wish their patients knew
- What to do during your medical appointment
- When to use ER, urgent care, or doctor's office

Sources

- Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Board of Internal Medicine
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Consumer Reports Health
- Harvard University
- Mayo Clinic
- National Institutes of Health
- Office of the U.S. Surgeon General
- Puget Sound Health Alliance
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Should you create a personal health record?

If banking were like healthcare, ATM transactions would take days or longer due to unavailable or misplaced records.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 authorized incentives for doctors and hospitals to create electronic health records that can be quickly accessed and shared so healthcare providers are on the same page.

It's a great idea in theory. But when patients are seeing five physicians at a time, it's unlikely that



any doctor's record is going to have all the facts. The only person who has access to everything is the patient. If you're sick, injured, unconscious, or otherwise incapable of communicating with your healthcare providers, how will they know your complete health history?

The answer is a personal health record. Similar to the electronic records being created by physicians and hospitals, a personal health record is something you do on your own. It's easy to do and free

with a service like **Microsoft HealthVault** (www.microsoft.com/healthvault).

HealthVault offers consumers a safe and secure place to organize, store, and share their health history, conditions, appointments, medications, important documents, and emergency contact information.

These details are vital to making sound decisions about your present and future health and well-being.

Ask Mayo Clinic: Call 800-903-1836

When you're not sure how to respond to an injury or illness, call **Ask Mayo Clinic**. A registered nurse will take your call,

ask you a series of questions about your situation and advise you on the most appropriate response. This service is available at no cost to eligible carpenters and dependents.

Call 800-903-1836 any time, 24 hours a day.



Program the number into your mobile phone so it's always with you.

Mayo Clinic website offers "good medicine, good ideas"

A *New York Times* column recently compared two well-known health information websites and declared MayoClinic.com the better of the two in terms of credibility and integrity.

"No hysteria. No drug peddling. Good medicine. Good ideas," the author wrote after reviewing the Mayo Clinic website. "This is very, very rare in the medical Web."

The competitor, WebMD, was criticized by the author for the "pseudomedicine and subtle misinformation" of its paid content. The author noted that the ad-cluttered site shows obvious connections to pharmaceutical companies and other commercial entities.



Mayo Clinic's credibility and integrity carry over to the **EmbodHealth** website (www.CarpentersHealth.org) that is available to eligible health plan members through the Carpenters Wellness Program. No ads, gimmicks, or commercial interests. Just well-researched information and guidance to help you make good decisions about your health.



CARPENTERS TRUSTS

of Western Washington

PO BOX 1929, Seattle, WA 98111-1929

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 5544

Diabetes program helps carpenters take control

Diabetes is not a disease just for the elderly. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 1.5 million people between the ages of 20 and 64 were diagnosed with diabetes in 2010. The good news is that there's an excellent free program available to help health plan members manage diabetes. Even better, there's a \$200 incentive for participation.

Provided by **Nurtur**, the Carpenters diabetes program combines education and telephone coaching to help you overcome the challenges of living with diabetes.

Eligible health plan members pay nothing out of pocket to participate. Even better, the Carpenters Health and Security Plan offers a \$200 gift card to members who try the diabetes

program or another telephone coaching program from Nurtur. **Call 877-676-7700 to enroll or learn more.**

To qualify for the incentive, just complete a health assessment call and six additional calls with a Health Coach. A Health Coach is a healthcare specialist trained to help health plan members understand and follow their physician treatment plans for chronic health conditions. Participants in the diabetes program are paired with a certified diabetes educator.



Coaching calls are confidential. Personal information is never shared with an employer or union. Calls are usually 15 minutes long and scheduled once a month. It's time well spent when you consider what can be gained from the program. The program provides information,

resources, and personal support so you can take control of your condition and lead a normal, productive life.