

Florida

# BLUE

MEDICARE & MORE® EDITION  
Spring 2002

## Expanding options with BlueComplements

Savings on  
products and  
services

Alternative therapies:  
benefits and cautions  
page 4

Know the signs of  
skin cancer  
page 14

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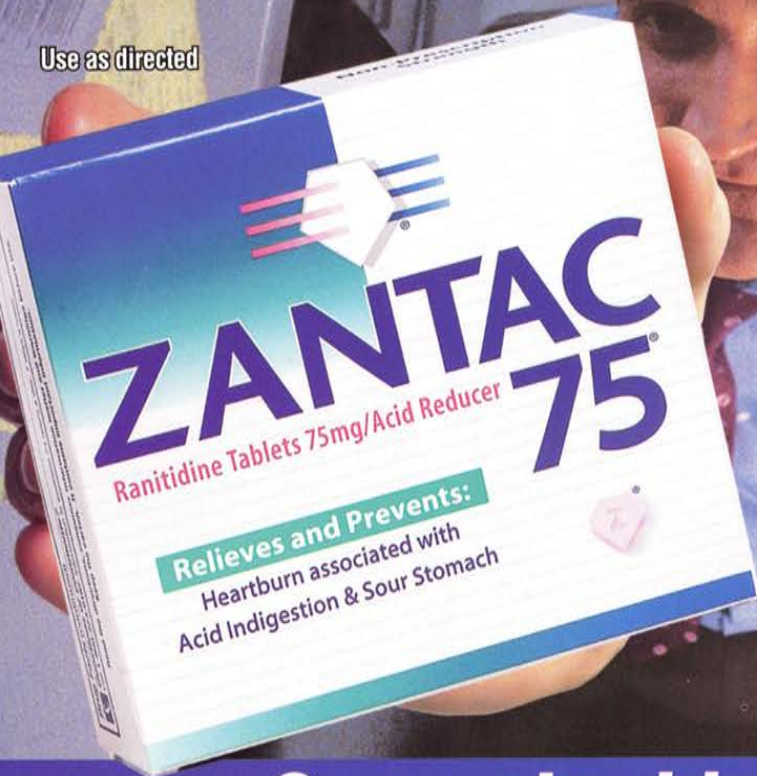
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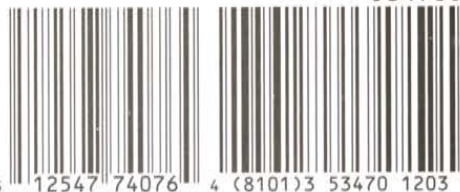
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## Member Services

If you have any comments or questions about this magazine, write to:

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Spring 2002



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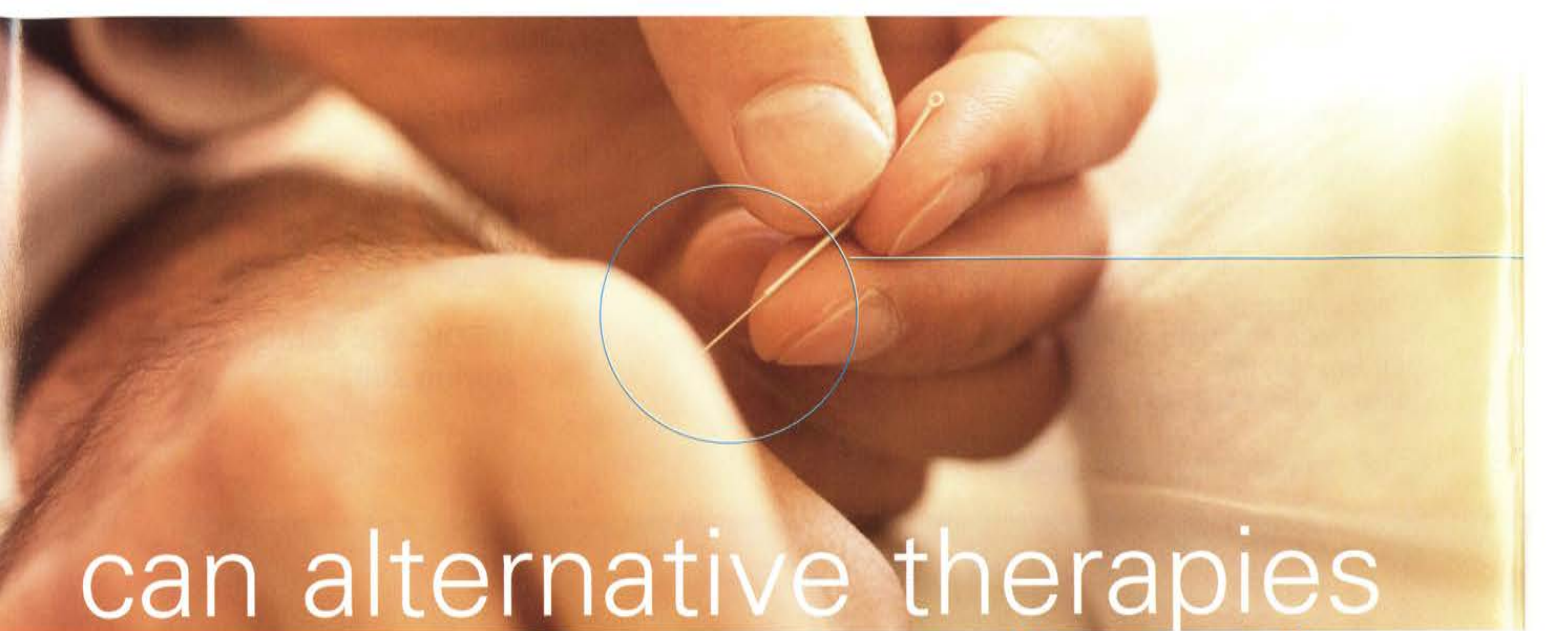
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# can alternative therapies help what ails you?

Many consumers are turning to chiropractors, massage therapists and acupuncturists to complement their health care treatment. In fact, a 1998 survey in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* revealed that four out of 10 Americans use complementary and alternative therapies. These treatments offer relief for numerous ailments. But there are cautions that you should know before using them.

## Chiropractic treatment

Chiropractors focus on the relationship of the body's joints, muscles and nervous system. Conditions treated include back and neck pain, as well as headaches. Central to treatment is an "adjustment" or manipulation of the spine. This is used to correct joint dysfunction, to decrease pain and to improve range of motion. In addition, the chiropractor may prescribe exercise, ice, heat, electrical muscle stimulation or ultrasound, supports and lifestyle changes. Together they may help to speed recovery. They also may prevent or minimize future episodes.

Chiropractic treatment can speed relief from acute back pain in the first month after

symptoms appear. It also has been found to be significantly more effective than the medical or physiotherapy management of patients with chronic or severe low back pain.\*

However, spinal manipulation can worsen some forms of arthritis, osteoporosis and herniated disks. Neck manipulation has a small risk of stroke (less than one case per million treatments).\*\* Use caution if you have a history of these conditions. Also consult with your family physician before seeking chiropractic care in certain cases. These include if you have long-term symptoms of numbness (especially in the groin or buttocks), swelling, dizziness or fainting, or if you use blood thinning or steroid drugs.



## Acupuncture

Acupuncturists insert fine needles into the skin at specific points on the body. This stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord and brain that affect physical and emotional well-being. A 1997 National Institutes of Health consensus panel stated that acupuncture may be useful in treating low back pain as an alternative to standard therapy or as part of a comprehensive treatment program. Still, say Harvard doctors, there isn't enough reliable data currently available to determine whether acupuncture is effective for treating back pain.

The World Health Organization recommends acupuncture for a wide range of conditions. They include eye and mouth disorders, as well as digestive, orthopedic, neurological and respiratory problems such as asthma.

## Massage

Massage therapists manipulate the soft tissue and structures of the body with their hands. Massage is used to alleviate discomfort and stress, as well as promote general health, wellness and relaxation. It can reduce the heart rate, lower blood pressure and increase circulation. It also relaxes muscles, improves flexibility, helps relieve pain and may enhance recovery from illness or injury.

Massage may not be appropriate if you have certain medical conditions. These include phlebitis, infectious disease, cardiac problems, certain skin conditions, inflammation or infection, open wounds and some forms of cancer.

Massage is not a substitute for conservative medical care.

Only a few studies have examined the effectiveness of massage on ailing backs. But so far the news is good. One encouraging study compared patients who received massage, acupuncture or written self-care materials. The study concluded patients in the massage group had less pain and were more active than those who had received acupuncture. They also used less medication for their backs than patients in the other two groups.

### Plan coverage

Chiropractic services are covered in part by Medicare and will also be covered by your plan. For complementary alter-

native services not covered, you can take advantage of Healthy Alternatives, a discount program we offer for this type of service.

\*Sources: Agency for Health Care Policy and Research; *British Medical Journal* (1990)  
\*\*1996 RAND Report, "The Appropriateness of Manipulation and Mobilization"

### Find Out More

[www.amerchiro.org](http://www.amerchiro.org)  
[www.amtamassage.org](http://www.amtamassage.org)  
[www.medicalacupuncture.org](http://www.medicalacupuncture.org)

# healthy alternatives: discounts available on complementary alternative services



Interested in alternative health care options? Your BlueComplements package of value-added services includes our Healthy Alternatives program. Healthy Alternatives is a complementary alternative medicine discount program. It is administered by American Specialty Health Networks (ASHN), which has been awarded full accreditation by the American Accreditation Healthcare Commission/URAC.

As a member in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida family of health care plans, you can receive discounts of up to 25 percent or more on services provided by chiropractors, massage therapists and acupuncturists in the ASHN program.

To locate an ASHN chiropractor, massage therapist or acupuncturist near you, call ASHN toll-free at 877-335-2746. Or contact ASHN online through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's website, [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com).

Keep in mind that Healthy Alternatives is a discount program for certain types of complementary alternative care—not a benefit of Medicare & More. Therefore, exhaust any benefits available through your health care coverage plan before accessing the Healthy Alternatives discount program.

Also, ASHN recommends that prior to receiving complementary health care services you confirm the provider's participation in the ASHN program and verify your financial responsibility.

## Healthyroads

How would you like to take advantage of discounts on thousands of health and wellness products? Thanks to BlueComplements, you can. The program includes Healthyroads, which offers a myriad of health-related products: vitamins and supplements, herbal and homeopathic remedies, natural therapies, diet and sports nutrition, yoga and fitness activities, personal body care, books and videos.

And because you're a member of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's HMO subsidiary Health Options, you get even better discounts than the general public—15 percent to 45 percent off the manufacturer's suggested retail price—plus free standard shipping.

### Find Out More

[www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com)

Click on "BlueComplements"  
Click on "Healthy Alternatives"  
Click on "My Store"

ASHN/Healthyroads

Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. EST

**877-335-2746**

TTY, call Florida Relay: 711





Find Out More

American Academy of Audiology  
[www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org)

[www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com)

Click on "BlueComplements"

Click on "HEARx"

HEARx

800-323-3277

TTY Dial: 711

# now hear this

If your family complains that you turn up the television or radio too loud, that you often ask them to repeat themselves or that you only hear parts of conversations, you may be suffering from hearing loss.

About 28 million Americans suffer from hearing loss, according to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. Most often their condition develops slowly—over a period of 25 to 30 years—and usually the loss is permanent.

Hearing loss can be caused by a variety of factors. Long-term overexposure to such excessive noise as gun-shooting, industrial noise or amplified music can permanently damage your hearing. A problem with the auditory nerve, often caused by a benign tumor that grows on the balance nerve, also can cause hearing loss. Inherited conditions can reduce hearing. Less common are auditory

impairments caused by problems in the brain.

Everyone who lives long enough will develop some degree of age-related hearing loss. Exposure to loud noises, family history or simply wear-and-tear of the systems that help you hear are the causes.

Because hearing problems in

most people develop gradually, the trick is recognizing when it is happening. In addition to the symptoms mentioned above, if you can't hear the doorbell, you don't understand the punch line in a joke because you've missed too much of the story, or you need to ask others about the details of a meeting you just attended, you might be losing your hearing.

---

## HEARx Discount Hearing Program Available

Learn more about hearing loss and your options for improving your hearing through a program administered by HEARx, the largest hearing care organization accredited by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

As part of our value-added services package, members receive free hearing exams and 25 percent off the everyday retail price of hearing aids purchased at HEARx centers. Some special promotional prices will result in even higher savings.

For more information, call HEARx toll free at **800-323-3277** (TTY, call Florida Relay Center: 711). Or visit the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida website, [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com).



## do you **need Glasses?**

Most people experience changes in their vision as they grow older. Paying attention to these changes and consulting an eye professional will help keep your vision as sharp and healthy as nature allows.

You should have your eyes checked at least once every other year unless you have a medical condition that requires very close monitoring, such as diabetes, which will require more frequent exams.

Schedule an eye exam if . . .

- You need more light to see.
- It is more difficult to focus on near objects.
- You have problems adjusting to glare and darkness.
- Differences between colors, especially shades of blue and green, are more difficult to discern.
- You have difficulty seeing distant objects when driving.
- You see specks that seem to dart away when you look at them.
- Your side vision is not what it used to be.
- You experience frequent headaches, itching or burning eyes and double vision.



# save money

## on your glasses

If glasses are what the doctor recommends, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida can help you with significant discounts through special arrangements we have made with individual suppliers.

The Vision One discount program can save you money on both the eye exam and eye-wear. You pay only \$35 for the exam and receive discounts of up to 60 percent off the retail price of frames and lenses.

The program is offered through Cole Managed Vision. To receive the discount, just present your health plan ID card to contracting optical departments at Sears, JCPenney and Target Optical, Pearle Vision Centers and other independent vision care centers in the state. It is not necessary to file a claim. To find the provider nearest you, please call Cole Vision at 800-793-8622 or visit the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida website, [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com).

### Find Out More

[www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com)

Click on "BlueComplements"

Click on "Vision One"



### Find Out More

[www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com)

Click on "BlueComplements"

Click on "TruVision"

TruVision

**877-747-2020**

TTY (for the hearing impaired with a teletype device), call Florida Relay Center: 711

## get

# contact lens discounts

## through TruVision

Now you can order your contact lenses from TruVision for prices that average 15 percent less than those offered by other national contact lens mail-order programs.

TruVision, through an agreement with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, ships your contact lens order directly from the manufacturer to

your house, or other given address, in five to seven days. The lenses are 100 percent guaranteed by TruVision and shipping is always free.

To place an order, or for more information, visit Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's website or call TruVision toll free at 877-747-2020.





## ability to change plans limited this year

Under federal law, this year between January 1 and June 30 you can only change health plans—in other words, leave one health plan and join another—once. This includes leaving a Medicare HMO plan such as Medicare & More in order to return to original Medicare coverage. Whether or not you do make such a change, after June 30 you must stay with your plan for the rest of the year. In certain cases, such as if you move to another area, you might be able to choose another plan.

 [Find Out More  
www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

## familiarize yourself with Medicare changes

There are a number of changes to Medicare & More for calendar year 2002. These changes became effective Jan. 1, 2002, and will remain in effect through Dec. 31, 2002. Because plans vary by county, call your Medicare & More Member Services number if you have questions about changes specific to your plan.

In 2002, new Medicare benefits have been added to your Medicare & More plan. These include:

### Annual glaucoma screening

If you are considered at high risk for glaucoma, have a family history of glaucoma or have diabetes, you're covered for an annual glaucoma screening.

### Medical nutrition therapy services

If you have diabetes or renal disease, you are covered for medical nutrition therapy services.

### Post-hospitalization skilled nursing care

You're covered for this care through your home skilled nursing facility if Medicare & More has a contract with the facility or if the facility agrees to accept similar payment under the same terms and conditions that would apply to skilled nursing facilities that have contracts with Medicare & More. A home skilled nursing facility is one of the following:

- One where you resided at the time of the hospital admission that triggered your eligibility for the skilled nursing facility care upon discharge;
- A facility that is providing such services through the continuing care retirement community where you resided at the time of your hospital admission; or
- The facility where your spouse is residing at the time you are discharged from the hospital.



# preferred medication list is on our website

Our complete Preferred Medication List is now on our website. We revise the list quarterly. Check the website for the latest updates.

Please remember that if a particular drug is listed on this site, it does not necessarily mean the drug is covered under your plan. The list is offered as a guide. You should refer to the pharmacy endorsement or rider issued with your contract, Evidence of Coverage, member handbook or

Certificate of Coverage to determine whether a particular medication listed is excluded in your case. Call the customer service number on your ID card if you are unsure about your coverage or benefits or have questions about the lists.

 **Find Out More**  
To view the Preferred Medication List, go to [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com)  
Click on "Member"  
Click on "Pharmacy Programs"  
Click on "Medication Lists"

# network change announced

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida and our HMO subsidiary, Health Options, we continually update our provider networks. Sometimes provider groups' business goals do not coincide with ours, resulting in network changes.

At this time, the University of Florida's Shands Hospital in Gainesville is no longer a contracted provider in our hospital network for our HMO, Health Options. Also part of this network change are University of Florida College of Medicine

physicians, which include some 600 specialists and 20 primary care physicians.

With any network change, our members are our first priority. Those affected by this network change were notified. We also work with members in active treatment to provide guidance and assistance in order to avoid disruption in care. If you have any questions about this change, please contact your customer service representative at the toll-free number listed on your ID card.

# preferred medication list update

## Additions

**Effective 10/16/01:**

Rebetol

**Effective 11/02/01:**

Viread

**Effective 12/03/01:**

Cipro HC Otic  
Duoneb  
Tazorac cream  
Yasmin

**Effective 03/08/02:**

Alphagan P  
Entocort EC (budesonide)  
Innolet  
Mircette (EE/desogestrel)

## Deletions

**Effective 7/01/02:**

Lescol tablets\*  
TriNorinyl\*

\*No generic equivalent is available but an alternative medicine is listed.

## Deletions,

*continued on page 14*





# create your own **Personal Path**

## A Health Website Personalized for You

What if you had access to a personalized website that's private and secure and could help you make decisions that lead to better health for you and your loved ones?

Now you can. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida is one of the first health care coverage plans in Florida to provide its members with a free "personalized" health information website. It is part of our commitment to empower members with information to help them manage their own health care needs.

Called *PersonalPath.com*<sup>SM</sup>, this website was created by doctors and nurses. Additionally, doctors and nurses have reviewed all the content and links. The site covers health topics important to you and your family. These include: diseases, tra-

ditional and alternative treatments, medications, current health news and how to find helpful resources and local services. Features include:

- 100+ Care Guides<sup>SM</sup>—Get how-to guides not found anywhere else!
- Drug Center—Look up drug information. Learn about drug interactions and more.
- Health Records—Create records for the entire family. You can even record daily measurements, such as blood pressure and blood glucose.
- 400+ Disease Guides
- Harvard Health Publications
- Direct links to other respected and clinically reviewed websites, such as the American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Members can choose to personalize the site. That means those with diabetes, for example, will get information, tools, resources and news updates related to their condition. This feature can be turned on or off at any time.

Members also can be sure of privacy while visiting *PersonalPath.com*. The secured site is designed to give members all the benefits of a personalized web experience while maintaining their anonymity.

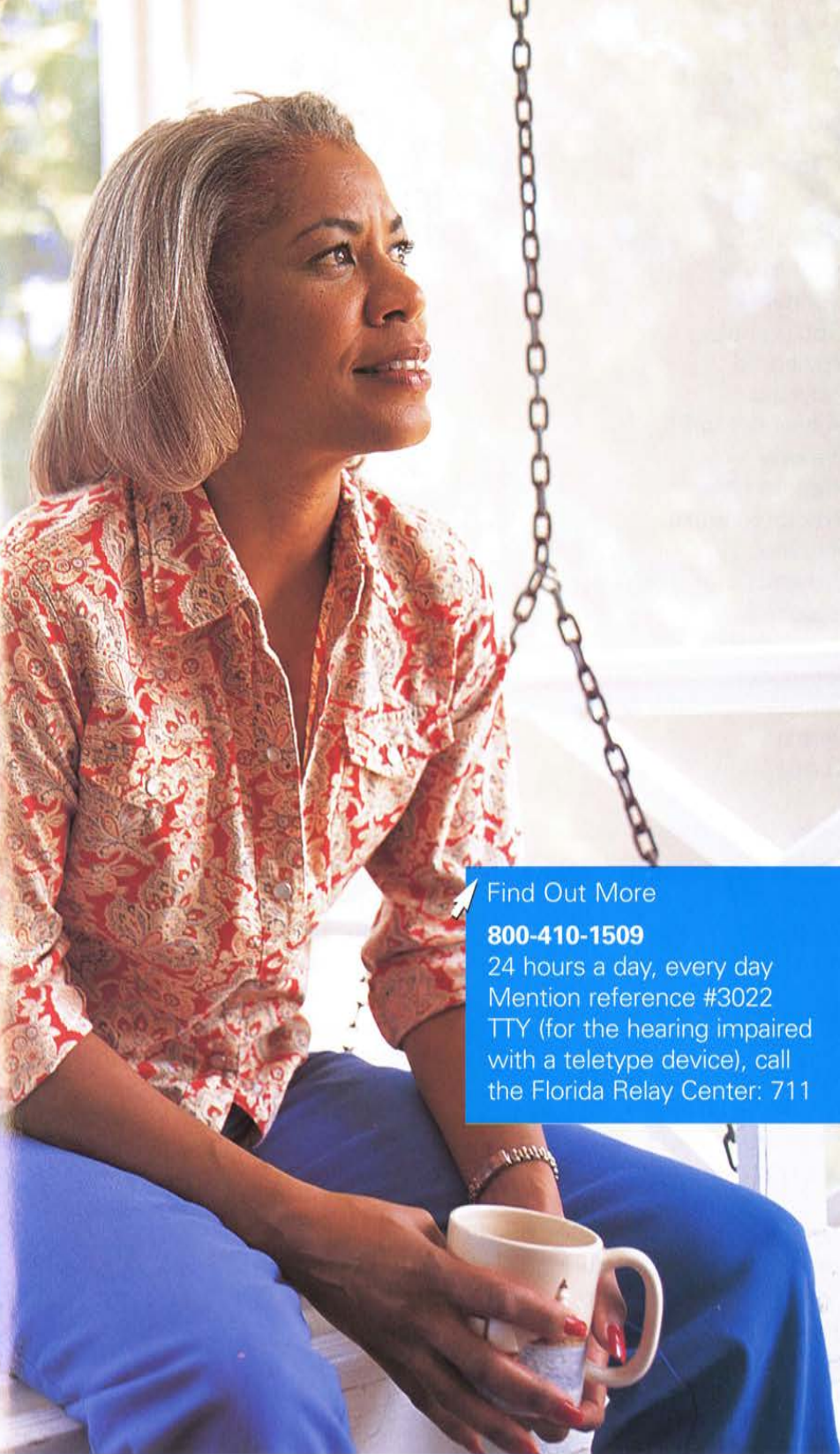
*PersonalPath.com* is free. It's another value-added benefit that comes with membership in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida family of products.

Visit [www.personalpath.com](http://www.personalpath.com) soon to create your own personal health record.



Find Out More  
[www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com)  
Click on "PersonalPath.com"





# secure your future with **BlueSecure**

At age 65 you face a 40 percent chance of a nursing home stay, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. And more than 70 percent of elderly individuals will use professional home care services during their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> But Medicare pays an average of only 7 percent of all long-term care costs.<sup>2</sup>

Find Out More

**800-410-1509**

24 hours a day, every day

Mention reference #3022

TTY (for the hearing impaired

with a teletype device), call

the Florida Relay Center: 711

A BlueSecure Complete Individual Long-Term Care insurance policy from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida can help you protect your assets if in the future you need nursing home, assisted living, adult care or home health care. Give us a call today and find out how you can secure your future with BlueSecure.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup>“Long-Term Care: Knowing the risk, paying the price,” HIAA, 1997

<sup>2</sup>Long-Term Care Handbook, 2nd Edition, National Underwriter

Form #61453-0102SU

LTO11-336-FL-1199

Some limitations and exclusions apply.



**Preferred Medication List Update,**  
**Deletions** *continued from page 11*

Every year the patents for a number of brand-name prescription drugs expire, enabling consumers to buy generic versions of these drugs at the lowest copayment level. Choosing one of these generic medicines can save you 30 percent to 60 percent on your out-of-pocket costs per prescription, depending upon your pharmacy benefit plan. The FDA requires generic drugs to contain the same amount of active ingredients as their brand-name counterparts and to be manufactured according to the same federal standards. The following brand-name products have recently lost patent and are now available in the generic form:

Adderall  
Bicitra  
Brethine  
Brevicon  
Calcimar  
Ceftin tablets  
Colyte  
Desogen  
Diprolene ointment  
Estrace  
Fioricet w/codeine  
FML  
Glucophage  
Kayexalate  
Klor-Con  
MS Contin

Myambutol  
Nephro-vite  
Norinyl  
Opti-pranolol  
Pediapred  
Polycitra  
Poly-vi-flor w/FE  
Prelone  
Prenate Ultra  
Proctocream-HC  
Propine  
Proventil oral tabs & syrup  
Rocaltrol  
Sulfacet-R  
Tambocor  
Ventolin oral tabs & syrup  
Verelan  
Virotic

Since these medicines are now available as a generic, the copay will be higher if you choose to continue the brand-name product after July 1, 2002.

Switching to one of these available generic products will help stretch your benefit dollars, particularly if you have a pharmacy benefit that has a yearly maximum.

Whether or not you choose the generic version of your medicine is still your decision. Just remember that the generic equivalent is not a second choice. It is a better value for your money.

# you are your first defense

Half of all new cancers are skin cancers, according to the American Cancer Society. In fact, more than one million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the U.S. this year.\* That includes basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, the most common skin cancers, and melanoma, which—although the rarest skin cancer—is also the deadliest.

“Fortunately,” says Robert Skidmore, M.D., chief of the division of dermatology at the University of Florida, “if detected early all three have extremely high cure rates.”

To detect skin cancers early, Dr. Skidmore recommends that you conduct a full skin exam monthly. “It only takes 10 or 15 minutes a month, and while you’re at it, women should also examine their breasts and men should examine their testicles,” says Dr. Skidmore. “These cancers are all easy to screen for by yourself.”

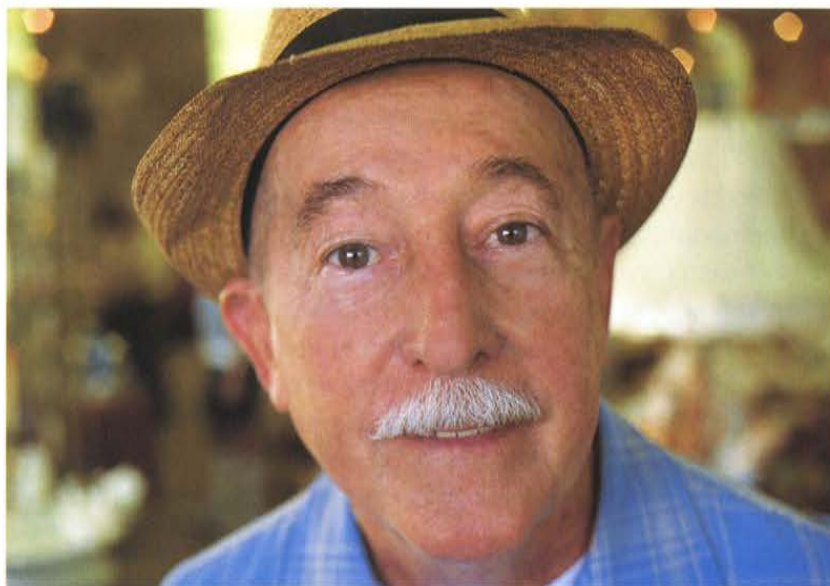
# against skin cancer

You should be aware of the ABCD signs of possible malignant melanoma. But, in part because the ABCDs aren't applicable to the more common skin cancers, Dr. Skidmore says it's even more important to be on the lookout for any skin changes. "By conducting a monthly skin exam, you're going to become very familiar with your body," he says. "As a result, you'll most likely notice new things on your skin that weren't there a month or two ago."

Beside the ABCDs, what should you be looking for? "Just any new area that is red, irritated or appears as though it's scaly or has a lot of dead skin on it," advises Dr. Skidmore. "Certainly if the lesion is painful or bleeding, that would be of concern."

If you do find something that concerns you, call your doctor or dermatologist immediately. "I'd rather have my patients come in and have me tell them it's no big deal rather than having them worry about something," says Dr. Skidmore.

\*Source: American Cancer Society 2001 Facts & Figures



## For melanoma, remember your ABCDs

The American Cancer Society recommends consulting with your doctor immediately if any of your moles or pigmented spots exhibit the following. These might be signs of malignant melanoma:

### Asymmetry:

One half unlike the other half

### Border irregular:

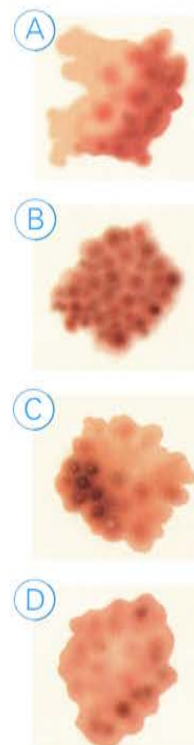
Scalloped or poorly circumscribed border

### Color:

Varied from one area to another; shades of tan and brown; black; sometimes white, red or blue

### Diameter:

Larger than 6mm as a rule (diameter of a pencil eraser)





# The Blue Foundation

awards nearly

## \$1 million in grants

In its inaugural grant offerings last December, The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, Inc., awarded \$925,000 to 16 nonprofit organizations throughout Florida. The philanthropic affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida was incorporated earlier last year to assist charitable causes and nonprofit organizations that align with our mission of affordable health care choices. The foundation plans to distribute up to \$1 million in grants each year. The grants will support programs that positively impact the health and well-being of uninsured and underserved Floridians. The next request for proposals deadline is Sept. 1, 2002. For information on how to apply for a grant from The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, contact the foundation office at 800-477-3736, ext. 63215. Or visit our website at [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com).



Family Central Inc.,  
Fort Lauderdale, \$138,577  
Improve access and understanding of preventive and primary health care for young children in at-risk families receiving subsidized childcare.

Diabetes Coalition of St. Lucie County Inc., Port St. Lucie, \$123,672  
Train lay outreach workers to deliver to a minority population health information about diabetes.

Sacred Heart Health System, Pensacola, \$118,938  
Establish a multiphase program to educate seniors about prescription drugs and enroll them in a discount drug-buying program.

Cardiovascular Center at Shands Jacksonville, \$100,000  
Develop and implement an initiative to reduce the incidence of heart disease and death among women.

PACE Center for Girls of Pinellas County, \$81,000  
Implement a comprehensive assessment program for each girl at the center at risk of pregnancy, poverty, criminal behavior and incarceration.





Gulf Coast Community Care, Tampa Bay, \$67,110  
Expand Elder Ed, a prevention program covering misuse of prescription drugs and overuse of alcohol, into Hillsborough and Manatee counties. Funds also will underwrite a targeted media campaign.

University of Miami School of Medicine Diabetes Research Institute, Miami, \$62,501  
Create diabetes education and behavior modification models to enhance care and support for children 12 to 17 years old with Type 1 diabetes, particularly the underserved and uninsured children in predominantly Hispanic and African-American communities.

Seniors First Inc., Orlando, \$50,060  
Establish a prescription drug education and advocacy program and related short-term case management for Orange County seniors at or below the poverty level.

Florida State University School of Nursing, Tallahassee, \$37,000  
Purchase a Pediatric Patient Simulator for the nursing skill laboratory serving 300 nursing students each year.

Baker County Council on Aging, Macclenny, \$32,076  
Provide one meal a day, five days a week for a year to 25 seniors who can't travel to congregate feeding centers.

University of Florida Department of Surgery Trauma/Critical Care, Jacksonville, \$26,550  
Double to 100 the capacity of the Turning Point: Rethinking Violence program aimed at altering violent behavior among first-time male offenders 10 to 16 years old.

Community Asthma Partnership, Jacksonville, \$25,000  
Launch an intervention program for asthmatic children and their families.

Florida Academy of Family Physicians, Statewide, \$24,000  
Finance the majority of education tuition loan interest for two family practice resident physicians in training during their first four years of practice. In return, the residents will serve their first year and four future years in high-need communities.

Hope Haven Children's Clinic and Family Center, Jacksonville, \$17,255  
Develop a comprehensive assessment and treatment center for children with autism and increase access for families who can't afford treatment at other facilities.

MaliVai Washington Kids Foundation, Jacksonville, \$16,261  
Underwrite development of a program for youth in third through fifth grades, including: non-smoking initiatives; HIV/AIDS education; pregnancy prevention; wellness and prevention programs; health promotion and education, and youth development.

Education Foundation of Sarasota County Inc., Sarasota, \$5,000  
Provide 10 mini-grants to enable Sarasota County teachers to explore new techniques and develop innovative health education projects.



# Blueprint for Health®

offers help with chronic illnesses

As a member of Medicare & More, you're eligible to take advantage of our chronic disease management programs. Blueprint for Health® programs provide both education and help with managing your health concerns. The programs are absolutely voluntary and available to you at no extra cost.



## Blueprint for Health Diabetes Program

The goal of the Diabetes Program is to help our members improve their understanding of diabetes so that they can manage their disease. Nurses stress the importance of routine medical checkups, periodic blood sugar testing, blood pressure monitoring, foot care, diet, exercise and following their doctor's treatment plan. In addition, information is provided on the importance of annual eye exams and other tests recommended for people with diabetes.

Find Out More  
800-937-9285, ext. 45891  
TTY Dial: 711

## Blueprint for Health Congestive Heart Failure Program

The goal of the Congestive Heart Failure Program is to help our members improve their understanding of heart failure and help them manage their disease. Members are

encouraged to monitor their diet and weight, take their medications and follow their doctor's treatment plan.

Find Out More  
800-955-7635, ext. 17572  
or 17566  
TTY Dial: 711

## Blueprint for Health® Cancer Care Program

The Blueprint for Health Cancer Care program and Quality Oncology, Inc., a cancer disease management company with oncology-trained nurses, coordinate care for members diagnosed with cancer. The program provides members with education and care-management assistance. Implemented in South Florida in 1999, the program will be available statewide in May 2002.

Find Out More  
800-955-7635, ext. 17430,  
17606 or 17371  
TTY Dial: 711



# ASTHMA MYTHS:

## KNOW THE FACTS

There are a lot of myths and rumors about asthma. Sometimes even people who work in hospitals, clinics or doctors' offices have the wrong information. Sometimes even people who have had asthma for many years have the wrong information. Below are a few of the myths and rumors often heard.

**MYTH** Many people think they only have asthma when they have trouble breathing. They think that asthma comes and goes, day by day, week by week.

**FACT** People with asthma have it all the time. When they have trouble breathing, they are having an asthma episode. On those days, their asthma is not under control.

**MYTH** Many people think asthma is all in your head.

**FACT** It's in your lungs. Asthma is a disease – a breathing problem of the lungs. Asthma stays with people all the time, but asthma may worsen when the lungs are bothered. Because asthma is with you all the time, many children and adults take asthma medicine every day to help control symptoms and prevent attacks. People with asthma have sensitive lungs.

**MYTH** Many people think asthma is an emotional disease; if you are an emotional person you get asthma.

**FACT** Emotions do not cause asthma. But, if you already have asthma, crying, yelling or laughing hard can start an asthma attack.

**MYTH** Many people think that all children will outgrow asthma.

**FACT** People have asthma for many years. Sometimes, when children grow up, their asthma is less severe – but we try not to say that all children will outgrow it. In fact, many times asthma does not get better as a child grows – and sometimes it even gets worse. If someone has asthma, their lungs will always be more sensitive than the lungs of people who do not have asthma.

**MYTH** Many people think you can not ever play sports if you have asthma.

**FACT** Many star athletes have asthma – track star Jackie Joyner Kersee, swimmer Amy van Dyken, basketball players Dominique Wilkens and Isaiah Thomas, and many Olympic stars. The secret is getting a good asthma action plan from your doctor to prevent attacks.

Adapted from a National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Publication: A Guide for Helping Children with Asthma



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*Do you need your  
fast-acting inhaler  
more than twice a week to  
treat your asthma symptoms?*

*You may be able to do a  
lot better:*



According to the National Institutes of Health, if this happens more than twice a week,

your asthma may be poorly controlled. The good news is, you may be able to do a lot better.

There are asthma treatments available now that can help you be more active and productive, with less interference from your asthma symptoms. They're described in the new booklet, "**Guide to Current Asthma Treatments.**" The guide explains the two main components of asthma, airway constriction and inflammation. And it tells how you may



experience greater freedom from asthma symptoms by treating both. **Best of all, it's absolutely free.**

Request your free guide. Read it over. Then ask your doctor which treatment option would work best for you. To receive your free copy, visit [www.TreatBoth.com](http://www.TreatBoth.com) or call **1.800.230.4800**. Do it today. Life should take your breath away, not asthma."

**Request your free guide now.**

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March 2002



NOT THINKING ABOUT HEALTH PLANS

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