



ILLINOIS  
**HEALTH  
CONNECT**  
Your Home For Healthcare™

## ILLINOIS HEALTH CONNECT CLIENT NEWSLETTER

September 2009, volume 2, issue 2

### THE AUTISM PROGRAM OF ILLINOIS (TAP)

More children are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) than AIDS, cancer and diabetes combined! The Autism Program of Illinois (TAP) focuses on the system of care for children with ASD. TAP has 12 Centers across Illinois and more than 30 partners. TAP is the largest statewide network of care in the nation for the diagnosis, treatment and support for children with ASD.

While ASD is a serious developmental disability, there are ways to help individuals with ASD reach their fullest potential. Early identification is important, but treatment at any age can be successful.

#### What is Autism?

ASDs include the following:

- Autistic Disorder
- Asperger's Disorder
- Rett's Disorder
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder

People with ASD do not look different, but they may communicate, interact, behave and learn in ways that are different from other people.

#### What are some signs of ASD?

People with ASDs may have problems with social, emotional and communication skills. Many people with ASDs also have different ways of learning, paying attention or reacting to things.

#### Someone with ASD might:

- Not play "pretend games" (like feeding a doll)
- Avoid eye contact and want to be alone
- Not want to be held or cuddled or may cuddle only when they want to
- Not notice when people talk to them but will notice other sounds
- Be interested in people, but not know how to talk or play with them
- Repeat words or phrases said to them
- Repeat actions over and over again
- Not like to have their routine changed
- React strangely to the smell, taste, look, feel or sound of things
- Stop saying words they were once saying

#### How can TAP help?

TAP offers many tools, resources, services and training to help parents, teachers, daycare/childcare providers, and anyone with an interest in ASDs.

#### What should you do if you think your child has an ASD?

If you think there could be a problem, talk to your doctor. Your doctor may refer you to a specialist. The main treatment for ASDs is behavioral intervention. It is very important to begin this intervention as early as possible. Acting early can make a real difference!

For more information on The Autism Program of Illinois and TAP locations, visit the TAP web site at [www.theautismprogram.org](http://www.theautismprogram.org) or call (217) 525-8332.

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## KNOWING WHEN TO GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM

Many of us have found ourselves in the Emergency Room at one time or another. Whether with a head injury, a broken leg, or chest pains, these situations can come up. How do you know when to go to the Emergency Room and when to go to your primary care provider (PCP) at your medical home? It is important to give this some thought, so you are best prepared when an emergency happens.

The first step is to make sure that you know who your PCP is at your medical home. Your medical home is the place you go to see your PCP first for most of your healthcare. If you don't know who your PCP is for your medical home, call Illinois Health Connect at 1-877-912-1999 (TTY: 1-866-565-8577). The call is free! Illinois Health Connect will give you information about your PCP or help you pick a different doctor for your PCP. When selecting a PCP at your medical home, make sure you are comfortable with the doctor. You will also want to make sure that you are able to make appointments with your PCP at times that work for you.

The next step is to know what a medical emergency is. An emergency is a health problem that is life threatening or one that will seriously affect your health if not treated right away. Examples of this would be chest pain, poisoning, or seizures. An emergency



can be from an accident or sudden illness that puts you in danger of death or severe harm. If you are not sure you have an emergency, you should call your PCP first. If the problem is not serious, make an appointment to see your PCP. Only go to the Emergency Room if the problem is serious.

If you are unable to reach your PCP after hours or on weekends, you can call the Illinois Nurse Helpline at 1-877-912-1999 (TTY: 1-866-565-8577) from 8:00 pm to 7:00 am. The call is free. The nurse will answer your medical questions and give you information to help you decide if you need to go to the Emergency Room or call 9-1-1 (if available in your area).

In an emergency, you can use any hospital or other emergency provider. If you need a list of emergency providers in your area, call Illinois Health Connect at 1-877-912-1999 (TTY: 1-866-565-8577). The call is free.



“An emergency is a health problem that is life threatening or one that will seriously affect your health if not treated right away.”



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK!

Illinois Health Connect would like to thank all of you who took part in our first Member Satisfaction Survey. We talked to Illinois Health Connect members throughout the state. We asked questions about what is working and what we can do better. We got great feedback! We want you to know we appreciate the time you took to answer our questions. We are happy to hear that over 90% of our members are satisfied with our program and services.

From your answers, we are taking steps to make our program even better for you.

First, we plan to increase our outreach in the community to help you know how Illinois Health Connect can help you. Second, we are working to find ways to help you connect with your Primary Care Provider (PCP) at your medical home for most of your medical needs. We also want to help you connect with your PCP first to reduce the times you need to go to the emergency room to get healthcare. You can read more about when to go to the emergency room in this issue of the newsletter.

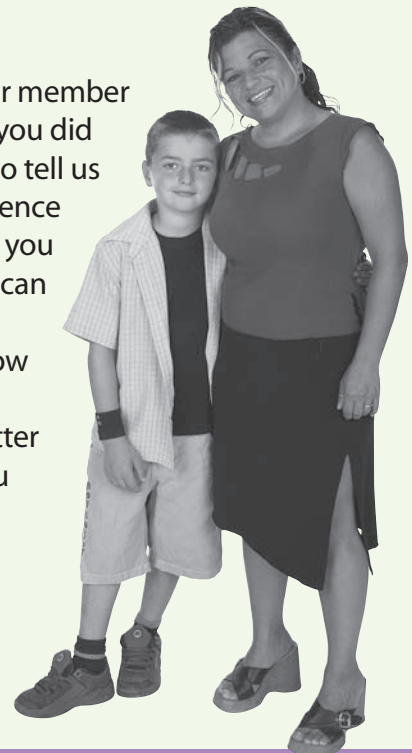
Illinois Health Connect is here to help. We can help you pick or change your PCP. We can help you make appointments to see your PCP at your medical home. We can answer your questions and help you get information you need about Illinois Health Connect. We are ready to take your call from 8:00 am - 7:00 pm Monday through Friday. You can call 1-877-912-1999 (TTY: 1-866-565-8577). The call is free! You can also visit our website at [www.illinoishealthconnect.com](http://www.illinoishealthconnect.com) for more information about Illinois Health Connect.



### FLU SHOTS

With flu season right around the corner, it is important to get your flu shot. One of the best ways to protect yourself and stay healthy is with immunizations (shots). Shots help your body fight diseases and stay healthy. Make sure to talk with your PCP about getting a flu shot today! If you need help making an appointment with your PCP, call the Illinois Health Connect Client Helpline at 1-877-912-1999 (TTY: 1-866-565-8577). The call is free. [Learn More](#)

We will do another member survey in 2010. If you did not get a chance to tell us about your experience this year, we hope you will next year. We can learn from your experiences on how we can make this program work better for you. Thank you again! [Learn More](#)



## REFERRALS

### **Remember: When you need medical care, call your Primary Care Provider first!**

Almost all HFS and All Kids medical card-holders have a Primary Care Provider (PCP) for their medical home. Your medical home is the place you go to see your PCP when you are sick or need a check-up. Your PCP is your family doctor, nurse or other healthcare provider at your medical home that takes care of you and your family.

When you need medical care, contact your PCP at your medical home first. Your PCP will refer you to other doctors, when needed. If you want to see a different PCP for services, you will need a referral from your PCP. Other healthcare providers may refuse to treat you without a referral.



Call Illinois Health Connect at 1-877-912-1999 (TTY: 1-866-565-8577) with any questions you have about your medical home or PCP or to change your PCP. The call is free. You can also learn more about Illinois Health Connect online at [www.illinoishealthconnect.com](http://www.illinoishealthconnect.com).



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