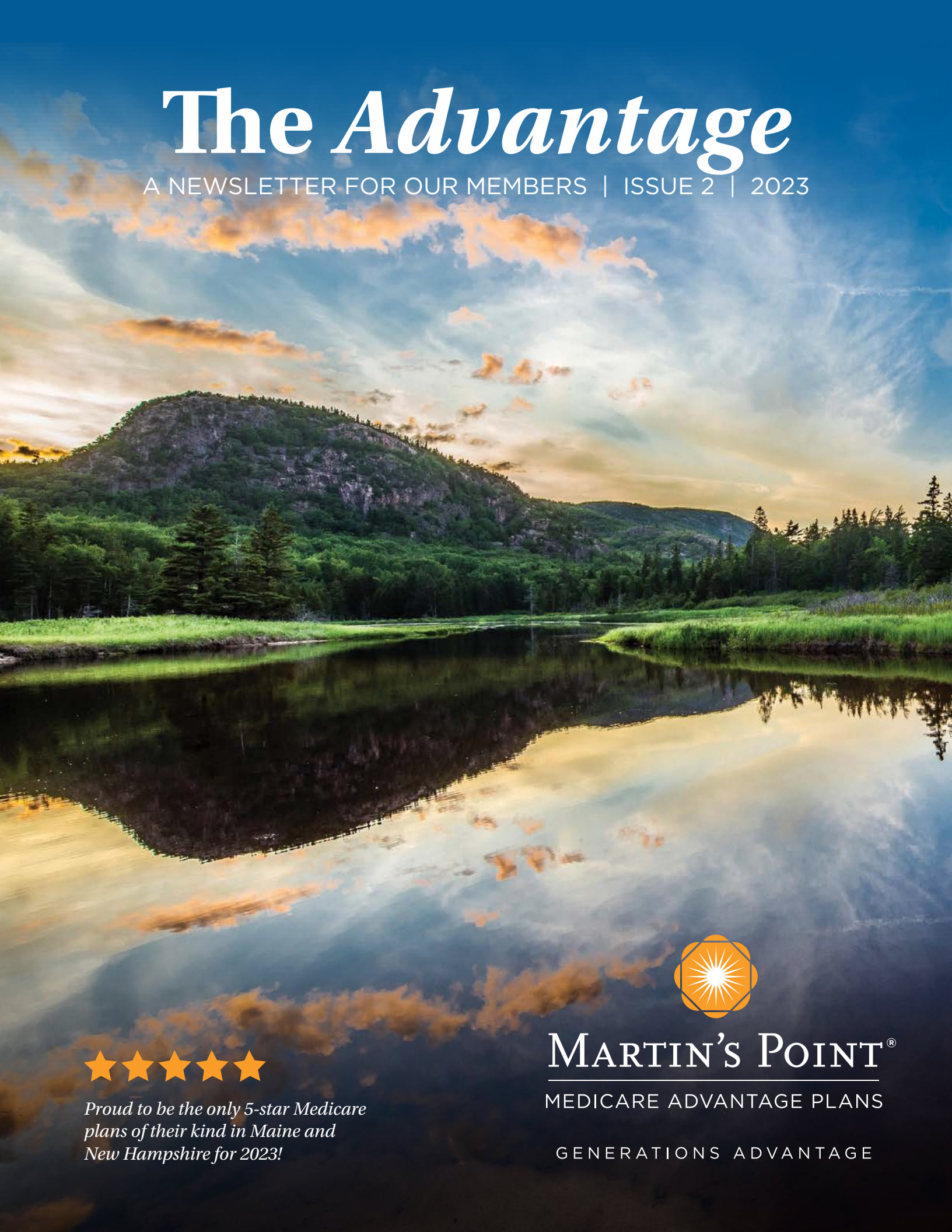


The Advantage

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR MEMBERS | ISSUE 2 | 2023



Proud to be the only 5-star Medicare plans of their kind in Maine and New Hampshire for 2023!



MARTIN'S POINT[®]

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS

GENERATIONS ADVANTAGE

In this edition:

- Important Diabetes Screenings
- Timely Care after a Hospitalization
- Focus on Medication Safety
- Help for Mental Health Needs



*Martin
Wesolowski,
DO, MBA*

Facing a Common Challenge Together

A Note from Dr. Marty

Consider your hometown. Picture “Main Street.” Now imagine that the people living on one side of the street are taking their medications as instructed...and those on the other side are not. In fact, this is reality in America. Only about half of our population is taking their long-term medications as prescribed.

If you’re a member of that 50% having trouble following their medication directions, it isn’t a failure—rather, it’s a common challenge that needs to be met! You’ve agreed to a treatment plan with your PCP or specialist, but the “taking the pills” part hasn’t gone according to plan. That’s ok! The first step to getting back on track is to figure out why: Has something changed in your life? Are there too many pills to deal with? Are you unsure about when and why you’re taking them? Do they make you feel lousy (side effects)? And what about the cost?

Inside, you’ll find information to help you overcome common barriers to safely and effectively taking your medications. I urge you to learn more and take advantage of the resources available to help you get the most out of your care.

Wishing you the best of health this summer,

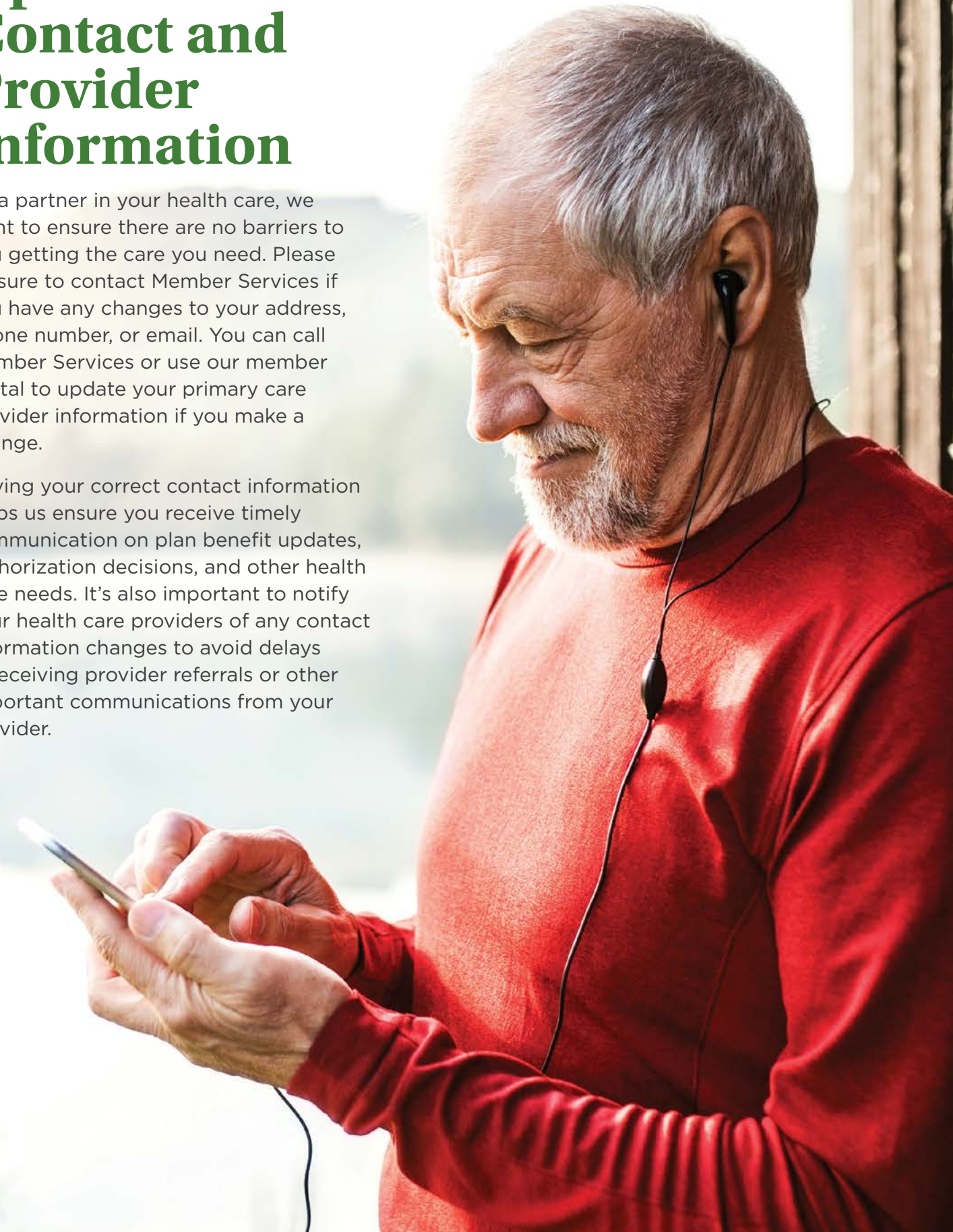


Martin Wesolowski, DO, MBA
Vice President, Medical and Pharmacy Management

Update Your Contact and Provider Information

As a partner in your health care, we want to ensure there are no barriers to you getting the care you need. Please be sure to contact Member Services if you have any changes to your address, phone number, or email. You can call Member Services or use our member portal to update your primary care provider information if you make a change.

Having your correct contact information helps us ensure you receive timely communication on plan benefit updates, authorization decisions, and other health care needs. It’s also important to notify your health care providers of any contact information changes to avoid delays in receiving provider referrals or other important communications from your provider.





Good Health Care Is More than Sick Care

An Ounce of Prevention Is Worth a Pound of Cure

Benjamin Franklin is credited with saying “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” His reference was to fire prevention in Philadelphia in 1736, but his words hold just as true for health care today.

Many people only see their doctor when a health issue has worsened to the point where it can’t be managed at home. Unfortunately, this practice can lead to more serious problems. Routine preventive care, like annual wellness visits and physical exams, can help avoid diseases or find them at an earlier stage when they may be more manageable.

Primary care is the gateway to preventive care, including ordering cancer screenings, providing immunizations, reviewing labs and

vital signs, or providing disease-prevention education. Routine preventive care visits can be key to avoiding many sick care visits in later years.

We encourage you to book this year’s annual preventive care visits now if you haven’t already. When scheduling, ask your primary care provider’s office about combining your Medicare annual wellness visit (a conversation about health goals and preventive care) with your annual physical exam (hands-on examination) into one longer “Comprehensive Visit.” To support your best health, your Generations Advantage plan covers preventive care exams and screenings at a \$0 in-network member copay.



Emergency Room Visit or Hospital Stay?

Always Follow Up Quickly with a Primary Care Visit

After a visit to the ER or a hospitalization, your health often still needs extra attention. You may have experienced a new medical condition or a worsening of a condition that will change your previous routine. You may also have a change in your medications.

Having a follow-up visit with a primary care provider very soon after an ER or hospitalization discharge is a very important next step in taking the best care of your health. Research shows that timely follow-up after an ER visit was linked with a 51% decrease in deaths within 30 days of discharge.*

Timing is everything.

Because timing is key for positive outcomes, best practice is to see a provider within seven days of being discharged. This is especially true if you are living with multiple chronic conditions like COPD, heart disease, chronic kidney disease, or dementia, as these conditions can affect your recovery. If you can’t see a primary care provider within seven days, 30 days is the longest you should delay a hospitalization follow-up visit.

Although it would be best to see your regular primary care provider for follow-up, they may not be available within the recommended timeframes. It’s more important that you

be seen very soon after your discharge, so making a timely appointment with any provider within your primary care office is highly recommended. They will be able to identify any concerns or complications you may be experiencing after your hospital visit.

Why is a timely follow-up visit after a hospitalization or emergency room visit so important?

A follow-up visit allows your primary care office to do the following:

- Be aware of the details of your recent emergency care or hospitalization.
- Determine if the treatment you were prescribed is effective or if you are having any complications from new medications or treatments prescribed.
- Provide continued education around new medications, diagnoses, or treatments.
- Take over responsibility of prescribing any new medications that you will continue to take.
- Support you with any further testing or referrals that may be necessary.

*Lin MP, Burke RC, Orav EJ, Friend TH, Burke LG. Ambulatory Follow-up and Outcomes Among Medicare Beneficiaries After Emergency Department Discharge. JAMA Netw Open. 2020;3(10):e2019878. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.19878

Heading Out for Summer Fun?

Don't Forget Your Over-the-Counter Benefit

It's time to stock up on those summertime items that help protect you from the sun and stay healthy outdoors! All Generations Advantage members receive a quarterly amount to purchase select, CVS-brand, over-the-counter (OTC) items.

Popular OTC summer items include allergy medication, sunscreen, bandages, and aloe vera. You can also find everyday OTC essentials like vitamins, digestive health aids, and pain relievers, too! For information on how to use your OTC benefit or for a list of covered items, please visit our website at MartinsPoint.org/OTC

Help with Managing Your Medications



To protect your health, it's important to take all your medications as directed. As your health plan, we want to make sure you have the information and support you need to manage your medications. One of our health plan pharmacists may send you a letter or email or call to talk with you about ways to make sure you are able to follow your medication treatment plan. If you receive a letter or email, we encourage you to call one of our health plan pharmacists. They, along with your doctor and your pharmacy, are here to support you!

Visit MartinsPoint.org/MedicationTracker

Learn more about the Medication Therapy Management program and download a Personal Medication List to keep track of your prescriptions.

Get your Medication Explanation of Benefit (EOB) Documents Online

If your Martin's Point Generations Advantage plan includes Part D Prescription Drug coverage, you can choose to receive your monthly medication EOBs online instead of by mail. Paperless medication EOBs provide the same information in the same format as the printed ones you may currently receive, and they're faster and more convenient.

To get started with receiving online medication EOBs, visit Caremark.com/paperless to sign up. There you can register through their portal to access a secure, online prescription management center available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also register to manage your prescriptions, monitor out-of-

pocket spending, and get information about your medications.

The medication EOB shows what you, your plan, and others paid for drugs during a particular period. It also tells you what stage of Part D Prescription Drug coverage you are in and how much more you need to spend to move to the next stage of coverage. This can help you see if you are approaching the coverage gap or "donut hole" stage where you pay more for your medications. If you have questions about signing up for online medication EOBs, help is available by calling CVS Caremark at the number on the back of your Generations Advantage member ID card.

Taking Multiple Medications Safely

*What You Need to Know
about the Risks of Polypharmacy*

As adults get older, many find themselves taking several medications as they manage multiple health conditions. The use of multiple medications—which can include prescription drugs, over-the-counter (OTC) products, and herbal supplements—is called “polypharmacy.” It is a growing concern for older adults because it can result in increased risk for side effects, interactions between drugs, interactions between drugs and diseases, and other medication-related problems.

If you are taking multiple medications, it’s important to make sure you are taking them all safely.

Here are a few recommendations for doing so:

- 1 For each medication: Make sure you understand what it is, what condition it is treating, and how to take it correctly. We encourage you and/or your caregiver to ask your provider or pharmacist ANY questions you may have about your medications.
- 2 Ask your provider if any of your current medications could possibly be tapered or stopped. This is also known as “deprescribing.”
- 3 Take all medications as prescribed (taking the right dose, at the right time, and as directed).
- 4 Before starting any new prescription drug, or OTC or herbal product, ask your pharmacist or provider about any possible interactions, side effects, and whether any other medications need to be stopped.
- 5 Always report any problems or negative side effects to your providers.
- 6 Keep an updated medication list on hand and share it with all your health care providers.

Watch for Side Effects

Some medications, when used together, can increase the risk for side effects. Some medications, on their own, are more commonly associated with side effects, such as prescription medications to treat pain, anxiety, or depression; some antihistamines—such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl®); and muscle relaxants. Make sure to check your medicine cabinet and be aware of the possible negative effects associated with any of your medications.

Medication Types	Common Side Effects
For Pain, Anxiety; Muscle Relaxants	Drowsiness, Respiratory depression, Falls
For Depression, Seizures; Antipsychotics	Drowsiness, Dizziness, Falls
Antihistamines	Dry Mouth, Constipation, Bladder Issues

References: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/taking-medicines-safely-you-age>
<https://www.uspharmacist.com/article/polypharmacy>





Diabetes: Protect Your Health with Regular Screenings



Having diabetes increases your risk of developing other serious health conditions that can affect your kidneys, heart, eyes, and more.

If you have diabetes, it's important to manage your blood sugars to avoid developing these and other complications. Regular diabetic screenings help monitor how well your diabetes is being managed and guide treatment decisions. Below you'll find information to help you understand the types, frequencies, and reasons behind these recommended diabetic screenings. We recommend that you contact your doctor to see if you are due for any of these important tests.

Hemoglobin A1c

A hemoglobin A1c screening is a blood test that measures your average blood glucose levels for the previous two to three months. The A1c value is shown as a percentage that corresponds with a blood glucose range (see the table). A high A1c helps show that your blood sugars are not under control, putting you at greater risk of complications. Per the American Diabetes Association, the goal for most people is to have an A1c of 7 or under but this can vary based on age and other health conditions. **If you don't know what your A1c goal is, ask your doctor.** You should have an A1c test every 6 months if your A1c has been at goal, more often if not.

A1c %	Blood Glucose Range
6	126 mg/dl
6.5	140 mg/dl
7	154 mg/dl
7.5	169 mg/dl
8	183 mg/dl
8.5	197 mg/dl
9	212 mg/dl
9.5	226 mg/dl
10	240 mg/dl

These two kidney tests are recommended for those with type 2 diabetes or those who have had type 1 diabetes for over 5 years. They may be recommended more often if there are signs of kidney disease.

Urine Albumin Creatinine Ratio (uACR)

A uACR test reports how much of the protein albumin is present in your urine. Too much protein in your urine is a sign of kidney damage. This test is important as early treatment can prevent or slow the progression of kidney disease.

Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR)

An eGFR is a blood test that estimates how well your kidneys are functioning.

Stages of Chronic Kidney Disease		GFR	Kidney Function	
Stage 1	Kidney damage with normal kidney function	90 or higher	90-100%	
Stage 2	Kidney damage with mild loss of kidney function	89-60	89-60%	
Stage 3a	Mild to moderate loss of kidney function	59-45	59-45%	
Stage 3b	Moderate to severe loss of kidney function	44-30	44-30%	
Stage 4	Severe loss of kidney function	29-15	29-15%	
Stage 5	Kidney failure	Less than 15	14-0%	



Where to Get Help

Help is here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
 - » Veteran's Crisis Line: call **988** then press 1
- Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.
- Text **HOME** to **741741** to access the Crisis Text Line.

Behavioral Health Care Management Program

A Martin's Point care manager can also help address ongoing behavioral health needs. If you would like to speak to a Martin's Point behavioral health care manager about our free care management program, call **1-877-659-2403**.

Learn more about ways to support the mental health of adults and children on our website at MartinsPoint.org/MentalHealth.

Managing Your Blood Pressure

Almost half of all adults in the US have high blood pressure (greater than or equal to 130/80) and nearly half of them don't have their high blood pressure under control.

High blood pressure is also called hypertension. It is often referred to as a silent killer because many people with this condition experience no symptoms but can be at very high risk for heart disease and stroke. The high incidence of hypertension—combined with heart disease being the primary cause of death for adults in the US—points to the importance of keeping your blood pressure under control.

If your blood pressure is currently high, we encourage you to contact your provider for guidance in taking steps to bring it under control.

Check out our new Heart and Vascular Health webpage at MartinsPoint.org/HeartHealth

to learn more about high blood pressure risk factors and management. This helpful resource also lists other health conditions that people with high blood pressure are at increased risk of developing.

Higher Blood Pressure Readings at Your Doctor's Office?

It's common for blood pressure readings to be higher at your doctor's office than when you take your blood pressure at home. If this occurs, ask your provider to recheck your blood pressure at the end of your visit or call your home blood pressure reading into your provider's office on a later date.





Try the Member Portal

The Generations Advantage Member Portal makes it easy to find the information you need and take the actions you want—all online!

- Update your Primary Care Provider (PCP)
- View the status of authorizations
- Request/print a replacement member ID card
- View/print claims
- Find a network provider or facility
- Pay plan premiums
- Find plan documents, benefits information, and much more

To set up a Member Portal account, click on the “Sign In” tab at the top right of the **MartinsPoint.org** website and register.



Refer a Friend!

Do you have a friend who deserves 5-Star benefits like you have? Refer them!

Please let your friends and family know they can start enjoying the highest-quality Medicare benefits and service by joining one of our 5-Star plans right NOW—they don’t have to wait to switch!

Ask them to call 1-866-544-7502 (TTY: 711).

To Contact Generations Advantage:

Member Services (for current members):

1-866-544-7504 (TTY: 711)

Call us 8 am–8 pm, seven days a week from October 1 to March 31; and Monday through Friday the rest of the year.

Interested in becoming a member?

Please call:

1-888-640-4423 (TTY: 711)

Generations Advantage Website:

MartinsPoint.org/MedicareMember

Material presented in this newsletter is not intended to replace your health care provider’s medical advice. Every year, Medicare evaluates plans based on a 5-star rating system. Generations Advantage 2023 Overall Ratings: 5 out of 5 Stars for HMO Contract H5591; 4.5 out of 5 Stars for LPPO Contract H1365. Visit www.Medicare.gov for more information. Martin’s Point Generations Advantage is a health plan with a Medicare contract offering HMO, HMO-POS, HMO SNP, and local PPO products. Enrollment in a Martin’s Point Generations Advantage plan depends on contract renewal. Material presented in this newsletter is not intended to replace your health care provider’s medical advice. Martin’s Point Health Care complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.



The Advantage

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR MEMBERS

Health and Wellness or Prevention Information



MARTIN'S POINT[®]

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS

PO BOX 9746 | PORTLAND, MAINE 04104

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE

PAID
PERMIT #186
PORTLAND, ME

My Advocate[®]

Helps You Find Savings and Live Well

Martin's Point Generations Advantage partners with My Advocate, a leading provider of services that help members achieve healthy living within their financial means for over 20 years.

My Advocate has helped thousands of Medicare members apply for their state's Medicare Savings Program (MSP). This program helps members save money on their Medicare Part B premiums. Advocates work with members to determine if they may be eligible for the program. Then, they assist eligible members with the application process. Advocates also identify Medicare beneficiaries who may qualify for Extra Help with Part D Prescription Drug costs.

Visit Trust.MyAdvocateHelps.com or call My Advocate today at 1-866-274-0369 to see if you can start saving! Advocates are available Monday through Friday, 9 am to 6 pm.