

# scanclub

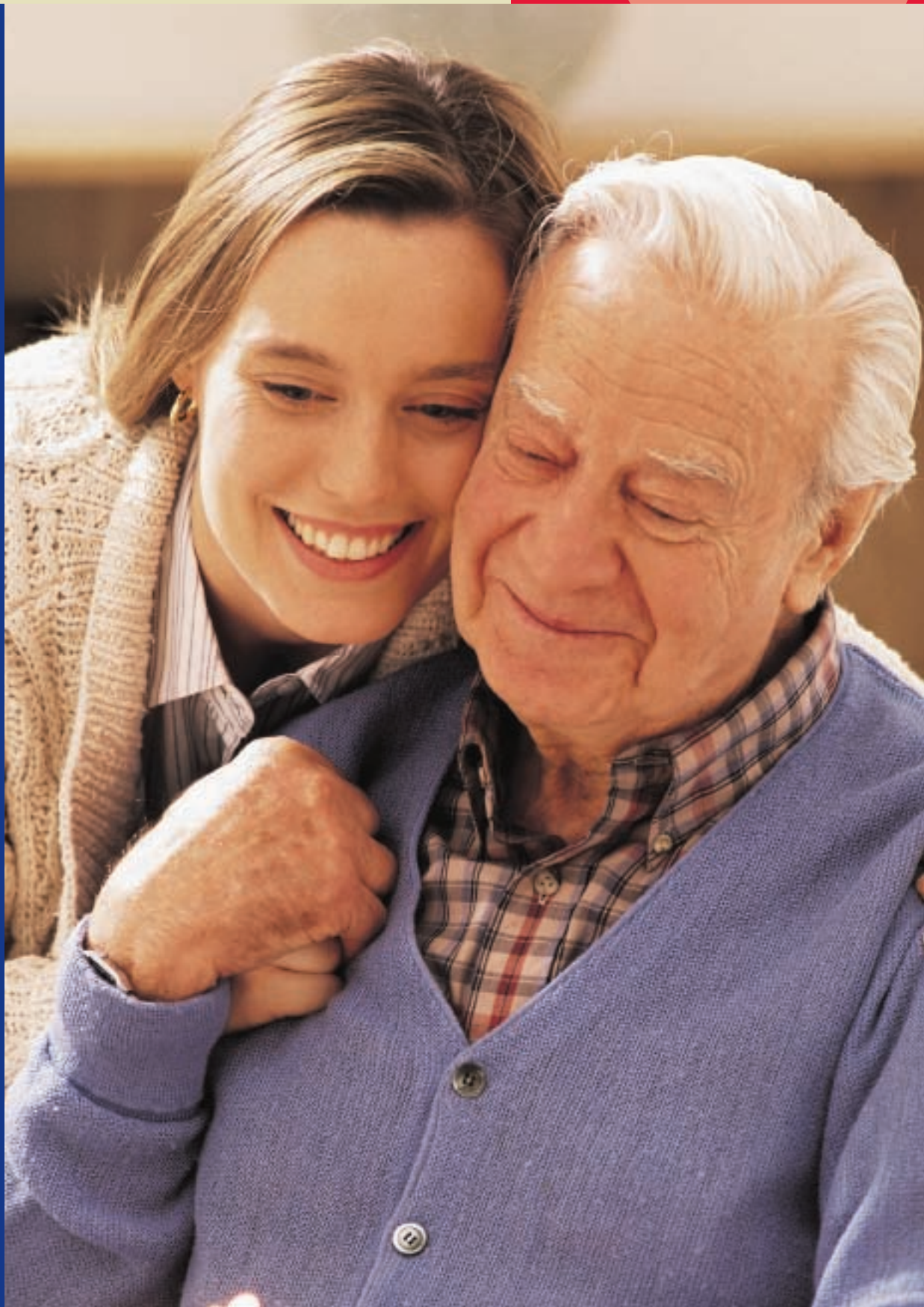
A NEWSLETTER FOR SCAN MEMBERS



## Protect Yourself from the Flu

Flu season is approaching, and SCAN would like to encourage you to make an appointment for your yearly flu shot. Who should get vaccinated?

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The flu shot is important especially if you are:

- ▶ An adult age 50 or older
- ▶ An adult or child six months or older having any of the following health conditions:
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Certain heart conditions
  - Cancer
  - Emphysema or lung disease
  - HIV or AIDS
  - Certain types of liver disease
  - Organ transplant
  - Sickle cell disease or other blood diseases
  - Kidney disease or dialysis
  - An immune system that does not work well
  - Long term aspirin therapy
  - Pregnant

October or November is the best time to schedule your flu shot. It will be best for you to get your flu shot even as late as December, since the flu season can last for many months.

Please contact your doctor to schedule your flu shot. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact your Case Manager or Member Services at 1-888-540-7226.

# When a Cough Needs Attention

What is the number one reason people in the U.S. seek medical care? It is not heartburn, headaches or the flu. Close to 30 million office visits a year are for coughing. The SCAN OnCall® nurses tell us it's also one of the topics on which they receive the most calls.

Now a cough doesn't always signal trouble. It's your body's way of getting rid of materials or clearing mucus from the lungs. A cough is also a sign of the common cold. It will usually go away on its own within a week.

Of course one of the most common causes of ongoing coughing is smoking. For nonsmokers, the vast majority of ongoing coughs are due to mild respiratory problems, such as post-nasal drip.

Heartburn can cause a cough. And adult-onset asthma is often first noticed with a dry cough in response to certain "triggers" or at night (wheezing and shortness of breath after exercise are also symptoms of asthma). Certain drugs ordered for heart patients can also cause an ongoing cough.

It might seem like a minor enough problem, but an ongoing cough can range from annoying to downright depressing. It may impact your quality of life. The key is to get to the root of the problem.

Describe your cough to your doctor:

- ▶ Does it only come on at certain times of the day or night?
- ▶ Does it seem to be in response to something you do?
- ▶ What does it sound like?
- ▶ Is it a dry cough or wet cough?

Whether treating a short or long-term cough, drink lots of water, hot tea or hot water with honey or lemon juice to help soothe your throat.

You need to see a doctor if any cough brings up blood or colored mucus. This is especially important if you have a history of lung problems.



# Keep Your Kidneys Healthy

## Do you have a going problem?

We do not think much about our kidneys unless we have a problem. More than 20 million Americans have chronic kidney disease. Another 20 million are at high risk of developing it. Want to learn a little more about it?

The leading causes of kidney problems are:

- ▶ diabetes and
- ▶ high blood pressure.

Your kidneys may suffer if you take over-the-counter pain medicines on a regular basis for a long period of time. Make sure you talk to your doctor about having your kidneys checked.

## Keep Your Kidneys Healthy

You need to first get diabetes or high blood pressure under control. Work with your doctor to determine what your blood glucose numbers should be. Aim for a blood pressure below 140/90.

Although most people won't have any symptoms at all, you may notice that you:

- ▶ Feel more tired
- ▶ Feel itchy
- ▶ Have a bad taste in your mouth
- ▶ Need to go to the bathroom more or less often
- ▶ Lose your appetite
- ▶ Have muscle cramping, especially at night
- ▶ Have trouble sleeping
- ▶ Have swollen or numb hands, feet or ankles
- ▶ Have puffy eyes in the morning
- ▶ Feel sick to your stomach

If you have any reason to suspect kidney disease, contact your doctor. Your doctor should check your kidneys. Be sure to take any tests as directed. Let your doctor know of any side effects. It's also critical to continue taking any drugs that control your diabetes or high blood pressure. Be sure to tell your doctor how you feel. He or she can determine the best course of care.

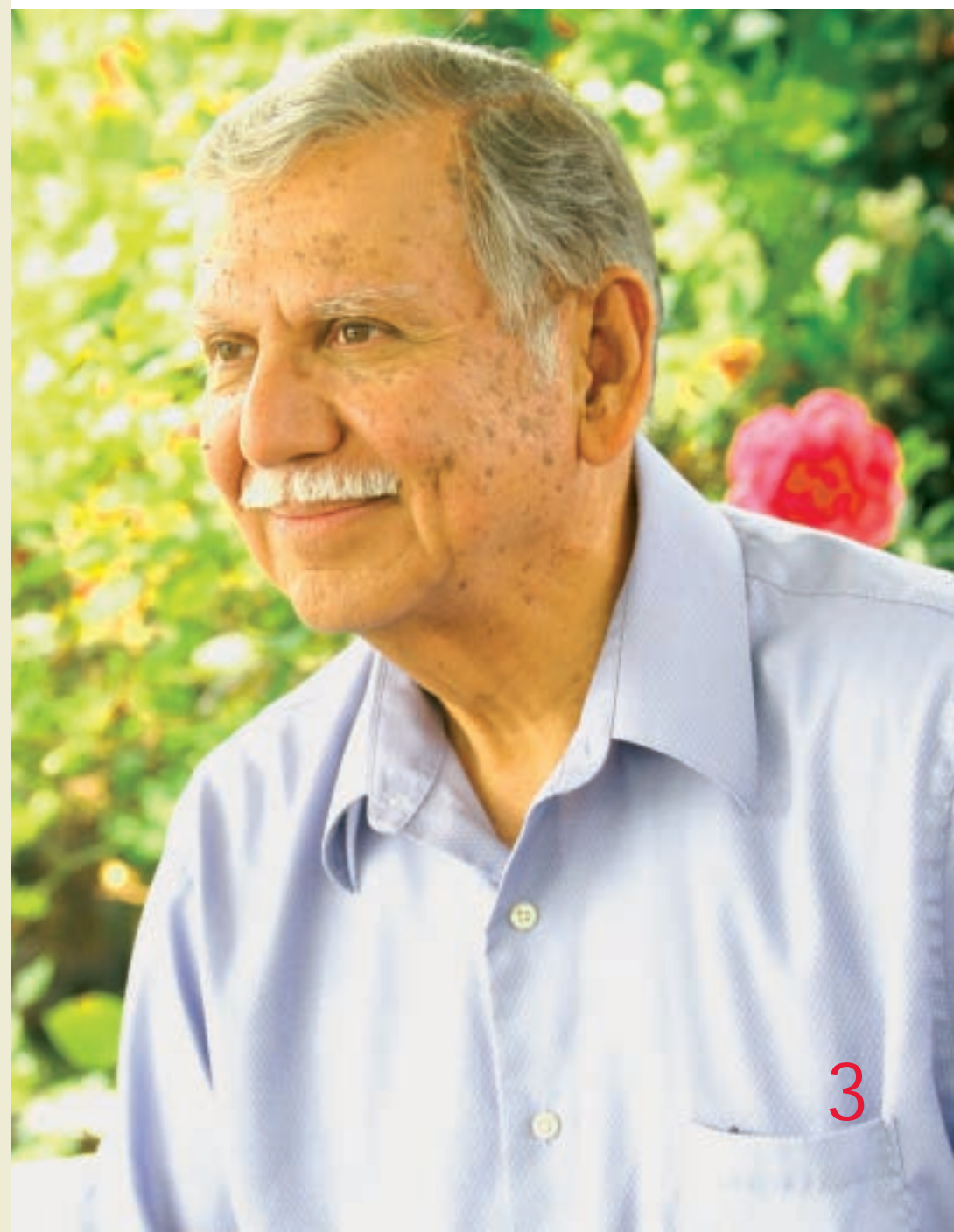
# Services for You

Speaking with our members is very important. We know that English may not be the best way. For those needing help, we have the following services:

- ▶ **Plan Staff:** We have staff who speak Spanish. If you need to speak with someone in Spanish, just ask us. We will have someone there for you.
- ▶ **Doctors:** We have many doctors who speak languages other than English. Check your doctor listing to find one who speaks the language you need.
- ▶ **Language Services:** We can help you get an interpreter. Your doctor can order this for you. Services are offered in many, many languages.
- ▶ **Forms and Mailings:** Our forms and mailings, such as this newsletter, are offered in Spanish. Let us know if you would like them to be in another language. There are other means available. For example, a TTY line is there to help members with hearing problems. All of these are at no charge to you.

If you need any of these services, call Member Services. Their number is: 1-888-540-7226 or 1-800-367-8939 for TTY.

As we said earlier, it is important that we speak to one another. To tell us how we can get better, call Member Services.





## HOW TO Eat When “Nothing Tastes Good”

There are many reasons why you might lose your appetite. Often, it’s just not a big deal.

You’re feeling a little under the weather, perhaps, so you just pick at your meals for a few days. There are times, however, when loss of appetite does become a problem.

You may have been told that it’s “normal” for your sense of taste (and smell) to change as you age. And that’s true up to a certain point. Some of the nerves that control smell wear down – and smell contributes to taste. Also your taste buds may become less sensitive. In general, these changes mean it’s harder to taste the sweet and easier to taste the sour in foods. So if you’ve found yourself using more sugar in your coffee than usual, that might explain why.

Other issues can make these changes more apparent, and this can be when eating becomes a chore. These include:

- ▶ Allergies and sinus problems
- ▶ Mouth sores or tooth decay
- ▶ Diseases such as Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s
- ▶ Certain medications, including some antibiotics, high blood pressure drugs or chemotherapy agents
- ▶ Tobacco use

With some of these issues, the action is obvious. If you’re a smoker, you can regain your sense of taste by quitting. And if you have poor dental health, you need to see a dentist.

It’s a different story if you have a long-term condition or are going through treatment. Chemotherapy, for example, can cause a bitter taste in your mouth. When that’s the case, you need to do what you can to adapt your eating to maximize your nutrition. The American Cancer Society has some excellent recommendations even if your eating challenge has nothing to do with cancer.

**When you just don’t have an appetite:**

- ▶ Try to eat a nutritious snack or mini-meal every 2 hours. Try a hard-boiled egg, cottage cheese with fruit, crackers with peanut butter, or yogurt with nuts or cereal mixed in.
- ▶ Eat your favorite foods any time of the day. A bowl of breakfast cereal with milk is a fine afternoon snack. Or have pudding for a mid-morning treat.
- ▶ Be active, if possible. Increased physical activity should increase your appetite.
- ▶ If eating causes pain, heartburn or any other uncomfortable side effects, talk to your doctor to see how it can be treated.

**When foods don’t taste right:**

- ▶ Regular brushing and rinsing (with mild ingredients, such as baking soda and salt) will keep your mouth clean, which can help relieve bad tastes.
- ▶ Try using plastic flatware.
- ▶ Suck on sugar-free lemon drops, gum or mints to get the unpleasant taste out of your mouth.
- ▶ Freeze grapes and small chunks of fruits such as cantaloupe or watermelon and eat them – they can be soothing to the mouth.
- ▶ If your old favorites don’t taste good, try flavors you don’t typically use such as barbecue sauce, mustard, or fresh herbs.

Again, make sure your doctor is aware of any problems you may have that are getting in the way of your good nutrition.

NOTE: Regardless of your food intake, it is essential that you drink plenty of liquids. Cool not cold water is best. Water and juices are better than soda.



## Safely Manage Your Drugs

Older Americans take more drugs – both prescription and over-the-counter – than any other age group. Drugs can work wonders. They can also be dangerous, particularly when you take more than one drug.

One drug could have side effects that interact with another drug that you are taking.

As we age, our body changes. For example, kidney and liver functions slow down. Drugs leave our body slower than in a younger person. That's why it's important for your doctor and pharmacist to take into account your age – not just your weight – when determining dosage amounts and instructions.

You should keep an updated list of all medications and over-the-counter drugs you take. Take the list with you to every doctor visit. Remember: Vitamins, herbs, and nutritional supplements should be listed. Give your doctor a copy for your file. When you get a new drug, have your doctor or pharmacist review your list to make sure there are no problems.

If you do not have a list, simply put all your drugs into a bag. Take the bag with you when you visit your doctor.

### Medication Dos:

- ▶ Double-check your order.
- ▶ Check the label and make sure your name and the drug's name are correct.
- ▶ Look at the medication itself – does it look right? If not, ask the pharmacist about it. It may be a different brand or a generic, which can be a different color or shape.
- ▶ Take the medication exactly as directed and, if you take a liquid medication, use the measuring device that came with it.
- ▶ Save the package insert or wrapper that includes such information as how many pills to take and how often.
- ▶ Throw away any drugs that are past their expiration dates.
- ▶ Use pill organizers, timers and other tools that can help you keep track of which meds you've already taken.

### Medication Don'ts:

- ▶ Don't store your drugs in the bathroom. Heat and steam can change a drug's effectiveness.
- ▶ Don't share pills with someone.
- ▶ Don't stop taking a prescription drug unless your doctor says it's okay.
- ▶ Don't change your dosage without consulting your doctor. Don't physically change (cut, crush, break or mix) your meds.
- ▶ Don't drink alcohol when taking drugs unless your doctors says okay. Some meds don't work well, and can even make you sick, if taken with alcohol.

Find out the answers to these questions about every drug you take:

- ▶ What is the drug's name and why am I taking it?
- ▶ How does this drug work?
- ▶ How often do I take it and how much do I take?
- ▶ When do I take it – with food or on an empty stomach?
- ▶ How long will it take to work – and how will I know it is working?
- ▶ What side effects should I expect?
- ▶ Will this interfere or interact with other medicines/vitamins/supplements I'm taking?
- ▶ Are there any foods, beverages or supplements I should avoid while I'm taking this?
- ▶ What should I do if I miss a dose?



# ASK SCAN®

In this column, we provide answers to member questions of interest to all members.

Dear SCAN:

How do I receive my diabetic supplies?

We asked our Medical Director, Dr. Marc Lato to respond: "SCAN® covers all your diabetic supplies, including glucometers, test strips and lancets, at no cost. Just go to your Primary Care Physician (PCP) to get a prescription for the items you need. Then you can fill your supplies prescription through a local, SCAN contracted pharmacy.

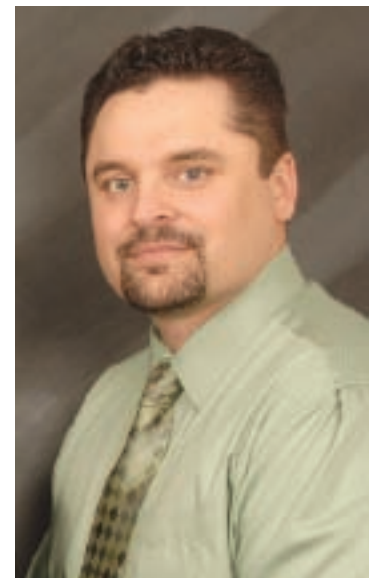
SCAN covers the One Touch and Accu-Chek brands of glucometers. You can receive a maximum of 100 test strips for a 30-day supply. You'll also need a prescription from your PCP for syringes and insulin, at no cost to you."

If you have any questions about your diabetes supplies, or any other SCAN benefit, please call Member Services Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 1-888-540-7226 or (TTY 1-800-367-8939).

Do you have a question that you think we should include in ASK SCAN? Send us a note at the address listed on the last page of this newsletter. We want to hear from you.

## A Message from Joey Zepeda, Director of Case Management

As the Director of Case Management at SCAN, I am pleased to oversee the delivery of care you receive. Our goal is to work closely with you and your support system to create a service plan that will keep you as healthy and independent as possible. We believe that case management starts with respecting your:



- wishes
- interests
- culture
- beliefs, and
- preferred setting for services.

As your needs change, your case manager will work with you and your support system to change your service plan and goals.

A good case manager makes all the difference. We are very proud and lucky to have such a great group of skilled case managers. If you need to talk to someone right away and your case manager is not available, there will always be someone at SCAN to help you, day or night! Member Services may be reached at 1-888-540-6227. TTY users can call, 1-800-367-8939. We have several staff that can help you at the time of your need.

We know that you have a choice in health plans. I would like to thank you for choosing SCAN and being a part of our family.

Case Management is committed to making a difference in your life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joey Zepeda".



# The Surprisingly Common Cancer

Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in the United States.

## Colorectal Cancer Facts:

- ▶ Nearly 150,000 people are diagnosed annually
- ▶ More than 55,000 die, and
- ▶ More lives are lost to colorectal cancer each year in the United States than breast cancer and AIDS combined.

The good news is that it takes 10 or 15 years for cells to develop into colorectal cancer. If detected early it is up to 90% curable.

Regular screening is very important. This cancer may not show any signs at all while it's developing. Pay attention, though, if you experience any of these signs:

- ▶ A change in bowel habits
- ▶ Diarrhea
- ▶ Constipation
- ▶ Narrowing of the stool
- ▶ Feeling that the bowel does not empty completely
- ▶ Frequent abdominal discomfort
- ▶ Frequent gas pains
- ▶ Bloating
- ▶ Fullness
- ▶ Cramps
- ▶ Bleeding from the rectum (bright red or very dark stool)
- ▶ Unexplained weight loss
- ▶ Weakness or tiredness
- ▶ Vomiting

If you are over 50, regular screenings are recommended. A family history of the disease also puts you at a higher risk. If you have not been tested recently, please make an appointment and talk to your doctor.

# ATTENTION SCAN Health Plan Arizona Medicare Members

There have been some changes made to your Evidence of Coverage (EOC). If you would like a copy of these changes, you may call Member Services at 1-888-540-7226. They will be more than happy to send them to you.

Your 2008 EOC will be sent to you at a later date. This document will include the changes made this year and any new changes as well.

## We Have MOVED

The SCAN office has moved to a new location in central Phoenix. We are now located at:

1313 East Osborn Rd., Suite #150

Phoenix, AZ 85014

We will have a community resource center which will provide a lot of programs and services in the near future. See our next newsletter for more details.



Providing assistance and information for our valued members.



Member Services – Call Member Services for answers to questions about your SCAN coverage, eligibility for services, and more. Member Services is available 7 days per week, 7 am to 8 pm.  
1-800-540-7226.

TTY Users – 24 hours, 7 days per week. 1-800-367-8939.



SCAN OnCall® for Arizona – You can speak with a registered nurse 24 hours, 7 days per week. They can help answer your health questions like:

- What is the difference between routine and urgent care?
- Where should I go to get needed care?

The nurses will help you make the right decision about your health. The SCAN OnCall® nurse line is 1-877-582-7226



Website – SCAN has a website, [www.scanlongtermcare.com](http://www.scanlongtermcare.com), to help you, if you have a way to use the web.



Interpreting Services – SCAN® is here to help you if you speak a language other than English. Our language service is available to you at no cost. We have arranged with Language Line Services for telephone interpreting service. They cover over 150 different languages. If you need this service, call Member Services at 1-888-540-7226.



Thank you for putting your trust in SCAN. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

# Thinking of Quitting Smoking?

General Message: If you are thinking about quitting tobacco, there is free help available. The Arizona Department of Health Services' Tobacco Education and Prevention Program offers face-to-face classes and over-the-phone counseling to help you quit smoking or chewing tobacco. If you participate in one of these programs, you may also be able to receive medical help called Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). NRT includes the patch, gum, lozenge, and some products that require a prescription from your doctor. If you are interested in more information or are ready to take the first step toward quitting, please call the Arizona Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-556-6222, visit their website at [www.ashline.org](http://www.ashline.org), or talk to your doctor.

Si no comprende este boletín o tiene problemas para leerlo debido a que la letra es muy pequeña o las palabras son difíciles de leer, por favor llame a nuestra oficina al 1-866-406-0994 ó al 602-778-3340, o para usuarios de TTY, al 1-800-367-8939, y alguien le asistirá. Este boletín pudiese estar disponible en otro idioma o formato. Por favor llame a nuestra oficina para recibir asistencia al 1-866-406-0994 ó al 602-778-3340, o para usuarios de TTY, al 1-800-367-8939.



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