

# scanclub

A NEWSLETTER FOR SCAN MEMBERS

## Depression: Common, But Not “Normal”

Depression is common in older adults. For one thing, you may have more to be sad about now. After all it's normal to feel sad and grieve when faced with loss—of friends, family members, even loss of mobility or activities. That doesn't mean depression is a normal part of aging that you need to tolerate. Yes, everyone feels “down” now and then. But when those feelings last day after day and begin to interfere with your daily life you need to take action.

*Story continued on Page 2*



## INSIDE

Depression: Common, But Not “Normal”	2
CEO Message: A message from David Schmidt	3
Cholesterol, Triglycerides and Lipids—Oh My!	4
Have You Received a Questionnaire?	6
Meet Senior Advocate Shirley Judge	7
A New Way to Read SCAN Club	8

Story continued from front page.

Keep in mind that people with depression aren't necessarily feeling sad and crying. The symptoms vary widely. For example, do you:

- Feel "empty"
- Have a change in appetite or weight
- Feel unmotivated or listless
- Feel irritable or restless
- Feel nervous or anxious
- Have physical symptoms, such as headaches, fatigue or weakness
- Sleep more or less than usual
- No longer enjoy the things you used to
- Feel unloved or worthless
- Feel that life isn't worth living anymore or feel hopeless

Of course, some of these symptoms can be signs of other serious illnesses. If you're experiencing any of these things—and have been feeling like this for more than a few weeks—you need to be checked out by a doctor. Depression is not a sign of weakness or a character flaw. It is a medical condition and can even make your other medical conditions worse.

There is one thing that won't get rid of your depression: thinking you can snap yourself out of it. Even if your depression doesn't get worse, wouldn't you rather it go away? Wouldn't you rather feel like your "old self" again? The best way to do that is to accept that you have a medical problem and that you need to get, and follow, your doctor's treatment plan.

Your doctor may or may not suggest an antidepressant medicine. Sometimes talking to a therapist or taking part in a support group can help. If your doctor thinks you would benefit from an antidepressant, you should know that there are many newer medicines with far fewer side effects than some of the older options.

For more on information, see the section on depression in your Healthwise® for Life Handbook. Or go to [www.scanhealthplan.com/depression](http://www.scanhealthplan.com/depression).

If you or someone you know is depressed and you fear that they are having suicidal thoughts, get help immediately. Call this number: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). This will connect you to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a free service available to anyone. You can call for yourself or a loved one. All calls are confidential.



## Member Services Question Answered!

### Can I change my Primary Care Physician?

Yes, you can change to a new Primary Care Physician at any time and for any reason. To do so, just call SCAN Member Services at 1-800-559-3500 from 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. seven days a week or TTY users can call 1-800-735-2929.

If you call by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, your change will be effective by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next month. For example, if you call by May 20<sup>th</sup>, you could start seeing your new doctor starting June 1. If you call between the 21<sup>st</sup> and the end of the month, please be aware that you will have to wait an additional month for the change to take effect. So if you call on May 21 or later, you would have to wait until July 1 to see the new doctor.

The SCAN website always has the most up-to-date information on doctors in your area. Follow the "current members" link and you can search for doctors by name, medical group or location—you can even specify gender and language preference. Check it out at [www.scanhealthplan.com](http://www.scanhealthplan.com).

# We Continue to Grow— Thanks to You

## A message from David Schmidt

Well, annual enrollment is over (as of March 31) and we hope all our new members are settled in. On our end, the 2010 enrollment year was our most successful one ever, with nearly 16,000 new members! Needless to say, our Senior Advocates were very busy making their welcome calls and Member Services was working overtime. They answered more than 50,000 calls in January alone—that's a 30 percent increase over last year.

On to what we can expect for the rest of 2010: As I write this, the healthcare reform bill passed in the House of Representatives on Sunday and was just signed today by President Obama. There is much information being circulated on this subject, so I want to answer two questions that we have been getting from SCAN members by phone.

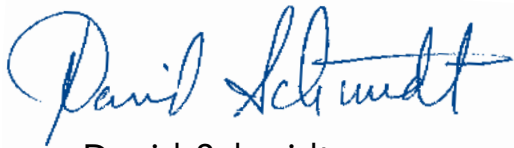
First, I want to assure you that this legislation does not eliminate the Medicare Advantage program. It is true, however, that new law includes future funding cuts for Medicare Advantage plans including SCAN. That will challenge us to work even harder at becoming more efficient with how we spend your Medicare dollars.

Also, please be assured that your current SCAN benefits are guaranteed through the end of 2010. As is the case every year, Medicare Advantage plan members including SCAN members will receive a notification of any benefit changes for 2011 this October. You can count on us to put members first in everything we do.

You can also count on us to keep you informed about your SCAN benefits and services through SCAN Club, annual benefit communications and our Straight Talk meetings in the fall. And by the way, you can now receive many of these communications, including this newsletter, electronically (see the article "A New Way to Read SCAN Club" below).

So stay tuned. I thank you for your membership and for putting your trust in SCAN.

Best regards,



David Schmidt

CEO



### A New Way to Read SCAN Club

How would you like to receive your SCAN Club newsletter via email rather than the hard copy you're holding now? We know that many readers like to hold a book, magazine, or newspaper in their hands and turn the pages. But as people get used to using their computers for more things, they often find they prefer to do at least some of their reading online.

In fact, 3,200 SCAN members have already chosen to receive their member materials online reducing printing and postage expenses. So in addition to SCAN Club, they will be sent their Annual Notification of Change (ANOC) and Evidence of Coverage (EOC) information via email in October—as well as many other required member mailings.

If you would like to join them and stop getting your member information by "snail mail," just call Member Services—or go to the SCAN website and complete a short online form.

Then, instead of getting more heavy books from us, you will receive emails whenever the new materials are available. Within the email will be a link to click that will take you to the newsletter or to your specific materials.

# SCAN healthcheck



## Cholesterol, Triglycerides and Lipids—Oh My!

*You've been told to "know your numbers" and thought you were doing well to know your blood pressure. That is a step in the right direction, but to take total charge of your health, there are more numbers you need to know.*

**About cholesterol.** Cholesterol and triglycerides are the two major types of lipids, or fats, found in your bloodstream. You can have high levels of cholesterol in your blood and not even know it because there are no symptoms. As with the fats we eat, there are good fats and bad fats. A simple blood test can tell how much of each you have. From there, you can work with your doctor to get a better balance.

LDL-C is the "bad" cholesterol. This is the form that brings cholesterol to your tissues and can lead to blocked arteries. High levels of LDL-C in your blood means there's too much cholesterol (see "Healthy Lipid Levels" chart).

HDL-C is the "good" cholesterol. This type helps remove bad cholesterol. So the higher the level of HDL-C, the more bad cholesterol your body can remove.

**About triglycerides.** These are another type of fat found in the blood. A high triglyceride level is often caused by being overweight, being inactive, eating a carbohydrate-rich diet (sugar, white flour, etc.), drinking too much alcohol and/or smoking. People with diabetes are more likely to have high triglycerides—and to face greater risk from those high levels—than those without it.

**The heart disease link.** According to the National Lipid Association, "the most dangerous of the heart diseases is atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. It's a buildup of the waxy deposits from cholesterol, called plaque, that can narrow your arteries and prevent oxygen from getting to your heart." The higher your LDL the greater your chances of having a heart attack, stroke or other serious health problems.

So what can you do? Ask your doctor if you need a blood test to find out your "lipid levels." Once the results are in, here's what to ask:

1. What are my lipid levels:

Triglycerides: \_\_\_\_\_

LDL-C (bad): \_\_\_\_\_

HDL-C (good): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cholesterol: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Based on these numbers and any other risk factors, what is my risk of developing heart disease.

3. What should my lipid levels be—my goal levels?

Triglycerides: \_\_\_\_\_

LDL-C (bad): \_\_\_\_\_

HDL-C (good): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cholesterol: \_\_\_\_\_



4. What steps should I take to bring my lipids to my goal levels?
5. Should I be taking a medication?
6. How often should I get my lipids checked?

**What you can do.** If you and your doctor find that your levels need to be improved, lifestyle changes may be enough. And you know what that means: lose weight if you're overweight, eat better and get regular physical activity. Remember, there are very few excuses for not moving more. Whether that's a walk, a swim, a bike ride or gardening, dancing or taking a tai chi class, do what you can, then try to do a little more.

Food-wise, the best way to lower cholesterol (and lose weight) is to cut back on foods high in fat and cholesterol and to increase your fiber intake. It's not hard to do. Make fresh fruits and vegetables your go-to snack, choose 100 percent whole grain breads and crackers, and read the labels on all packaged foods.

**About dietary fat and cholesterol.** Today's food labels plainly list the amount of saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol. As a reference, you should get less than 7 percent of your calories from saturated fat (that means 13 grams of saturated fat if you eat 2,000 calories a day—fewer if you take in fewer calories). Saturated fats are found in animal products, so make sure you choose low-fat proteins like skinless chicken breasts and non-fat or low-fat dairy products. Trans fats are found mainly in foods made with hydrogenated vegetable oils, such as margarines and shortenings. It's often used in packaged baked goods, so read your labels.

Your cholesterol intake should be no more than 200 milligrams a day. An interesting note: the cholesterol you eat does raise the cholesterol in your blood—but not as much as saturated and trans fats do. Trans fats tend to raise blood cholesterol similarly to saturated fat.

Keep in mind that there are “good fats” that do not raise your blood cholesterol. These include olive, canola, safflower, sunflower, corn and soybean oil. Choose these for cooking and salad dressings.

**When drug treatment is needed.** If lifestyle changes alone don't bring your lipid levels into your goal range, your doctor may prescribe a cholesterol-lowering drug. There are many options available and your doctor will help decide which type of drug will be most effective for you. Remember to keep up with your healthy lifestyle efforts so that you can take the lowest dose of medication possible. Besides, regular exercise and healthful eating is good for your overall health and wellbeing, not just your cholesterol levels. Find more information at [www.scanhealthplan.com/cholesterol](http://www.scanhealthplan.com/cholesterol).

Healthy Lipid Levels	
<b>Triglycerides</b>	less than 150 mg/dl
<b>LDL-C (bad)</b>	less than 100 mg/dl
<b>HDL-C (good)</b>	greater than 40 mg/dl (men) greater than 50 mg/dl (women)
<b>Total Cholesterol</b>	less than 200 mg/dl

Source: National Lipid Association, 2008

# Have You Received a Questionnaire?

As a SCAN member, you may have received a written questionnaire, or a phone survey, asking questions about your health or your health plan. Some ask about your well-being and lifestyle; others may ask about your experiences with your doctor's office or with SCAN. According to Grace Mayeda, Director of Customer Services for SCAN, there are a few things you need to know about these questionnaires.

"Some of the surveys are sent to all members; some to a random selection of members; and still others are sent only to members who took part in a specific program," she explains. "So some members will only get one, while others may get several, each asking about a different aspect of your health care."

Grace points out that not all of the surveys are from SCAN. "Many of these are required by regulators (government agencies that oversee SCAN). For example, the health questionnaire that members fill out when they sign up for any Medicare health plan—and then are mailed

every year or two—is a Medicare requirement. Another one, called the 'Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems' is done by regulators on behalf of SCAN and all Medicare plans. So even though our name may be on the questionnaire, it may not have come from us."

If you receive a survey and have any questions about it, Grace invites you to call Member Services at 1-800-559-3500 from 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. or TTY users can call 1-800-735-2929. We are available to help you seven days a week. A representative can tell you where the survey came from and what it will be used for.

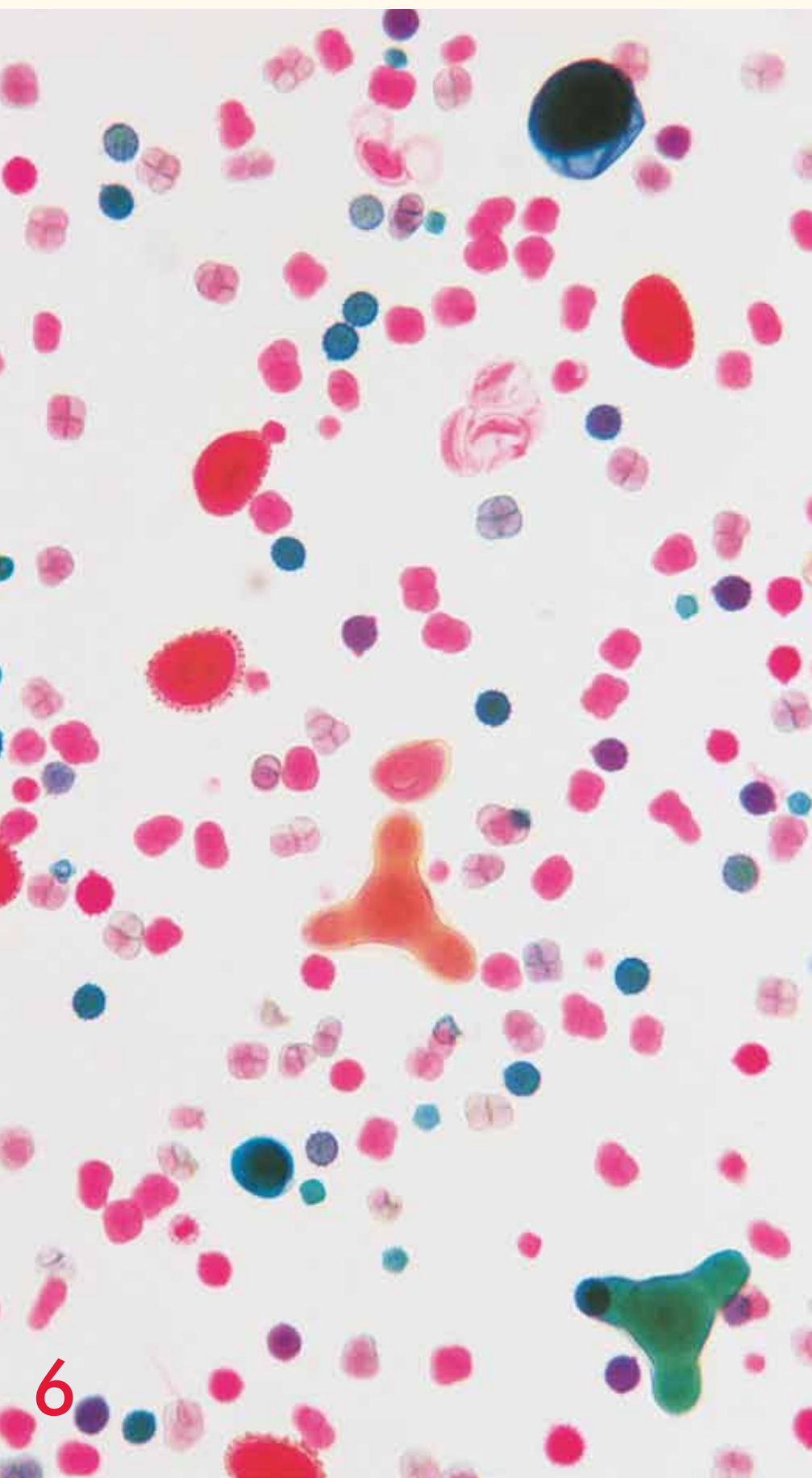
Regardless of where the surveys originate, they all have one goal in common: to improve your health care experience. "It's important that members complete the surveys as best they can," Grace says. "We look closely at the results to see where we can make improvements. Their feedback does matter to us and it does make a difference."

## Update on the H1N1 Flu

We're not hearing much about the H1N1 flu anymore, which is good news. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, H1N1 activity peaked last October and has declined significantly. But that doesn't mean we're out of the woods yet. Flu cases often come in waves, and we could well see another wave in the spring. That's why, if you haven't already gotten your H1N1 vaccine, it's not too late to do so.

The vaccine is available and encouraged for everyone who wants to be protected from H1N1. It is no longer being restricted to people in the priority groups (unlike the seasonal flu, H1N1 is much more common in people under 65). Call your doctor's office first to see if they offer the shot. If not, most local health departments do. And most are free of charge. If you do get charged an "administrative fee," call Member Services to find out how to get reimbursed at 1-800-559-3500 from 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. or TTY users can call 1-800-735-2929. We are available to help you seven days a week. For a vaccination location near you, go to [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) and enter your zip code into the Flu Vaccine Locator tool.

Remember, if you got a vaccine for the "regular" or "seasonal" flu last fall, you are not protected against the H1N1 virus. You must get a separate shot. For more information on H1N1 and the vaccine, go to [www.scanhealthplan.com/h1n1](http://www.scanhealthplan.com/h1n1).



# Meet Senior Advocate Shirley Judge

Shirley Judge came to SCAN in a rather round-about way. While volunteering with Pathways Hospice in Long Beach, Shirley had noticed some SCAN materials at the home of one of her hospice patients; Shirley helped care for her, and she was a woman who had become a good friend over the years. Shirley read the materials and thought SCAN would be a good option for her husband, but after learning more about SCAN, both Shirley and her husband joined! Shirley needed to switch doctors to one more convenient to where they live, but her husband was able to keep his doctor of many years—an important consideration when making their choice.

After just a few months of membership, Shirley saw a picture of the SCAN Senior Advocates and says: “They looked like they were having fun.” Shirley called to see how she could be a part of this group and as soon as there was an opening, she got an interview and, from there, got the job.

“I love wearing my SCAN jacket and having people react so positively to it,” she says. “One of my neighbors is 104 years old and a long-time SCAN member. She’ll see me wearing my jacket and call out: “I love SCAN!””

One of her favorite things to do is telephone our members. Senior Advocates make welcome calls to new members and call SCAN members on his or her birthday. “Our members are so interesting,” Shirley says. “I’ll ask if they have any birthday plans and I hear the most wonderful stories.” She’s also been known to do the most wonderful things.

When making one of her calls as Senior Advocate she realized the member she was chatting with on the phone was staying in the same assisted living facility as Shirley’s friend from Pathways Hospice. Shirley asked if the member would mind if she visited the next time she was at the facility, and from then on, Shirley visited the SCAN member every time she visited her friend from Hospice.

She’s also been known to bring flowers to members who sounded down, and recently made sure Member Services knew when a member she was talking with told Shirley she was without heat—during a cold snap. (In turn, Member Services made it a priority to get the appropriate service agency to respond to our member’s need.) Shirley is the type of employee who lives the SCAN mission to enhance the lives of seniors.



But SCAN members aren’t the only ones to benefit from Shirley’s care and concern. She was honored as Volunteer of the Year last year by Hospice Pathways, and with her church cooks meals and delivers food for the homeless—a cause near and dear to her heart. In fact, she says she was moved to find out that SCAN sponsors the Thanksgiving food baskets distributed by Lakewood Country Club. “I knew about the baskets, but had no idea SCAN donated the food until I read it in the newspaper last year,” she says. “I already thought so highly of SCAN and after that I was just so pleased to be part of such a wonderful organization. Everyone there, from the people at the front desk to the people you ride with on the elevators to the CEO, is so friendly.”

Shirley says one of the things she appreciates most about SCAN is how they go the extra mile. Funny; we’d say the same thing about Shirley!

Providing assistance and information for our valued members.

**Need Assistance? SCAN is Here to Help.**



**Member Services**—Call Member Services for answers to questions about your SCAN coverage, eligibility for services, copayments, and more. Member Services is available between the hours of 7 A.M. to 8 P.M., 7 days a week.

**1-800-559-3500**

TTY Users call: **1-800-735-2929**



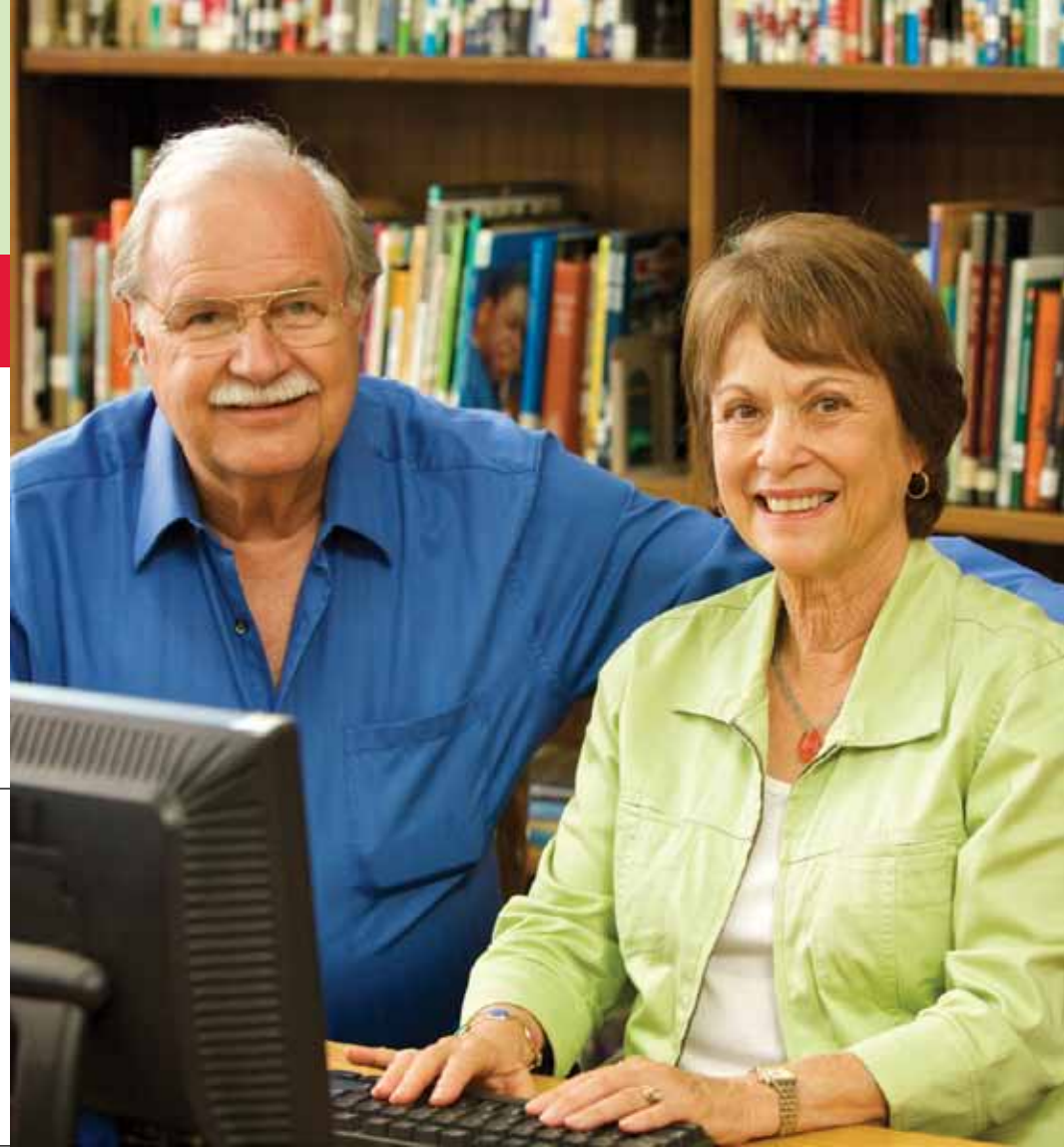
**SCAN OnCall**®—Talk to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call SCAN OnCall® when you have health-related questions, for instance about a medical condition, a medical test, or a medication and its side effects.

**1-800-793-1717**



**Website**—Our website is for members as well as their family and friends. [www.scanhealthplan.com](http://www.scanhealthplan.com)

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



# scanclub

## A New Way to Read SCAN Club!

See Page 3 for details.

8

### PODEMOS AYUDARLE EN SU IDIOMA

Si necesita ayuda para entender esta información en su idioma, por favor llame a SCAN al 1-800-559-3500, 7 días a la semana de 7:00 A.M. a 8:00 P.M. Usuarios de TTY deben llamar al 1-800-735-2929, 7:00 A.M. a 8:00 P.M., 7 días a la semana. Cuando utilice los servicios de atención médica, usted tiene derecho a un intérprete sin costo alguno. Pida un intérprete si el doctor o el personal no hablan su idioma.



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