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Member Newsletter

Update from CEO Eddy D. Broadway:
Listening to mind and body – the sooner the better

Everyone has experienced the mind-body connection. Taking a walk. Deep breathing. Yoga. Eating a bowl of fruit instead of a bag of chips. All of these things can make us feel better mentally, even as they’re improving our physical health.

The reverse is true, too. Stress can not only make us cranky. It can do lasting harm to our bodies. Fatty foods and lack of exercise hurts our bodies, and can darken our mood.

That’s why Mercy Maricopa has been so focused on “whole health,” also known as integrated care. The concept is pretty simple. We know that treating the mind and body together can make huge improvements in people’s lives.

So we’re excited that there are now three integrated health homes in Maricopa County: Partners in Recovery’s Arrowhead Integrated Care; the Michael R. Zent Healthcare Center from Jewish Family and Children’s Service; and Assurance Health and Wellness Center. You can learn more about them in this newsletter.

Adult members determined to have a serious mental illness (SMI) will have several more integrated health homes to choose from next spring.

Health care choice is extremely important. It allows people to find the right fit for them. To get care from someone they’re comfortable with, so they can work as a team.

It’s also extremely important to get care early. Sometimes that looks like “preventive” care, such as an annual mammogram, or regular blood pressure checks. Sometimes it means keeping on top of a chronic illness. And sometimes it means asking for help even when you’re not sure.

Research tells us that:

• Treating physical and behavioral health separately leads to poorer health conditions. That’s especially true for people with an SMI determination.
• People living with SMI often don’t or can’t find primary care. Sometimes that’s because of stigma. That leads them to be underdiagnosed and undertreated.
• People living with SMI have higher rates of chronic medical conditions. Their average life expectancy is 25-30 years less than the general population.

Research continues to show that “whole health” programs can remove barriers to primary care. These programs can help people get the care, services and support they need. They can prevent small problems from becoming big ones.

All three integrated health homes have doctors available to see new patients right away.

Two new “first-episode” clinics are now open in the Valley. They serve teens and young adults who have experienced their first episode of psychosis. This can be hard to figure out. Sometimes the person and their family aren’t sure what’s happening. Sometimes they deny it. Fear and stigma can prevent people from seeking help.

We know that treatment works, but people often wait months or even years before they get help. The new IMHR Epicenter and the First-Episode Intervention Center run by Maricopa Integrated Health System can change that.

These clinics are specially equipped to treat teens and young adults, together with their families, at the first signs of mental illness. They will help youth and families understand the disease, and manage and reduce its symptoms. You can read more about these exciting new programs on Page 2.

Sometimes the simplest ideas can be the most difficult to make happen. Treating the whole person, and the sooner the better, is worth the struggle. But no one can do it alone. Together with our provider partners, members, families and the community, we’ll continue to move forward.

Take three steps to avoid the flu

People can get the flu at any time of the year, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that the flu usually shows up as early as October and hangs around as late as May.

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Staying healthy is important all year. It’s especially important with flu season here.

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Growing the integrated health home movement

Health coaches and nutritionists help members adopt a “heart-healthy” lifestyle. That includes:

- Being physically active
- Eating a healthy diet
- Managing stress
- Reducing or quitting smoking

The Integrated Care Team includes a primary care physician (PCP), psychiatrist, and case manager. They work together at the same location on the same team with the members. Services are integrated through a shared electronic medical record and single service plan.

The Arrowhead Campus first opened in 2014. It was the first SMI clinic in Maricopa County to be licensed for both physical and behavioral health services. In 2015, PIR launched the county’s first Medical Assertive Community Treatment Team (Medical ACT Team).

Jewish Family and Children’s Service

The new Michael R. Zent Healthcare Center is in the West Valley. Here members can get treatment for their mind and their body, on the same day. The center was formerly called the Catalina Center.

Members can meet with a family nurse practitioner for their physical health care needs. They can get a range of mental health services, too. Other services for SMI member at the new JFCS health center include:

- Case management
- Pharmacy
- Health Navigators (help schedule appointments)
- Exercise, nutrition and other wellness services
- Help finding and keeping a job
- One medical record for both physical and mental health

Assurance Health and Wellness Center

Assurance was the first integrated health center to join Mercy Maricopa’s group of providers. It’s located in central Phoenix. Like the other centers, it uses a team approach to care for members living with SMI. It encourages members to take charge of their health care.

Teams are supervised by a primary care physician (PCP) and a psychiatrist. Team members may also include nurses, case managers, peer navigators and other specialists. Members have one medical record to improve integration of services and a care coordinator.

Treatment programs are driven by the member and their needs. They might include:

- Physical fitness
- Nutrition and cooking
- Chronic disease management
- Substance abuse treatment
- Support groups
- Community outings

You can learn more about all of these centers on their websites. You can also get your questions answered at our monthly Adult System of Care Community Forum. The meetings are held from 6 – 8 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month. They’re held at RI International, 2701 N. 16th St., Suite 119, Phoenix. Spanish language interpretation and refreshments are available.

Partners in Recovery

Arrowhead Integrated Care
5625 W. Bell Road, Glendale
602-239-4100
www.partnersinrecovery.us.com

Jewish Family and Children’s Service

Michael R. Zent Healthcare Center
3001 N. 33rd Ave., Phoenix
602-256-0528
www.jfcsaz.org

Assurance Health and Wellness Center

1515 E. Osborn Road, Phoenix
602-604-0000
www.assurancephoenix.com

Community mural launches first of two “first-episode” clinic openings

Two new treatment centers are providing early help to teens and young adults after “first-episode” psychosis.

The centers help young people and their families learn to understand what mental illness looks like. They also help them manage and reduce symptoms. The treatment is intended to start as early as possible. Studies show early treatment improves recovery.

IMHR Epicenter opened in October at 1415 N. 1st St. in Phoenix. Before it opened, the community created a mural on the side of the building. The mural project was led by artist Antonio Pasos and sponsored by Mercy Maricopa. RI International and PSA Art Awakenings organized this amazing community art project.

Mercy Maricopa’s Youth Leadership Council consulted on the Epicenter design. And these young people helped create the mural.

Marica Integrated Health System (MHI$) recently opened its first Episode Intervention Center. The clinic is located next to their Pendergast Family Health Center in the West Valley. 10550 W. Mariposa St. MHI$ already has a thriving neighborhood clinic here. Their new first-episode center offers important services to young people and their families.

Symptoms of psychotic disorders usually start between 15 and 25 years old. But the average delay between the first symptoms and getting treatment can be years.

IMHR Epicenter and the MHI$ First Episode Intervention Center can help reduce relapse and disability. They provide critical early treatment for young people and their families. These services can reduce the time it takes to get to hope, healing and recovery.

Fear and stigma often keep people from seeking help. Early symptoms of mental illness can be difficult to recognize or understand. The clinics offer “evidence-based” treatment, including family and group support. This means research has shown that these programs are effective.

These supports can help young people get back to work and school more quickly. They can empower them to take charge of their care. The message is clear: Treatment works, the earlier the better.

Take three steps to avoid the flu

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

There are three main things that health officials say will help you avoid the flu.

Step One

- Take time to get a flu vaccine.
- It’s the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
- It can reduce flu illnesses, doctor visits, and missed work and school due to flu.
- It can prevent flu-related hospitalizations.
- The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine every year, by the end of October if possible.

Step Two

- Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you’re sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from getting them sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

Step Three

- Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.
- If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can be used to treat your illness.
- Antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and shorten the time you are sick.

Don’t let the flu get you!

Call your primary care doctor or visit a local Walgreens, CVS, Fry’s, Target or Alberton’s to get your flu vaccine at no cost. You do not need a referral to get a vaccine.

To find a location near you, call Member Services at 1-800-564-5465. Or visit our website at www.mercymaricopa.org.

Merry Maricopa joined PSA Art Awakenings artist-in-residence Antonio Pasos, PSA Behavioral Health, RI International and the IMHR Epicenter team to unveil the community mural at Epicenter in Phoenix.
Video interpreting: A new way to get language and translation services

Not speaking a certain language should not stop you from getting the care and treatment you need. That’s why Mercy Maricopa has one more way for you to get help in a language you understand. It’s called remote video interpreting.

This means that you can get translation services from an interpreter through a live video. You can do it on just about any device, including a smart phone.

You can also get language services by phone or face-to-face. Interpreters can help you during clinical visits. For example, therapy sessions and group counseling. They can also help you in non-clinical settings. For example, when you’re setting up a doctor’s visit.

There’s no cost to you for these services, if:
• You qualify for benefits under the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and/or
• You have a serious mental illness (SMI) determination

Your provider can schedule all of the language services you need, when you need them. Just tell your provider that you need language services.

If you have any questions about these services, call Mercy Maricopa Member Services at 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465; hearing impaired (TTY/TDD) 711.

Take five: Understanding and managing stress

Stress happens when you feel like the demands on you – such as work, school or relationships – exceed your ability to cope.

Some stress can be good at times. It can give you a boost that provides the drive and energy to help you get through a situation. Like an exam or a work deadline. But an extreme amount of stress can affect your health. It can take a toll on your body and mind.

When you don’t treat chronic stress, you can end up with serious health problems. Some of these are:
• Anxiety
• Insomnia
• Muscle pain
• High blood pressure
• Weakened immune system

Research also shows that stress can contribute to the development of major illnesses, such as heart disease, depression and obesity.

By finding positive, healthy ways to manage stress, you can reduce the negative factors. Ways to manage stress are different for everyone. Some people like to work on a hobby, such as gardening, playing music and creating art. Others find relief in activities they can do alone: meditation, yoga and walking.

Here are five healthy ways that research shows can help reduce stress:

1. Take a break from the stressor
• Give yourself time to do something else.
• Don’t avoid your stress, but even 20 minutes to take care of yourself is helpful.

2. Exercise
• Research shows that exercise benefits your mind just as well as your body.

3. Smile and laugh
• Our brains are connected with our emotions and facial expressions. When people are stressed, they often hold a lot of the stress in their face. Laughs and smiles can help relieve some of that tension.

4. Get social support
• Call a friend, send an email.
• When you share your concerns or feelings with another person, it does help relieve stress. But it’s important that the person you talk to is someone you trust.

5. Meditate
• Give yourself time to relax and focus.
• Much like exercise, research shows that even meditating briefly can help you.

Research shows that children in foster care do better when they live with families. To learn about becoming a foster parent or helping in another way, call 1-800-543-7633 or go to https://dcs.az.gov/services/foster-care-and-adoption.

Families also had a chance to enjoy the Hispanic Heritage Day Celebration on the plaza before the game. There were ballet folklorico dancers, musical performers and food vendors.

Before the game, Mercy Maricopa, Dignity Health and the Arizona Diamondbacks, along with the Arizona Department of Child Safety, arranged for the special day.

One of our goals was to increase public awareness about foster care,” said Tad Gary, chief clinical officer for Mercy Maricopa. “There were resource tables on the main concourse of Chase Field with people available to answer questions and provide information about foster care.”

Officials gathered on the field with foster families. They smiled on the jumbo screen. The crowd cheered and recognized them for raising awareness about foster care.

Hundreds of children are removed from their homes each month in Maricopa County. This is because of allegations of abuse or neglect. There aren’t enough foster families to care for that many children. That means more children end up in group homes or shelters.

Research shows that children in foster care do better when they live with families. To learn about becoming a foster parent or helping in another way, call 1-800-543-7633 or go to https://dcs.az.gov/services/foster-care-and-adoption.

About 1,000 foster, adoptive and kinship families enjoyed a fun-filled day with the Arizona Diamondbacks at Chase Field on September 10.

Kids and caregivers got free tickets to the game against the San Francisco Giants. They got vouchers for food and drinks and a Diamondbacks shirt and hat. Children also got a backpack with a coupon for a pair of shoes, tickets to the zoo and a few other goodies.

Mercy-Maricopa Integrated Care, Mercy Care Plan, Dignity Health and the Arizona Diamondbacks, along with the Arizona Department of Child Safety, arranged for the special day.

The Diamondbacks lost to the Giants, but families still had a great time. They got to spend time together, have their faces painted and take family photos.

Can’t wait until next year!

Thousands of people took over the State Capitol on Saturday to enjoy a beautiful morning together at the 12th annual NAMI Valley Walk, raising funds and awareness, and reducing stigma surrounding mental illness. This was the biggest crowd ever, including a great team from Mercy Maricopa and Mercy Care Plan.

Can’t wait until next year!
Children’s medical director marvels at strength, resiliency of children

Deborah Fernandez-Turner wanted to become a doctor for as long as she can remember.

“It was always my dream,” said Fernandez-Turner, who is now the children’s medical administrator at Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care. As medical director, she makes sure that each child and family gets the services they need. She makes sure they get the right services, delivered at the right time. She makes sure the person delivering those services is effective and an expert.

“I’m very fortunate to work for an organization that is focused on the member. That fosters this approach to make sure that the child and family are always at the center of everything we do,” she said.

Before joining Mercy Maricopa, she worked as a psychiatrist at Cottonwood de Tucson. Prior to that, she served as a physician advisor at Community Partnership of Southern Arizona and as a medical director at Pantano Behavioral Health.

Fernandez-Turner and her husband have two daughters, ages 16 and 18. They enjoy visiting the oldest daughter, who goes to college in California. They’re “a family of Disney fans,” she says, so they visit Disneyland as often as possible.

She grew up in Staten Island, New York. She earned her bachelor’s degree in biology from New York University and her medical degree from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Psychiatry intrigued her. That’s the part of medicine that diagnoses, treats and prevents mental, emotional and behavioral disorders. Psychiatry was her focus during her medical training at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New York City.

Fernandez-Turner wanted to leave the city where she was born and raised. So she accepted a fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

“I enjoyed looking more holistically at an individual and family,” she said. “I was not a fan of seeing a patient as a single disease, treating that disease and moving on quickly to the next person. But I found that in psychiatry, I can evaluate the person or family medically, emotionally and culturally. And make an impact on a whole family system.”

Seeing children who are traumatized by the people they trust is one of the most challenging parts of her job.

She marvels at children’s resiliency.

Often small changes can make a huge impact on a developing and growing child, she said.

“Each phase of development builds on the next. So if you’re able to impact a child when they are 6- or 7-years-old and improve their functioning, and their family’s functioning, you are preventing years of poor self-esteem, social development, family challenges,” she said.

“And it’s a pretty awesome job where you can have toys in the office and get on the floor and play with adorable children.”