

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Logging Off, Shutting Down and Liking It!
- FAQ's
- Research on Exercise for Depression
- Changing the Rules of Change

**CONTACT US:**

To request an appointment, ask a question, consult about an issue of concern or find out more about the resources & services available through the PAP:

Call us at 800-777-1323  
(or via TDD at 800-777-4969)

Visit us on the Internet at:  
[www.1stchoicedoc.com](http://www.1stchoicedoc.com)

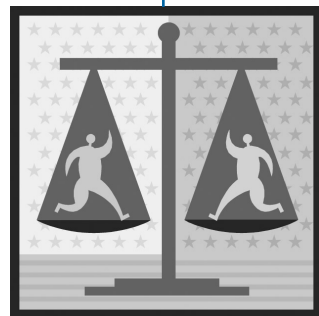
The First Choice Health Physician Assistance Program is dedicated to excellence in client care and customer service. We look forward to the opportunity to serve you anytime a need arises.

**QUALITY, CONVENIENCE, & RELIABILITY**

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. If specific health or medical advice or assistance is desired, the services of a licensed healthcare professional should be sought. The information in the First Choice Health PAP Quarterly Newsletter is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of your physician or healthcare provider. If you are experiencing health problems or contemplating lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise, consult your healthcare provider ahead of time to ensure your well being.

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**Bringing Balance to  
Work, Home, and Life**

**DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE**

**PRACTICE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES -  
Logging Off, Shutting Down and Liking It!**

In search of ways to combat the unexpected drawbacks of unlimited access to information and computing power? More and more professionals and families are making the decision to limit the amount of leisure time spent in front of the laptop or using electronic conveniences.

The digital revolution has enabled people to do more and more (and more and more and more) in less and less time. Access to information, news, entertainment (games, news, music, stock market results) and virtual interactions with friends or family has become an “all you can eat” phenomenon. People are beginning to recognize the need to push away from the table or reduce the information portion size. While few people would dispute the benefits of accessing information quickly, the “always on” connection to work tools, cell phones, cable television, and the Internet also has a downside.

If the age of electronics enables people to accomplish more in less time, it can also lead us to disengage from the activities, hobbies, pursuits, and connections to friends & family that contribute to a balanced, satisfying lifestyle. Professionals increasingly report being concerned and distracted about filling time doing “just a bit more” work or surfing the Internet out of habit rather than necessity. The abundance, speed, and efficiency of the modern age can lead human beings to feel uncomfortable with the prospect of unwinding and moving at a slower pace.

**“Nature does not hurry, yet  
everything is accomplished.”**

**- Lao Tzu**

Can you imagine feeling great about doing little except relaxing or recreating on a day off? Many people cannot. Do you experience a vague but consistent need to be “connected” and productive at all times? Can you remember what it feels like to be pleasantly tired from a day of physical activity or several hours of intentional relaxation?

Remember that effective practice management also includes self-care strategies. It’s important to know when to switch gears and log off. Give yourself permission to reconnect with activities, people and places that recharge your batteries and refresh your perspective. Enhance your balance and increase your overall professional productivity by protecting yourself from the subtle sources of stress in modern life.

Speeding through life in the electronic passing lane can be detrimental – undermining your balance and diminishing your natural ability to get things done. Some people find it helpful to schedule “Technology Free” weekends or evenings. Others make it a point to break the cycle of working from home or having the cell phone or PDA with them at all times. You work hard. It’s important and necessary to rest, relax, and play with the same level of enthusiasm and commitment to your personal well being.

Developing the habit of slowing down can be as simple as making (and then taking) time for lunch or relaxation, even when your practice or workday is scheduled full. Contact the Physician Assistance Program to discuss strategies for managing and responding effectively to the conflicts, demands, and stress of modern living.



## Research on Exercise for Depression

A study at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (reported in the Journal of Preventive Medicine, January 2005) confirms what physicians and mental health professionals have been advising for many years: *Exercise can be effective in reducing and managing the symptoms of depression.* The research was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health.

Mild to moderate symptoms of depression were reduced almost 50 percent in adults aged 20 to 45 who engaged in 30 minutes of “moderately intense” aerobic exercise three to five times per week. The aerobic exercises in this study included treadmills and stationary bicycles.

Participants who exercised at lower levels of aerobic intensity (three to five times per week) also experienced relief, although at a lower level (30 percent symptom reduction). These results

suggest that activities like walking, running, swimming, biking, and using stair-stepper or elliptical machines are powerful tools for responding to and relieving the discomfort of depression.

Symptoms of depression typically include negative thoughts, decreased ability to make decisions or to tolerate frustration, lethargy, agitation, irritability, and a sense of hopelessness – sleep irregularities are not uncommon. While adults with symptoms of depression typically view exercising as a chore, this study makes clear the benefits of becoming an active participant. Consistent exercise can lead to consistently feeling better.

Because aerobic exercise increases and sustains the heart rate at levels higher than those required for basic daily activities, it’s important for people to consult their physician prior to beginning or significantly increasing an exercise program. It’s also a good idea to consider working with a trainer or qualified fitness coach so that exercise workload increases are accomplished safely.

As you know, exercise is an adjunct to - not a replacement for – medical treatment of moderate to severe symptoms of depression. In general, the symptoms of depression can be most effectively managed by a combination of counseling, medical treatment and making an investment in a healthy, physically active lifestyle.

Contact First Choice Health PAP for more information about the symptoms of depression or visit us online at [www.1stChoiceDoc.com](http://www.1stChoiceDoc.com) to make use of the *Awareness Tools* for Depression, Anxiety, Assertiveness, Stress, and Compassion Fatigue.



## PAP: Frequently Asked Questions

Contributed by the PAP Customer Service Team

The question most frequently received by the PAP Customer Service Team is this: *How do I make an appointment?* The answer to that question and to a handful of other frequently asked questions can be found in this article. If you have a question about PAP services that isn’t covered here, I invite you to contact us at **(800) 777-1323** or by email at [info@firstchoicedoc.com](mailto:info@firstchoicedoc.com).

**How do I make an appointment?** Contact us by phone or by email. We’ll ask about your needs and preferences. The PAP will identify a provider close to where you work or live. The provider will contact you directly by phone to discuss your concerns, their background and experience, and to offer dates and times for an appointment. It’s that easy. You can expect to hear from a PAP provider within 48 hours of contacting the PAP.

**What are PAP services all about?** In two words: *Convenience* and *Confidentiality*. PAP services help physician families respond to the conflicts and demands that add to the stress of contemporary life. The PAP helps people resolve distractions, tackle problems, make changes, connect with useful resources and develop new skills - whether the distractions or concerns exist at work, at home, at school, in rest or at play. Your contacts with the PAP are very confidential.

**What services are available?** We’ll connect you to a licensed counseling professional for assessment & referral in response to emotional, behavioral, family, relationship, or mental health concerns. *Assessment & referral* means that your provider will work with you to determine the nature of the concern and, if possible, to resolve the issue within the available PAP visits. The provider will also make recommendations about the value of treatment (beyond the PAP appointments) in response to your situation or concerns.

In response to the needs of “sandwich generation” physician families (raising children and involved in decision making about the needs of elderly or ill parents), **Eldercare Consultation & Referral** services are available through the PAP. Eldercare services make it possible for you to identify, screen, and coordinate with a wide range of professional resources, information, and services specific to aging loved ones, no matter where in the USA your loved one lives.

**Which people in my family are eligible to use PAP services?** The spouse or partner with whom you reside and dependent children up to the age of 18. If your child is 18 years of age or older and attends college or a trade school, contact us to discuss their eligibility for PAP services.

**What does confidentiality really mean?** Confidentiality means the PAP and our providers release no information without a signed form of consent. No information about your contact with the PAP is ever released unless you request it (in writing). As with all behavioral healthcare services, the rule of confidentiality is temporarily suspended (in the interest of public safety) if it is determined that a client presents a realistic and imminent threat of harm to self or others - including the abuse of a child or an elderly person.

**Who are the providers in the PAP network and where are they located?** The providers in our network are psychologists, *licensed mental health counselors, clinical social workers, marriage & family counselors, and chemical dependency professionals*. Providers are invited into the PAP network based on rigorous standards for education, training, experience, and state licensure. To meet the needs of our clients, First Choice Health PAP has providers across the United States and in countries around the world.

**Does the provider I want to see participate in your Network?** If a qualified provider is not already in the First Choice Health PAP network, we will gladly consider their application for preferred provider status in our network in order to respond to your preferences and needs.

**Will I be able to use my health insurance or managed care coverage with the PAP provider?** Yes. The PAP developed and uses *Right Referral, First Time* technology to ensure that your provider is eligible to deliver post-PAP services using your healthcare insurance or managed care coverage.

Your questions and comments are welcome! We look forward to meeting your needs and exceeding your expectations for client care and customer service.

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I keep six honest serving persons  
They taught me all I knew  
Their names are What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who

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- Rudyard Kipling

## Changing the Rules of Change

In our professional lives, in our personal and family lives, even at school or in the community, responding to change can be a stressful experience. Learning to recognize and embrace the opportunities that arrive on the wings of change is an important tool for navigating the contemporary (ever-changing) lifestyle.

Remember that it’s NORMAL for people to have a range of feelings in response to change – large or small. Each one of us responds to change uniquely. Some people have many feelings or reactions, while others do not. Since a person’s perception of the impact of change is often more stress creating than the change itself, allow yourself (and others) ample opportunity to give and receive clarifying feedback. Information reduces uncertainty.

The PAP is a confidential, professional resource where you can get practical and effective ideas and strategies for doing change well – in your medical practice or in your personal life. Contact us by phone or online to consult or for access to a provider near where you live or work.

“All things are difficult before they are easy.”

-Thomas Fuller