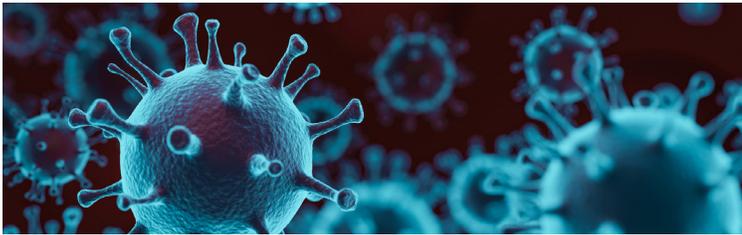




FALL 2020

Rising to the challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic



COVID-19 is an on-going reality that's impacting companies around the world, affecting work environments, home environments, and the physical and mental health of the workforce. Earlier this year, as many companies did, First Choice Health rapidly mobilized and converted to a nearly 100% virtual work environment.

As Washington State was the national epicenter for the virus, the local healthcare workers rallied on the front lines for long hours, citizens were anxious and fearful for their health, and employers scrambled to provide communication and care for their staff during the unprecedented and rapidly changing situation.

In the spirit of our corporate values of Caring and Innovation, First Choice Health was the first Third Party Administrator to provide HPA and PPO customers complimentary access to 98point6 virtual care for 60 days to support social distancing measures while discouraging the utilization of Emergency Departments as the first line of care. As the COVID crisis grew

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Self-care and avoiding burn-out for frontline workers

During these unprecedented times, it is critical that anyone working in healthcare – and especially those at the frontlines of this pandemic – never lose sight of the importance of taking care of oneself. Remember the old adage: Always put your own oxygen mask on first before you can assist the person next to you. You can't help others if you are incapacitated because of poor physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual health.

How can folks on the frontline take care of themselves when more than ever, they are being called upon to be so much to so many? Taking stock of your own health each day is critical. Here is a daily checklist you can use to keep tabs on your physical and mental wellbeing:

- Eat regular meals with food that nourishes you.
- Get enough sleep.
- Exercise when you can.
- Make time to prioritize your mental health.
- Connect with friends and family via video chats, or other favorite activities.

Understand that we are all grieving, and healthcare professionals are not immune to the psychological trauma of all this loss. Be as kind and patient with yourself as you are with the people you care for.

Source: <https://fenwayhealth.org/self-care-for-frontline-workers>

Medical Mgmt. Note:

FCH Medical Management is pleased to announce the implementation of **Interqual Clinical Criteria** beginning December 11, 2020. Interqual is an evidence-based clinical decision support solution to support making clinically appropriate medical utilization decisions. The use of MCG Care Guidelines will end at that time.

Expanding our Strategic CIN Partnerships

Clinically Integrated Networks (CINs) are gaining traction as a collaboration model and potential healthcare solution, offering potential solutions and innovative, value-based disruptions to our current healthcare system. First Choice Health's network of providers operates as a CIN and more, filling in gaps where traditional care teams are not necessarily able to help patients, and providing additional support to help navigate healthcare plans' complexities.

CINs offer a model of high-quality clinical care, coupled with benefit navigation and appropriate incentives. From what we've seen within First Choice Health's network, CINs in turn boost access to care and help drive healthcare savings in some major ways. Benefits of Clinically Integrated Networks:

- **Avoid unnecessarily high costs**
- **Allow for site-of-care optimization**
- **Deliver robust clinical outcomes**
- **Provide pricing stability**

At First Choice Health, we work with employer groups located in the Northwest to design and administer health plans and CINs optimized for their unique needs, providing the highest quality care right where their members live and work.

- We have an exclusive partnership with **Eastside Health Network** that provides direct access to quality, comprehensive care for employers throughout the Puget Sound region's Eastside, including Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah, Bothell and more.
- We've built a similar program with St. Charles Health System in Central Oregon, called **Central Oregon Select**, as well as one with **MultiCare Connected Care** throughout Washington State.
- **Puget Sound High-Value Network** has been a leading network since 2016, connecting the Puget Sound region from Tacoma and Puyallup to Everett and Marysville, with regional providers and healthcare organizations that are celebrated for high-quality care and service.



We plan to announce additional CINs in the near future, and are excited to be a part of their expanding use, and the shift toward a lower-cost, more accessible model of care.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Continued from previous page.

and people were reluctant or unable to make traditional visits to healthcare facilities, members increasingly used the 98point6 app to easily seek care from their homes.

Additionally, to help our provider community navigate through the unknowns of COVID, we quickly created and published a provider FAQ web page with answers to the questions we received within the first month of COVID hitting the region. We continue to add pertinent links and information to this page.

Our Physician Assistance Program has been heavily used by local hospital leadership and staff managers as they support anxious and overworked physicians and other frontline staff dealing with a new virus amid waves of patients. From promotional materials and education to webinars, First Choice Health ensured both managers and staff had the tools and resources to bolster their resilience and meet the challenge head-on.

If we all follow the recommended safety guidelines and do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19, life and work can soon begin returning to a version of normal. In the meantime, First Choice Health remains committed to providing continued high-quality service to all of the clients and people we support.



8 tips for providers transitioning into telehealth appointments

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, telehealth services have been booming and are anticipated to skyrocket in the coming months and years. The question for you as a provider is less about whether you are ready to increase your telehealth offerings, and more about whether you are able to set yourself up to continue providing high-quality, patient-centered care, even if it looks more digital these days. Here are some guidelines and extra tips that First Choice Health and other healthcare system providers can consider as they shift to telehealth, ensuring a smooth transition between the in-person exam and the virtual visit.

1. Technology: Tweak it and test it so you can trust it.

Set up high-quality video and sound equipment: Good video and audio quality depend on your camera and microphone. But high-quality camera and microphone options don't have to break your bank - there are many affordable options available.

Pro-Tip: Positioning - Remember to keep your camera position at eye level and look at the camera, not the projected image of your patient on your screen. This will help you maintain eye contact.

Pro-Tip: Anticipation - Know where things might go wrong or drop off. Video calls can use a lot of bandwidth, so closing background programs reduces the risk of frozen video streams, and you can avoid spotty WiFi and power interruptions with ethernet connections and plugged-in power adapters instead.

[For tips 2-8, click here to read our blog post.](#)

New VP of Med Mgmt



First Choice Health is pleased to announce the hiring of Shruti Singal, M.D., as its new vice president of medical management.

Prior to joining First Choice Health, Dr. Singal was a medical director for Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, and a leader in its commercial medical management. She is also a physician advisor for an on-demand telemedicine consulting platform, Physician 360, as well as the chief medical officer for MD Innovate, a growing medical device firm. Previously, Dr. Singal was the medical director for CVS Minute Clinic southeast region and an Emergency Medicine Physician at Emory Midtown Hospital based in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Singal is weeks away from completing her MBA from Georgia Institute of Technology.

"It's a privilege to join an organization that has prioritized data and innovation in medical management, from its push toward telehealth accessibility to forward-thinking initiatives, like its Chronic Opioid Pain and Education program," said Dr. Singal. "With Dr. Robinson and the rest of the great team at First Choice Health, I am confident that we will accomplish our goal of providing the best health for our members."

Fall Recipe: Stuffed Acorn Squash

Leah Sigel on our Network Management Team highly recommends this easy and healthy Stuffed Acorn Squash recipe packed with lots of sweet and savory flavors. Caramelized onions, sweet Italian sausage, apples, spinach and fresh herbs are stuffed inside roasted acorn squash, then broiled to perfection. Both Paleo and Whole30 friendly.

INGREDIENTS:

2 small/med acorn squash	1 large apple, cored and diced
1 lb pork sausage, casings removed if necessary	2 cups fresh spinach, roughly chopped
1 large onion, sliced thin	1 Tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped
3 tbsps ghee coconut oil, or other cooking fat	2 tsp fresh thyme, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced	Sea salt and black pepper to taste

[Click here to read the full recipe.](#)

Source: www.paleorunningmomma.com/sausage-stuffed-acorn-squash-paleo-whole30/

