

HEALTHNET NEWS

A newsletter for public librarians and others interested in consumer health information services

Volume XXV Number 2

Summer 2010

NETNEWS

A JUST-LAUNCHED WEBSITE EXPLAINS THE NEW HEALTH CARE LAW

HealthCare.gov

The nation's new Health Care Reform Law (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act), passed in March 2010, has a number of provisions that will affect the way Americans obtain health insurance coverage. Many of the Law's provisions will be phased in over a period of years.

How can you help library users understand the many aspects of this new law, that will influence health care and health insurance coverage for all Americans?

A new website from the federal government is now available to help health consumers of all age groups to better comprehend the Law.

The Law required that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services create a new website to help health consumers understand how the Law will impact each of us. The new website, "HealthCare.gov," at <http://www.HealthCare.gov> had to be launched by July 1, under the requirements of the Law. Additional information will be added to the website in phases.

This single website incorporates information about both public health insurance programs, including Medicare and the new Pre-Existing Conditions Insurance Plan, as well as details about more than 1,000 private insurance plans. The website allows Internet users to obtain insurance information focused on their community, their age group, and health situation. The initial July 1, 2010 website version includes information on coverage options, by state and zip code, for both public and private insurance plans.

Information on preventative services is included. The website will eventually incorporate quality rankings for health care providers in local communities. Beginning in October 2010, it will include price estimates for health insurance plans. Pricing and benefit information is currently being gathered from insurance companies.

Fact sheets about the Health Care Reform Law appear on the website at <http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/index.html>. Many of the fact sheets focus on different population groups such as seniors, women and children, Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans.

A timeline clarifying the dates that specific provisions of the Health Care Law are mandated appears on the website at <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/timeline/index.html>



Healthnet: Connecticut Consumer Health Information Network
Lyman Maynard Stowe Library ♦ University of Connecticut Health Center
PO Box 4003 ♦ Farmington CT 06034-4003
Telephone: 860/679-4055 ♦ email : richetelle@nso.uhc.edu
<http://library.uhc.edu/departm/hnet>

As of June 2010, the new Health Care Law has allowed Connecticut to receive federal funding to extend Medicaid health insurance coverage to certain low income adults.

Beginning July 1, 2010, some Connecticut adults have been eligible to apply for a “Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan” program administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services and the Health Reinsurance Association.

There are links to brief, basic overviews of the Health Care Reform Law on page 2 of the Spring 2010 issue of Healthnet News at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/spring10.pdf>



(Photo Credit: Tern photographed by Teddy Llovet April 2010)

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT THE GULF OIL SPILL

Even children who live far from the area of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill and the damage it has caused to the environment, economy, and psychological health of the area, have been affected by news of this disaster.

Online resources are available to guide parents who are talking with their children and helping them cope with the stress of hearing the nearly constant stream of negative information about the effects of the oil spill.

“*Tips for Talking to Children & Youth About the Oil Spill Disaster*” at <http://tinyurl.com/26o3d2o> is a brief, online brochure, published especially for parents and teachers by the federal government’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. It discusses the variety of ways children and adolescents may respond to upsetting news. It describes usual reactions according to the age of the child. There are specific suggestions for reassuring and supporting children. Additional resource organizations are listed. There is also a link to the agency’s Mental Health Services Locator, searchable by state.

The American Academy of Pediatricians, national professional organization of children’s physicians, has included “*Important Information for Parents on the Gulf Oil Spill*” on its HealthyChildren.org website at <http://tinyurl.com/2ao06kk> The web page includes specific “communication tips” for parents. The brief article emphasizes that, for children directly affected by the oil spill or hearing about it, “it’s important to talk with them about their feelings.”

“*Helping Kids Cope with Stress*,” online at the Kidshealth website at http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/stress_coping.html provides guidance to parents helping their children deal with a variety of stressful situations. Written by a child and adolescent psychologist, the publication recommends careful listening, briefly commenting on your child’s situation, and helping children label their feelings. The website includes additional articles about coping with stress written especially for children and adolescents.

Links to additional parenting guidance appear in the Resource Guide, “Your Child: A Health Resource Guide,” on the Healthnet website at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/>

NEW DROWNING PREVENTION GUIDELINES



Although rates of childhood drowning have fallen dramatically in recent years, drowning remains the second leading cause of death among children ages one to nineteen years of age.

In anticipation of summer outdoor activities, the American Academy of Pediatrics, national professional association of physicians specializing in the care of children, has updated its Drowning Prevention Guidelines. The new Guidelines are described on the AAP website for parents at <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/News/pages/AAP-Gives-Updated-Advice-on-Drowning-Prevention.aspx>

The new Guidelines encourage parents to teach their children to swim, but also to provide additional “layers of protection” by supervising children carefully near water, providing swim lessons for children four and older, learning CPR, and safety-proofing pools with high four-sided fences and a self-latching gate.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics’ new Guidelines, swim lessons may be appropriate for some children ages one to four, and may reduce the chance of drowning. The AAP’s previous Drowning Prevention Guidelines discouraged swim lessons for children under four years of age.

Additional drowning prevention tips and recommendations appear on the Safe Kids U.S.A. website at <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/drowning/>



MEDLINEPLUS HAS A NEW LOOK!

The design and colors of MedlinePlus changed this summer but the same current, authoritative, consumer-oriented health information is still available on the MedlinePlus website. The website has been redesigned to make consumer health information easier to access. New features have been added.

Published by the National Library of Medicine, a part of the National Institutes of Health, the MedlinePlus website at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>, includes information on more than 800 diseases and medical conditions.

Each health topic page offers a categorized collection of links to information from federal government agency and health organization websites. Categories for a disease might include: overviews of the disease, diagnosis/symptoms, treatment, prevention/screening, clinical trials, nutrition, coping with the disease, genetics, and research articles.

The new design features a “Video & Cool Tools” page with links to videos on surgical procedures and health news reports, calculators (such as “...Your Ten Year Risk of Having a Heart Attack”) and quizzes, as well as tutorials about medical terminology and evaluating health information on the Internet. The English and Spanish pages have distinct color schemes. The medical dictionary now appears on the website’s homepage. A “Share” button on each health topic page offers access to a number of social networks. The new design offers the opportunity to embed widgets for the MedlinePlus search box onto your blog or website. A mobile version of MedlinePlus is available. There are Twitter updates and a chance to sign up for email alerts.

Medline Plus continues its policy of not allowing any advertising or product endorsements on its website. News is updated each weekday. Specific quality guidelines are used to select links.

The newly redesigned Medline Plus remains a valuable first step when beginning a consumer health information search.

MEDICAL RESEARCH: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Has a library user asked your help in finding a medical research article that was discussed on the evening news? Are you looking for the meaning of a medical term...in plain language? How are new medications evaluated before they are approved for use? What guidelines should you use when evaluating medical research reports in the media?

A new Medical Research Subject Guide for health consumers, at <http://uchc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=111926> on the UConn Health Center Library website, offers information on these topics, and related ones, to help you understand reports about medical research you hear every day that may affect your health or the health of your family and to assist you in finding information for library users.

Medical Research: What You Need To Know is one of a series of consumer health subject guides on the UConn Health Center Library website at <http://uchc.libguides.com/browse.php?o=s>

This Guide includes information about understanding the research process, clinical research trials, finding medical research reports, dental research news, children's health research, medical terminology, and medical news sources.

The Guide links to selected websites from the National Institutes of Health, Reuters Health News Syndicate, National Library of Medicine, National Institute on Aging, the Journal of the American Medical Association, Harvard School of Public Health, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, the National Cancer Institute, and other sources.

Need more help? Contact Healthnet's free consumer health research service for Connecticut librarians and residents at **860/679-4055**.



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The following titles are recommended to public libraries and other libraries providing consumer health information services. They are not part of the UCONN Health Center Library collection.

A Practical Guide to Autism. What Every Parent, Family Member, and Teacher Needs to Know. Fred R. Volkmar and Lisa A. Wiesner. Hoboken, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2009. 610 p. (ISBN 978-0-470-39473-1 paperback).

Have you heard or read about autism recently?

Autism has become a frequent topic on television shows, as well as many other types of popular media. The public is now better acquainted with the repetitive behavior and lack of eye contact that children with autism exhibit. Although the diagnosis of autism, a developmental disorder characterized by serious difficulties with social skills, language, and behavior, is a much better known condition than previously, there are many less known background details about diagnosis, education, and family life, that could provide great assistance to parents of children and adolescents who have been diagnosed with autism.

A Practical Guide to Autism... is a very informative, comprehensive, lengthy (610 pages!), nontechnical resource for parents and teachers.

The authors have extensive experience treating children and adolescents with autism. Dr. Volkmar is Director of the Yale Child Study Center where he specializes in autism and co-author Dr. Lisa A. Wiesner is a Connecticut pediatrician who has conducted research on autism.

The Guide discusses topics such as obtaining a diagnosis, assessment techniques, safety planning, communicating with a child's school, effective educational interventions, managing problems among siblings, behavior problems, planning for the future, eating problems, social skills training, insurance coverage, and considering complementary and alternative therapies.

A number of charts throughout the text, on subjects such as warning signs of autism in the first two years of life, conditions that may be confused with autism, and selected intelligence and developmental tests, enhance the information. Case reports provide specific examples of autistic behavior and its management. Each chapter concludes with related questions from parents and specific, informative answers from the authors.

Information about autism and other pervasive developmental disorders appears on the Yale Child Study Center website at <http://childstudycenter.yale.edu/autism/pdd.html#diagnosis> and on the Healthnet website in the Mental Health Resource Guide at <http://uchc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=78575&sid=581906> in the Pervasive Developmental Disorders section.

Latina Guide to Health: Consejos and Caring Answers. Jane L. DelGado. New York, Newmarket Press, 2010. 239 p. (ISBN 978-1-55704-854-7 English-language paperback, ISBN 978-1-55704-855-4 Spanish-language paperback).

Hispanic mothers, like all mothers, often put the health needs of their children ahead of their own. A recent study in the journal *Ethnicity and Disease* (volume 20, number 2) found that Latino women in the Albany, New York area often delay seeking health care for themselves despite the fact that a majority of women in the study had health insurance.

This pattern is reinforced by a cultural belief among Hispanic women, that “to be good women we have to endure and hold everything together.” (page 9) However, according to author Dr. Jane L. DelGado, this belief can be overdone and Latinas “end up neglecting or even hurting themselves.” (page 9) She strongly encourages Latinas to “value ourselves” as well as their families and to care for themselves as well.

As a Hispanic woman and President and CEO of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health, online at www.hispanichealth.org, Dr. DelGado speaks with great understanding of the needs, customs, and cultural beliefs of Latinas. These beliefs encompass the importance of spiritual and emotional health to the concept of “health.”

Addressing the book to Latina women, she has written this Guide in a straightforward, conversational tone,”Just as if we were talking over a chocolate caliente (hot chocolate) or café con leche (coffee with milk)”...

Dr. DelGado addresses health problems specific to Latinas.”Latinas are more likely to have autoimmune disorders than non-Hispanic white women are.” Despite high rates of diabetes, Latinas “have lower rates of heart disease and stroke” and greater longevity than non-Hispanic white women. (page 12)

The first part of the book includes specific advice to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Part two includes alphabetically arranged discussions of health conditions prevalent among Latinas. The book concludes with a glossary of frequently used medical terms.

First Aid Manual. The step-by-step guide for everyone. Gina M. Piazza, M.D., editor-in-chief. London, Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2009. 288 p. (ISBN 978-0-7566-4982-1).

A sudden, unexpected emergency is a frightening experience. Often, trained medical personnel are not on the scene when an emergency occurs and aid may have to begin with a bystander.

The American College of Emergency Physicians, national association of physicians who specialize in emergency care, has published a third, updated edition of its First Aid Manual, written to help provide “everyone” with “basic skills” needed “to summon appropriate help” and “provide basic care.”

The initial chapters discuss preparing oneself to cope with an emergency psychologically, communicating effectively with the victim, seeking help, assessing the emergency situation, preventing infection as you provide care, and coping with the aftermath of this stressful situation.

Emergency situations are “grouped by body system or cause of injury” in color coded chapters. The manual explains aid for both less serious and life-threatening situations. It also discusses care for medical conditions such as abdominal pain, earaches and toothaches, diabetes, fever, and allergies.

An advantage of this First Aid Manual is its brief, clear step-by-step instructions, illustrated with illustrations and numerous color photographs. It includes information on techniques (performing CPR, applying sterile wound dressings, improvising a sling) and supplies (types of bandages and sterile dressings). The first aid directions are enriched by explanations and illustrations of wound healing, the respiratory process, and the structure of the sensory organs. The book concludes with a concise, “quick-reference guide” to emergency situations such as choking, heart attack, seizures, spinal injury, and poisoning.

Medicine for the Outdoors. Essential Guide to First Aid and Medical Emergencies. Paul S. Auerbach, M.D., Philadelphia, Mosby, 2009. 5th edition. 552 p. (ISBN 978-0-323-06812-0).

When medical help is on its way, it is certainly a challenge for an untrained person to provide emergency first aid while awaiting its arrival. When an individual encounters a frightening medical emergency while in the wilderness, hours or days from access to medical care, the challenge of coping becomes substantially greater.

What effective steps can you take to care for yourself or a sick or injured companion when medical help is far away?

Dr. Auerbach’s comprehensive, detailed guide covers a multitude of potentially dangerous situations. The author is a professor of surgery in the emergency medicine division of the Stanford CA University School of Medicine and a founder of the Wilderness Medical Society.

In addition to dealing with more common ailments such as minor bruises, tick bites, fatigue, motion sickness, encounters with poison ivy, and hay fever, Dr. Auerbach discusses “What to do when caught in a wildfire,” as well as poisoning, snakebites, animal attacks, lightning strikes, snow avalanches, and underwater diving accidents. His emphasis on preparation before a potentially hazardous journey includes specifications for recommended immunizations and the contents of a first aid kit.

Numerous illustrations clarify the recommended treatments. The appendices include a glossary of medical terms, a detailed list of commonly used drugs and their dosage, and an index.



*Healthnet News is written by Judith Kronick and Alberta L. Richetelle
If you have questions about anything in the newsletter or about Healthnet services for Connecticut public libraries,
please call 860/679-4055; e-mail address: richetelle@nso.uchc.edu*

© 2010 University of Connecticut Health Center. All rights reserved.

ISSN: 1526-8624