

All Together HEALTHY

elderplan|homefirst.
a participating agency of MJHS Health System

Winter 2025

Thank You for Your Feedback and Your Continued Trust In Us

The team at Elderplan/HomeFirst welcomes our newest members, and we thank our existing members for continuing to entrust us with your care. As we celebrate 40 years of serving our community with compassion, dignity, and respect, your feedback remains crucial to our growth.

Your feedback helps us recognize what we're doing well while guiding us on our journey to make continuous improvements. For example, when you shared that you were having trouble scheduling doctor's appointments and wanted more options, we listened. We've added NYC Health + Hospitals (HHC) to our network, providing access to more physicians and hospitals, as well as diagnostic and treatment centers. We also gave our members the freedom to see any specialist they choose, in or out of network.



We are very proud to say that because of your input, Elderplan received the top rating of 5-Stars on Health Care Quality and on rating of Health Plan from our members in the CAHPS survey.*

*Results based on the 2024 CMS CAHPS Survey.



Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

The Member Advisory Council (MAC) is a group of members, caregivers, and staff that work together to help us improve member experience and your satisfaction. We thank everyone who dedicated their time to be part of these important meetings and to voice their opinion on behalf of themselves and other members.

For more information about participating in the MAC, please email memberadvisorycouncil@mjhs.org or call 347-254-7700, Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We would love to hear from you!

In This Issue...

As we begin 2025, I would like to personally welcome our new members to Elderplan/HomeFirst and thank our existing members for continuing to entrust us with your care. Our entire leadership team and staff are committed to helping you stay as healthy as possible and ensuring your satisfaction with our plan.

It is with that commitment in mind that this issue of *All Together Healthy* includes important tips on preventing falls, beating the winter blues, and avoiding rehospitalization. Far too many people find themselves back in the hospital shortly after being discharged. Your team at Elderplan/HomeFirst wants to support you with the information and resources you need to avoid readmissions.

I'd like to also extend my appreciation to the members who have taken time to share feedback about their experiences with Elderplan/HomeFirst by responding to surveys and participating in Member Advisory Council (MAC) sessions. Your feedback plays a very important role in our ability to provide continuous improvement in our benefits, services, and overall member satisfaction. We continue to encourage all members to respond to future surveys you may receive about the plan and invite you to participate in upcoming MAC sessions.

If you have questions or suggestions about any plan features or benefits, feel free to call us at 1-800-353-3765 (TTY: 711) 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., 7 days a week.

Sincerely,



David Wagner
President & CEO
MJHS Health System

What You Can Do to Prevent Falls

Falls in older adults are very common and can lead to injuries that could affect your overall health and participation in social activities.

What can you do to prevent falls?

- **Stay active.** Regular exercise helps build muscles and increase strength. Exercises like Pilates and Tai Chi can improve balance and muscle strength.
- **Get enough sleep.** If you are tired, you are more likely to fall.
- **Have your eyes and ears tested.** Even small changes in sight and hearing can increase your risk of falls. When you get new eyeglasses, take time to get used to them and wear them as advised. If you have hearing aids, be sure they fit well and make sure you wear them.
- **Use assistive devices if you need help feeling steady.** Using canes and walkers correctly can help prevent falls. If your doctor tells you to use a cane or walker, make sure it's the right size for you. Also, make sure the walker wheels are rolling smoothly.
- **Wear the right footwear.** Non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes offer the best support.

If you have fallen, even if you don't feel pain or have balance issues, speak to your doctor. They can check for health problems and suggest physical therapy, assistive devices, or other measures to help prevent future falls.



If you have any questions or concerns about fall prevention, call Elderplan Member Services at 1-800-353-3765 (TTY: 711), 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., 7 days a week, and ask to speak with your assigned care manager.

Sources:

Merck - www.merckmanuals.com/professional/geriatrics/falls-in-older-adults/falls-in-older-adults, National Institute on Aging - www.nia.nih.gov/health/falls-and-falls-prevention/falls-and-fractures-older-adults-causes-and-prevention

How to Avoid Returning to the ER or Hospital

Have you recently been in the hospital? Whether it was a trip to the emergency room (ER) or you were admitted for an illness, injury, or scheduled procedure, the last place you want to be is back in the hospital again.

As many as one in five patients are readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of being discharged, according to reports by the Federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Getting re-hospitalized is stressful for patients and their families. It is also costly and may increase the risk of infection.

Why does Elderplan assign you a dedicated Transitional Care Nurse/Team?

Supporting your smooth transition home and helping you remain there safely is important to Elderplan. That's why you will be assigned a dedicated Transitional Care Nurse or Team to help ensure your healthcare needs are met after you are discharged from the ER or hospital. They will work with your doctor to create a personal post-discharge care plan that addresses your specific healthcare needs.

Should you require skilled nursing services, your Transitional Care Nurse/Team will discuss your home care options and help make arrangements for you to see the provider of your choice. They will also assist you with scheduling essential follow-up appointments with your doctors and can help you understand more about your new medications. If you are transferring to a nursing home or independent living community, instead of returning directly home, your Transitional Care Nurse/Team will be available to support you there.



How to Avoid Returning to the ER or Hospital (cont'd)

Follow this simple guide to make sure you know what to do once you leave the hospital after being discharged.

What steps will help you avoid returning to the ER or hospital?

- **Understand Discharge Information**
 - Ask questions if you are unsure of anything explained to you.
 - Have someone with you as a second set of ears, so you can discuss instructions and make sure they are understood.
- **See Your Doctor**
 - Visit your PCP within 7 days of an ER visit, 30 days of your hospital discharge, or as instructed.
 - Arrange to have your hospital records shared with your doctor.
 - Tell your doctor about any new medications you are taking.



Why is it important to see your PCP after being discharged?

- **Ensure Your Condition is Stable and Answer Your Questions**

It is very important that your PCP is able to monitor your condition after you are discharged. This will ensure that you are stable and that any possible issues are addressed immediately. Your doctor will also take the time to answer any questions you may have about your diagnosis or treatment plan.

- **Review Your Medications**

Another important step when visiting your PCP is reviewing your medications. This helps ensure that new medications prescribed by the hospital do not conflict with medications previously prescribed by your doctors. Medication errors, such as duplication, wrong dosage, frequency, and unwanted interactions, can result from not reviewing medications carefully after being discharged from the hospital or when transferring from one medical setting to another.

We recommend that you keep a record of all of your prescriptions, as well as any allergies or interactions experienced while taking them. This will help make it easier if you go to an ER, urgent care center, or are hospitalized, and after you've been discharged.



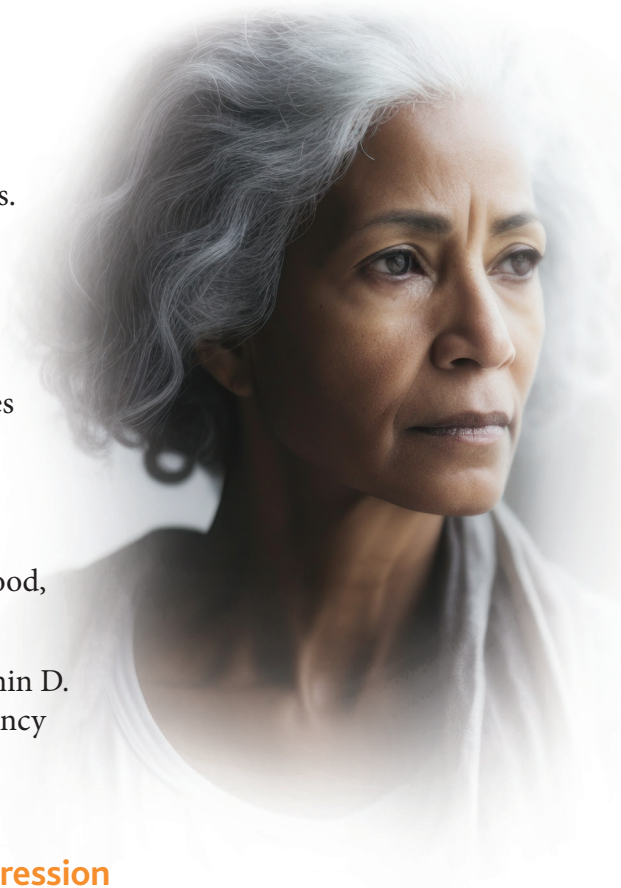
How to Beat the Winter Blues

Winter can be a tough time for everyone. Cold weather, fewer outdoor activities, and less sunshine can impact mental health and increase depression, especially for older adults. That's why it's important to find ways to improve your mental well-being during the winter months.

Causes of Depression in the Winter

Several factors that occur during this time of year may contribute to depression. These include:

- **Weather** – Cold weather makes it difficult to do outdoor activities such as running errands, attending doctor's appointments, or simply enjoying some fresh air.
- **Time change** – Less sunlight and changing the clocks as daylight saving time ends affect our biological clocks, which can cause mood, sleep, and hormonal changes.
- **Vitamin D deficiency** – Sunlight helps our bodies produce vitamin D. If you are exposed to less sunlight, it can lead to a vitamin deficiency that affects your mood.



Tips to Cope with Feelings of Sadness, Isolation, and Depression

Feeling sad, lonely, or depressed does not have to be a part of getting older. Here are some tips to help improve your mental health and well-being during the winter months:

- **Be socially active.** Engaging in social activities can boost your physical, mental, and emotional health. Find an activity you enjoy and connect with others.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** A balanced diet can help prevent illnesses that might lead to disability or depression. Some diets have been shown to reduce the risk of depression.
- **Stay active indoors.** Engage in indoor exercises or hobbies that keep you moving and occupied.
- **Get at least 8 hours of sleep.** Sleep problems can trigger feelings of depression, so maintaining a good sleep routine is crucial.
- **Stay in touch with friends and family.** Let others know when you are experiencing symptoms of depression.
- **Seek professional help.** If your appetite is decreasing or your behavior is changing, it could be a sign that depression is worsening. Don't hesitate to reach out for professional help to maintain your mental well-being.

How to Beat the Winter Blues (cont'd)

**Your mental health is just as important as your physical health.
If you need to speak to someone, support is just a phone call away.**

Elderplan has a network of licensed therapists and care managers available to provide you with emotional support. Call 1-800-353-3765 (TTY: 711) from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., 7 days a week, for help with finding a participating provider in your community or ask to speak to your assigned care manager.

Elderplan Plus Long-Term Care (HMO-POS D-SNP) members may call Carelon Behavioral Health at 1-833-918-0808 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, for help with finding a participating licensed therapist in your community.

Elderplan has made it even easier for you to speak with a therapist through Teladoc.

Teladoc has licensed therapists you can speak to over the phone or through video chat. If you're interested in learning more, call 1-800-TELADOC (1-800-835-2362) 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, to schedule an appointment or to learn about this benefit. You can also visit www.teladoc.com 7 days a week via Teladoc by phone, secure video through your personal computer, or by using a mobile device such as a tablet.

- The services through Teladoc are designed to handle non-emergency medical issues. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.
- While this service is not intended to replace your primary care doctor, a virtual doctor's appointment can sometimes be another option when your doctor's office or urgent care center is not available or open. Prescriptions can also be obtained when medically necessary.



Sources:

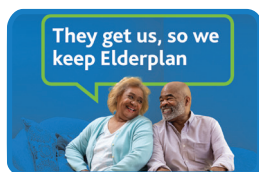
National Institute on Aging - <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/loneliness-and-social-isolation>
The Kim Foundation - <https://thekimfoundation.org/winter-weather-and-mental-health>
Cleveland Clinic - <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9293-seasonal-depression>

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What's Inside

Thanks for Your Feedback



Tips to Prevent Falls



Avoid Returning to the ER



Beat the Winter Blues



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