



# Western Physicians' Alliance



## NEWSLETTER

July 2011

### Western Physicians' Alliance & Saint Mary's Health Plans working together on Tertiary Referrals

In a collaborative effort, Western Physicians' Alliance (WPA) and Saint Mary's Health Plans (SMHP) have established several key initiatives intended to improve the delivery of health care to the members we serve. We are currently working on the following program:

#### Tertiary Referrals

The University of Utah Health Care system is ranked No. 1 by University Health System Consortium's 2010 Quality and Accountability Study. The annual study compares 98 of the nation's top academic medical centers and ranks them based on core quality measures, patient safety indicators, mortality rates, re-admission rates and patient satisfaction scores.

As the only academic health care system in the Intermountain West, the University of Utah Health Care system and its physicians offer services in more than 200 specialties and its hospitals and clinics are consistently ranked among the country's best health care facilities by U.S. News & World Report. The system provides care for a referral area that encompasses more than 10 percent of the

continental United States. The system receives more than 900,000 outpatient visits and more than 26,000 inpatient admissions annually.

In light of this significant network system, Saint Mary's Health Plans is diligently working to build upon our existing relations with the University of Utah for SMHP member referrals and management for those patients who require more specialty care than can be rendered in northern Nevada.

To help in this effort, Saint Mary's Health Plans is coordinating University of Utah specialist communications with community physicians in northern Nevada. Recently, specialty physicians from Utah were in Reno updating northern Nevada physicians about the range of services available and enhancing the referral process for SMHP members who need select specialized care.

Upon the recommendation of local northern Nevada physicians, Saint Mary's Health Plans refers more than 300 patients annually to specialty referral centers such as the University of Utah. Making these critical services available to our members in the highest quality location we can in an efficient cost-effective manner is a top priority.

To learn more about the University of Utah, please visit <http://www.wpareno.com/smhp-initiatives/docs/UofU%20Brochure.pdf>

#### **SMHP Member Travel Allowance**

Additionally, to help offset member travel cost for tertiary referrals, Saint Mary's Health Plans offers a \$3,000 member travel allowance (related to a single episode of care) when care is rendered at University of Utah or Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. All trips and means of transportation must be approved by a SMHP case manager prior to commencing the trip.

## Promoting Quality Health Care In Northern Nevada

Western Physicians' Alliance has worked with several health care plans in the region since its inception, improving access to, as well as improving the quality and cost efficiency of health care for patients in Northern Nevada.

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