

A publication for **AvMed Medicare** Members

ASPIRE

WINTER 2024



**Screenings to
Safeguard Health**

**Express Scripts
and Find-a-
Pharmacy Tool**

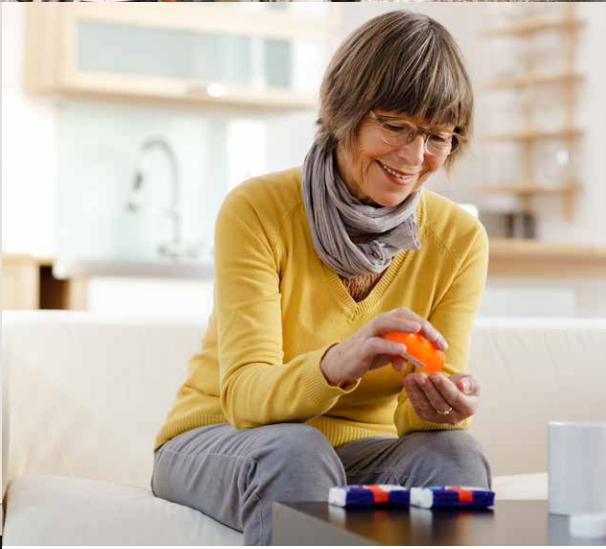
**February is Heart
Health Month**

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7 Member Spotlight:



ASPIRE

James M. Repp
President

Ana M. Eberhard
Vice President,
Member Experience

AvMed, one of Florida's largest not-for-profit health plans, provides quality health benefits throughout the state.

Always consult your Primary Care Physician (PCP) regarding medical advice. The health information in this publication is not intended to replace your doctor's directives.

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AvMed's Member Engagement Center
1-800-782-8633 (TTY 711)
October 1 to March 31:
7 days a week, 8 am-8 pm
April 1 to September 30:
Monday-Friday, 8 am-8 pm and
Saturday, 9 am-1 pm.
www.AvMed.org

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Departamento de Servicios a los
Afiliados al 1-800-782-8633.

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Pour un représentant bilingue
qui peut répondre à vos
questions 1-800-782-8633.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Dear Valued AvMed Medicare Member:



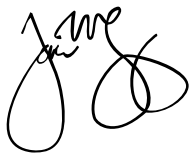
Hope your new year is off to a great start! AvMed has been Florida's trusted partner in health for more than 50 years, and we're proud to be a part of this community. As we enter the new year, I hope we inspire you to live a healthier, happier life.

In this edition of ASPIRE, we include information on the importance of regular screenings, key points to remember following a hospital discharge, and information about our new Find-a-Pharmacy Tool. Also featured is an inspirational story about an AvMed Member who prioritizes her mental health to live a WELLfluent life.

As a reminder, it's still flu season, and free flu shots are available at participating Providers and pharmacies. Additionally, in the next few weeks, you may receive a survey about AvMed in the mail from the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS). We value your opinion and appreciate your feedback, as this tool plays an important role in your health care and ensures we continue delivering better service, quality, and affordability.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you and your family. We look forward to another great year in 2024!

Sincerely,



James M. Repp
President, AvMed
ASPIRE@AvMed.org



Share Your WELLfluent™ Life! How are you joining the WELLfluent? Email us at ASPIRE@AvMed.org with your story and photo or share it on Facebook – tag AvMed and use the hashtag **#JoinTheWELLfluent**. You could be featured in an upcoming issue of the magazine.

SCREENINGS - HOW REGULAR SCREENINGS CAN SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH

You already know the basics of optimizing your health. Eating nutritiously, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, drinking in moderation, and not smoking are the foundations for good health and disease prevention. That's not all you can do, though. Regular screening tests are essential when it comes to preventing disease and finding better ways to stay healthy.

Screenings Save Lives

Screenings are important for better health because even serious conditions may not cause symptoms until the disease is advanced; screenings can save lives. Medical issues such as diabetes, high cholesterol, colon cancer, and cervical cancer are among the many conditions for which there are excellent screening tests. The guidelines for screenings vary, and factors include health status, risk factors, and age. Sit down with your doctor and review the screenings you should be having.

Colon Cancer

Colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Screening can identify precancerous polyps and detect colorectal cancer early when treatment is most effective. There are different screening tests for colorectal cancer, and Members

should speak with their doctor to determine the best test for them. Regular screenings, beginning at age 45, are the key to preventing colorectal cancer and finding it early. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) recommends that adults aged 45 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer. The Task Force recommends that adults aged 76 to 85 discuss screening with their doctor.

Diabetes

Diabetes affects more than 25 percent of people 65 and older in the United States, according to the CDC. There are different types of diabetes, but all are related to high levels of blood sugar; most diabetics should have Hemoglobin A1c (blood sugar testing) and testing for kidney damage at least once per year. The new American Diabetes Association guidelines recommend that all adults be screened at least once every three years starting at age 35 if results are normal.

Cholesterol

Because high cholesterol has no symptoms, it is important to monitor. When cholesterol is too high, it builds up in the arteries, decreasing blood flow to the heart. The screening test is a lipoprotein profile, which measures total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, and triglycerides.



TIPS FOR PREVENTING COLDS AND THE FLU



Spring approaching doesn't mean we can relax about colds and the flu. Flu season stretches well into spring, and colds stick around through fair weather. The best way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccine. Here are some other tips to stay healthy, and prevent colds and flu:

- **WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN.** Cold and flu viruses tend to spread through direct contact.
- **AVOID TOUCHING YOUR FACE.** Our eyes, nose, and mouth are where cold and flu viruses enter our bodies.
- **EXERCISE.** Aerobic exercise boosts our virus-killing capacity.
- **QUIT SMOKING AND CUT BACK ON ALCOHOL.** Both lower our immune system's ability to fight viruses.
- **GET YOUR R & R.** Relaxing through activities such as meditation helps rev-up our ability to fight off cold and flu viruses.
- **DON'T PASS IT ON.** When you do have a cold or flu, don't use bare hands to cover coughs or sneezes. Use a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Continue to wash your hands frequently and limit your direct contact with others.

Express Scripts and Our New Find-a-Pharmacy Tool

AvMed continuously looks for ways to improve benefits, services, and cost efficiencies for you, our Members. As a result of these efforts, we have made the strategic decision to change our pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) from CVS Caremark to Express Scripts®. We're partnering with Express Scripts to ensure you can get more from your pharmacy benefits and access the clinical expertise needed to improve and maintain your health and well-being. All Members should have received a new Member ID card as of **January 1, 2024.**

AvMed also just launched our new Find-a-Pharmacy tool. On this webpage, you can review a benefits overview and find information about in-network pharmacies and medication pricing. If you need additional information or have questions, contact the Member Engagement Team by calling the number listed on your Member ID Card.



February is Heart Health Month

Staying active is one of the best ways to keep your heart healthy, and maintaining a healthy heart is a great way to keep your loved ones' hearts happy. February is Heart Health Month—the perfect time to show your heart (and theirs) some love.

Why should you care about heart health?

According to the American Heart Association, heart disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S., but it isn't a normal part of aging. Even if it runs in your family, heart disease isn't inevitable. You can significantly reduce your risk by maintaining a healthy weight and keeping your cholesterol and blood pressure at normal levels. The best way to do this is to commit to a healthy lifestyle and keep up with annual wellness visits.

Five things you can do to reduce your risk of heart disease:

1. Stay active. Take a fitness class, walk, stretch, do

yoga, or ride a bike—as little as 10 minutes a day of physical activity can deliver some health benefits.

2. Choose healthy foods. Good nutrition helps keep critical risk factors like cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, and weight in check, and you'll feel better. Make sure your diet includes a good balance of proteins, complex carbs, and healthy fats.

3. Stop smoking. The toxic chemicals in cigarettes negatively impact the functionality of your heart and blood vessels, which leads to a build-up of plaque in your heart arteries.

4. Limit alcohol: Having more than two drinks per day for men and one per day for women can increase your risk of high blood pressure and obesity—both conditions raise the risk of heart disease.

5. Relax. Managing stress in a healthy way is essential to your mental health and your heart health.

Key Points to Remember Following a Hospital Discharge

If you're admitted to a hospital, the experience can be overwhelming. Your primary goal after a hospital admission should be a smooth recovery. Consider also being proactive about planning for your discharge.

Here are key points to remember following a hospital discharge:

- Contact your Primary Care Provider (PCP) as soon as possible following your hospital stay to schedule a visit within 7 days from your hospital discharge date.
- Fill all needed medication; if you have any questions regarding your medications, be sure to ask your pharmacist or PCP.
- Notify your PCP of any medication changes (this includes new medications added to your medication regimen or changes in current medication frequency or dosages).

- Ensure all discharge instructions are followed, and if you have any questions regarding your discharge instructions, reach out to the number provided on your discharge paperwork and/or your PCP.
- If in-home services and/or durable medical equipment are ordered, and you do not receive services/equipment within 24-48 hours following your discharge, please contact AvMed Member Engagement at **1-800-782-8633**.
- If you need any assistance coordinating care following a hospitalization, reach out to AvMed's Case Management Department at **1-800-972-8633**, Option 3 or via email at **CM@avmed.org**.
- If you have any question after hours or on the weekend, call our Nurse On Call at **1-888-866-5432**.

Helpful hint: Take your medications with you to review with the doctor to make sure you are taking the right medications at the right dosage and the right frequency.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *GOLDEN BANGLES HIDDEN TEARS* AUTHOR NIGHAT NASEER

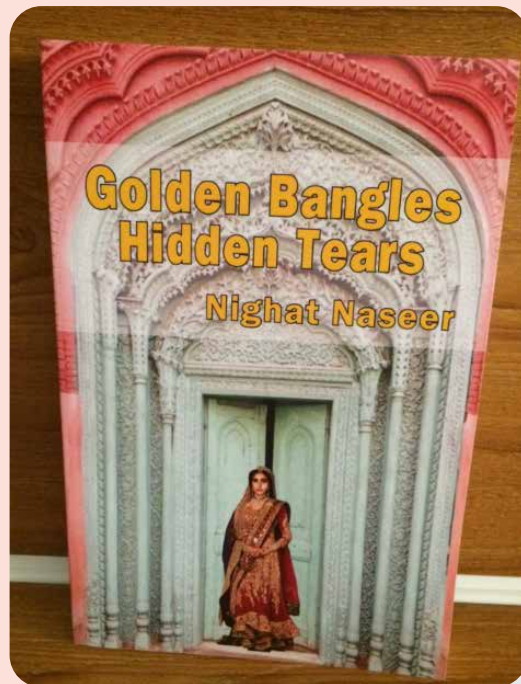
Following her career owning multiple Dunkin Donuts franchises with her husband, **Nighat Naseer** decided to fulfill her childhood dream and complete her bachelor's degree. In one of her English classes, a professor inspired her to become a writer. Five years later, Naseer published her 290-page memoir, *Golden Bangles Hidden Tears*, now five-star rated.

This memorable personal account tells the story of how an optimistic young girl evolved out of submissive obedience to become an outspoken defender of women's rights through exposure to the cruel and unjust treatment of women in her homeland. Her remarkable perspective as a Pakistani woman is a revelation. It has led to Naseer lecturing at universities, high schools, and events, gaining the interest of people everywhere.

In the story and speaking engagements following its publishing, she has been vocal about mental health struggles resulting from her fight to live the American Dream with her husband and gain her education. She credits AvMed with helping her prioritize her mental health through the use of AvMed's mental health care solutions.

"Ultimately, as a woman who was told by her culture to only focus on marriage and building a family, I will continue to fight for women's rights and the power of education throughout the world so that we can break the chains of outdated thoughts," Naseer said. "I also published my book to motivate everyone who thinks they cannot achieve the American Dream and remind them that, no matter where you come from, you CAN achieve anything you put your mind to. God Bless America, the land of the free."

Scan the QR code to read **Golden Bangles Hidden Tears** and to learn more about Nighat Naseer's incredible story. The book is also available on Amazon and at your local bookstore.



Sign up to receive text messages! Don't miss important health information from us.
Log in and register in your Member Portal. Click on Self-Services > My Preferences.

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Enrollment in AvMed Medicare depends on contract renewal.