

# ASPIRE

Fall 2021

**ED S. PROVES WE  
CAN GET BETTER  
WITH AGE**

**Papa Pals Unlimited**

**Aging Well Starts with  
Annual Wellness Visits**

**AvMed Virtual Events  
Prove to Be Inspiring**

**SPECIAL ISSUE:  
Annual  
Enrollment  
Period**

## feature

8 "Remaining involved in my community is the most important thing in my life." – Ed S

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# ASPIRE

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

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**April 1-September 30**  
 Monday-Friday, 8 am-8 pm and  
 Saturday, 9 am-1 pm.  
[www.AvMed.org](http://www.AvMed.org)

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# OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

## Dear Valued Medicare Member:



**F**all is the perfect season to reflect and embrace better health as an invitation to improve and enhance your lives. At AvMed, we are continuously looking for ways to help you live healthier.

The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period, which runs from October 15 to December 7, is the perfect time for you to make an informed

decision about your healthcare coverage. It's also a great time for you to reevaluate your health needs and select your benefits for next year.

In this issue of *ASPIRE* you'll find an insert that provides you with a glimpse of our Medicare Advantage plans and why AvMed continues to offer one of the best values in South Florida.

Our goal is to help you live a **WELLfluent™** life, one that is truly balanced and rich in what matters most – happiness and health. We're doing that by providing you with tips and tools to help you take care of yourself.

You'll also read a story about an AvMed Medicare Member who has mastered aging while feeling young. Other articles include regaining your balance, dental health and our inspiring Virtual Events, which connect Members online to keep them physically and mentally active. They've been a big hit during the pandemic.

Lastly, don't forget to read about the importance of your annual wellness visits, which is key to aging well and preventing health complications.

Thank you for being a Valued Member and here's to a great 2022!

Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James M. Repp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**James M. Repp**

President and Chief Operating Officer, AvMed

**[ASPIRE@AvMed.org](mailto:ASPIRE@AvMed.org)**



**Share Your WELLfluent™ Life!** How are you joining the **WELLfluent**? Email us at [ASPIRE@AvMed.org](mailto: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.

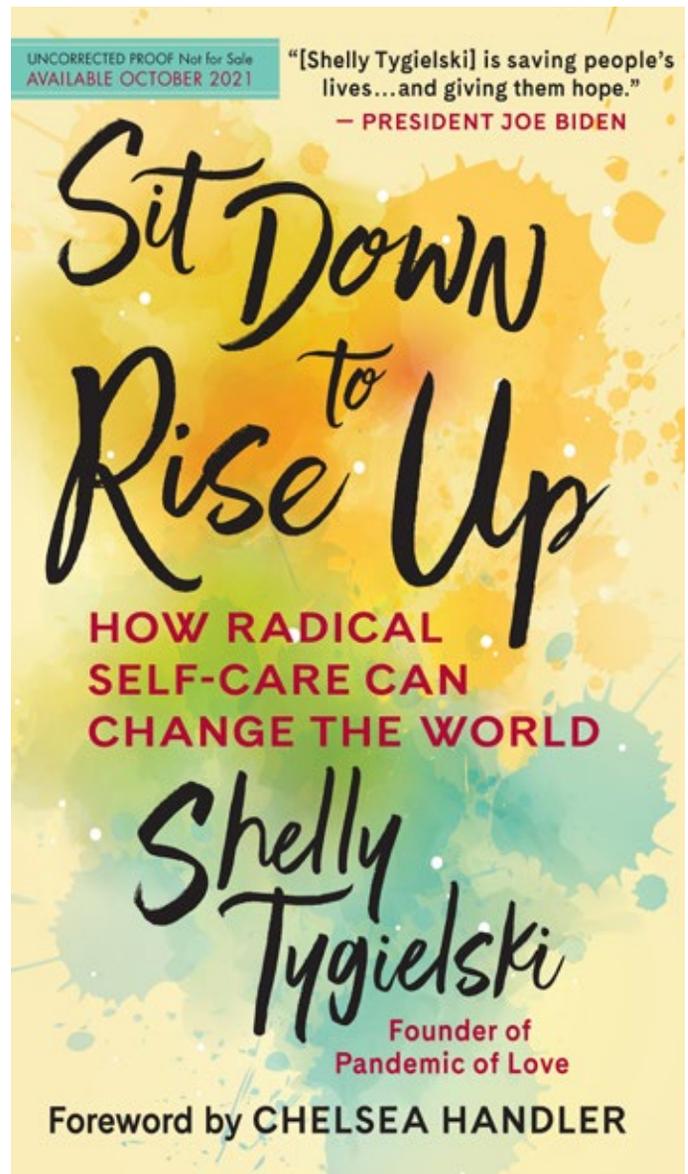
## Our Most Inspiring Book Talk Yet Starts Here

Our next AvMed Virtual Book Talk will inspire you beyond wanting to read the book. It will rekindle the desire in you to get involved in your community and to care for yourself by caring for others. This Book Talk will show you how you have a lot to give, even when you start with what seems like a little. The book is **Sit Down to Rise Up: How Radical Self-Care Can Change the World**, and its author is Shelly Tygielski.

Shelly, a Columbia University graduate, has been practicing mindfulness for two decades and now teaches it to help others live healthier and happier. She invites us to look at the concept of “self-care” not from a commercialized point of view, but from the idea that when you care for others you are also taking care of yourself. During our interview, she shared: “Self may be misleading, but it’s really the responsibility of our communities to take care of each other... provide access to all forms of what we consider to be well and healthy. [Self-care] is also being able to feel like we are supported, and we have a safety net.”

In response to “What is the ultimate change you want to see in the world?” Shelly replied, “I want to see a world where everyone has enough. Enough is a feast. If we tended the parts of our garden that we could reach and ensure everyone in our circle of influence has enough, we would have equity. I just recognized that many people have the notion that people need to work hard and lift themselves from the bootstraps... to paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr., if we can provide everyone the boots, then we can tell them to pick themselves up from the bootstraps.”

When asked how anyone could really make a difference in the lives of others, she shares, “The problems of the world are very daunting. And if we approach them like we have to carry the burden of the worlds on our shoulders, it can look heavy. But if we take responsibility for the people we touch in our lives daily, the ones we live with, work with, people in our block or building or neighborhood, and make sure they’re okay, and take a moment to take an active interest in their lives, we can make a difference



very quickly, individually. If we all throw one pebble, those pebbles have a ripple effect, and reach shores that we don’t even know that a pebble can reach.”

**Join us during our Book Talk with Shelly Tygielski at 12:30 p.m. on October 21, 2021.** And in the meantime, take daily steps to engage in self and community care, give someone a pair of “boots”, and throw your pebble; because what you do matters, and you might just change someone’s life forever, including yours.



Check out [AvMed.org](http://AvMed.org) to see our calendar listing of virtual programs. There are classes for everyone, Ageless Face Yoga, Purposeful Movement, and the AvMed Book Talk Series are just a few ways to stay active and engaged. To opt into our bi-monthly email and receive the program listings and registration links, please log into your AvMed Member portal at [www.AvMed.org](http://www.AvMed.org).

# HEALTHY AGING



## Papa Pals Unlimited

You've taken care of everyone else your whole life. Now it's your turn. Need help with technology? How about assistance unloading the groceries from the car? Or having a pal to go to the doctor's office with you and be there to take you home!

Papa Pals is a unique benefit designed to let you spend time doing what you love and have a Pal provide support where and when you need it. Our Medicare Circle and Choice Members are paired with specially trained, background checked, and curated "pals" for an extra layer of support due to life transitions or just because you want one.

For 2022, AvMed is the only plan with unlimited hours for Papa Pals services. You can also access Pap Pals virtually while remaining safe at home. AvMed and Papa Pals, creating a family on demand just for you.



Papa Pals can be reached at 1-877-751-9187 or visit [www.JoinPapa.com](http://www.JoinPapa.com).

## Regain Wellness by Regaining Balance

AvMed Virtual Events connect our members with like-minded individuals in search of wellness and socialization. Each event is also an expression of self-care, where participants strengthen their body and minds.

Purposeful Movement, with instructor TJ Tekurio, makes mobility and stability possible and fun. TJ is a choreography and movement expert who shows participants the foundation for strength and purposeful aging. Each class is a refreshing session with tips and physical activity that help you regain balance to prevent falls and feel safer when moving around the house and outside.



Join the next class and experience more mobility and stability. For a class schedule and more information, please call 1-888-430-9896 or email [AvMedClubAspire@AvMed.org](mailto:AvMedClubAspire@AvMed.org).

# Study Finds Annual Mammograms Reduce the Risk of Death from Breast Cancer



According to the American Cancer Society, “a staggering number of women have missed their regular mammogram over the past 12 months due to the period when screening services were suspended as a result of the pandemic, as well as enduring fears and barriers caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In fact, a recent study showed that participation in the two most recent mammography screening appointments before a breast cancer diagnosis provides a higher protection against breast cancer death than participation in neither or only one examination.

Breast cancer screening with mammography has helped to substantially reduce breast cancer deaths by enabling detection of cancer at earlier, more treatable stages. Despite mammography’s

well-established effectiveness, many women don’t participate in recommended screening examinations, and pandemic-related barriers to screening have exacerbated this reluctance.

According to the Prevent Cancer Foundation, an estimated 35% of Americans missed routine cancer screening due to COVID-19-related fears and service disruptions early in the pandemic.

Most doctors and medical facilities have implemented many safety protocols to keep their patients safe. Regular mammography screening is an important part of a woman’s preventive health plan. If you’ve missed getting your mammogram during this pandemic, call your doctor to make up that appointment, and be conscientious going forward about getting regular mammograms.



To read more about the Mammogram Study, visit the American Cancer Society at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

# Diabetes? Heart disease? Osteoporosis? Your Dentist May Know Before You Do

You probably know that if you have diabetes, you need to see your primary care physician and a specialist or two to make sure your blood sugar is in control (usually a HbA1c of 7 or below); that your diabetes is not damaging your kidney's (diabetic nephropathy); that you have annual screenings with your eye doctor to make sure you do not have any damage to your eyes (diabetic retinopathy); but did you know that a dental visit is also important for people with diabetes and numerous other chronic conditions?

## **Your dentist may be the first to know.**

Have you recently scheduled a dentist appointment because you noticed bad breath that wouldn't go away no matter how many times each day you brushed your teeth or used mouthwash? During the oral exam, your dentist also noticed that your gums seemed red and inflamed and were bleeding. Your dentist may have advised you to go to a physician for a medical check-up, since persistent bad breath and bleeding gums could be an early indicator of diabetes.

## **Oral health reflects overall health**

Research shows that more than 90 percent of all systemic diseases have oral manifestations, including swollen gums, mouth ulcers, dry mouth and excessive gum problems. Some of these diseases include:

- Diabetes
- Leukemia
- Oral cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease

Baby boomers are especially vulnerable to developing diabetes, osteoporosis and heart disease, the risks of which increase with age. Researchers believe



that symptoms of these conditions can manifest in the mouth, making dentists key in diagnosing the diseases. For example: bad breath and bleeding gums could be indicators of diabetes, dental x-rays can show the first stages of bone loss and a sore and painful jaw could foreshadow an oncoming heart attack.

## **Seeing the dentist regularly is a good idea**

In many cases, a dentist may be the first health care provider to diagnose a health problem in its early stages since many people have regular oral examinations and see their dentist more often than their physician.

## **What can you do?**

Seeing a dentist regularly helps to keep your mouth in top shape and allows your dentist to watch for developments that may point to other health issues. A dental exam can also detect poor nutrition and hygiene, improper jaw alignment and signs of developing oral and overall health problems.

When you visit your dentist, be sure to provide a complete medical history and inform them of any recent health developments, even if they seem unrelated to your oral health.



Prevention and oral hygiene are key. For more dental health-related tips, visit [www.mysmileway.com](http://www.mysmileway.com). You can also reach Delta Dental at 1-800-693-2601 (TTY 711) or visit <http://deltadentalins.com/avmedmedicare>.

# 5 Ways to Master Aging, Like Ed

Meet Ed, an AvMed Medicare Member that has proven that age is just a number, and that it is possible to feel young at any age. For Ed, it starts with his attitude towards life. Since retiring, he has made involvement in the community his priority, along with living a quality life with his wife Madeline.

A professional Public Communicator with a degree from Boston University, Ed has lived a full life and isn't planning on stopping anytime soon. Ed has scuba dived around the world, worked as a writer, managed fundraisers, worked at Port Everglades, and has been a dedicated family man. Currently, he works for a company that provides food samples, cooks tasty dishes for his family, and takes advantage of AvMed Supplemental Benefits.

**1. Stay socially active:** "I have a very good experience with AvMed, I have been directed to wonderful doctors that I can't say how much I care for them. My rheumatologist emphasized how important it is to be active, involved, meet with people and be out there." And that's exactly what Ed does to stay young at heart.

**2. Get rewarded:** Ed and his wife are both AvMed Medicare Members. They take full advantage of AvMed's Healthyperks<sup>SM</sup> program, which rewards Members for healthy activities like annual wellness visits. In Ed's words, "At the end of the year we have a pocketful of Publix gift cards."

**3. Live up your spirits:** An avid AvMed Virtual Events participant, Ed enjoys all the programs: "We take dancing classes, we take the cooking classes, I like the dancing and the music [programs]."



Ed S. says he likes making a splash!

**4. Rise to the challenge:** Ed completed the SWORD Health Pilot program, designed to get you active and reduce your risk of falls. In Ed's words, "I have osteoporosis, if I fall my doctor tells me I might not get up. I did every exercise. They sent me a tablet, you turn it on and the tablet tells you which exercises you are going to do: [for example] lean against the wall and do like you're going to sit down. They're not all easy, but I did everything. The program lasted several months, got high grades, and it was free of charge."

**5. Get the right care:** The biggest benefit Ed has had as an AvMed Medicare Member is being connected to the right care. "We have a wonderful primary care physician; the practice has been wonderful to both of us."

Anybody that needs to remain independent and wants to continue to make their own decisions, and continue to have a place in the society, has a great opportunity because AvMed makes it so much possible for us." — Ed S.

At AvMed we design every program and benefit to help our Members live healthier. And stories like Ed's inspire us to keep giving our best towards this mission.



Feeling inspired? Be sure to share your **WELLfluent™** story with us by emailing us at [ASPIRE@AvMed.org](mailto:ASPIRE@AvMed.org).



## AvMed will help you **do something** about high drug prices.

**AvMed** is committed to giving you the information you need to make informed healthcare decisions. That's why we're working with Rx Savings Solutions to help you find the lowest price on your prescription drugs.

### Things to Know:



1. Use your account to see the lowest prescription drug prices available.
2. Rx Savings Solutions account shows options for saving on current prescriptions—you'll also receive a message when you can save on any new prescriptions.
3. Even if your household isn't taking any prescriptions, activating your account right now can set you up for savings in the future.

**To get started**, access Rx Savings Solutions by logging on to AvMed's Member Portal at **[www.AvMed.org](http://www.AvMed.org)** and selecting the Rx Savings Solutions link on the left menu.

We hope you'll use this new resource to help reduce your out-of-pocket expenses!



If you have any additional questions, contact the Rx Savings Solutions Pharmacy Support Team. They can be reached Monday–Friday from 7 am–8 pm CT at **1-800-268-4476** or **[support@rxsavingsolutions.com](mailto:support@rxsavingsolutions.com)**.

Rx Savings Solutions has partnered with your health plan or employer to save you money on prescriptions. We utilize your claims history to find opportunities to save money on medications you and your family are taking. Any savings amounts displayed are based on Rx Savings Solutions patented algorithms and may vary at time of dispensing. All suggestions provided are for informational purposes only.

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## » MEET DR. CAPEZZUTI AGING WELL STARTS WITH ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS

We interviewed Dr. Jennifer Capezzuti, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, a family medicine practitioner at Holy Cross Medical Group, about the importance of aging well and preventing health complications. Dr. Capezzuti is passionate about preventive health, chronic and new disease management and annual wellness visits that help keep patients healthy. Her office is located at the AgeWell Center in Fort Lauderdale, FL. To make an appointment, call 954-542-2500. Both telemedicine and in person visits are being conducted.

### 1. As a physician, can you describe an annual wellness visit?

This is your number one preventive visit and should be completed annually regardless of health status. It's the tool we use as doctors to assess overall health and wellness. In addition to assessing your health status we discuss your mobility, any falls and fall-prevention plan, vaccination status and all preventive screenings. My goal is to catch health problems earlier and develop a personalized plan that manages or prevents any adverse condition.

### 2. Are there any screenings that AvMed Medicare Members should get yearly?

The annual wellness visit is a screening in itself, allowing us to do a physical exam of the patient and monitor their health condition. For women, mammograms should be done every 1-2 years, or as suggested by your doctor, because breast-cancer incidence increases with age. Another important screening is a bone density exam, especially for women because loss of bone density increases after menopause. For men and women, colonoscopies now start at age 45, even with no risk factors.

### 3. What vaccines should seniors get and why are they beneficial?

I tell all my patients that the pneumonia vaccine is essential, especially now with COVID-19 - we want to do all we can to protect our lungs. The first vaccine should be given at age 50 and a booster at 65. If a patient has had chicken pox, they should get the shingles vaccines and if they've never had chicken pox, I ask them to get the chicken pox (varicella)

vaccine, because chicken pox is more serious in adults. Every year, with or without the pandemic, patients should get a Flu vaccine to reduce illness.

### 4. What can AvMed Medicare Members do to come prepared for their wellness visits?

It helps us greatly as physicians when a patient brings an up-to-date list of medications and prescribers (neurologist, for example); results of recent blood work; diagnostics results; and any vaccines records, especially if it's a new patient. It's also helpful when patients write down any questions they have regarding their care so we can answer them during the wellness visit.

### 5. What regular activities can AvMed Medicare Members engage in to stay healthy?

Include wellness activities in your daily schedule, like AvMed's SilverSneakers® fitness program, which you can do online, or participate in AvMed's Virtual Events, which keep you physically and mentally active. These programs have physical benefits while also helping to lift our spirits. So be around others (even if virtually), engage in activities like joining a book club or participate in AvMed Virtual Book Talks. We want you to continue to be involved in the community.

### 6. Any word of advice to encourage healthier living?

"My primary mission is to help you age well and prevention is the key to achieve long term health. To keep your quality of life, you have to stay on top of your health. Wellness visits, combined with healthy routines, allow you to keep enjoying life as you age well." - Dr. Jennifer Capezzuti



**Quest Diagnostics** – Your Lab Partner—Remember, most health screenings and routine lab work can be done with AvMed's participating lab partner, Quest Diagnostics. Members have access to a secure tool that makes it easy for you to get lab test results, schedule appointments, track your health history and more, all in one place. Visit: [MyQuest.QuestDiagnostics.com](https://www.MyQuest.QuestDiagnostics.com)

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- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
  - Qualified interpreters
  - Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact AvMed Member Engagement, P.O. Box 749, Gainesville, FL 32627, by phone 1-800-882-8633 (TTY 711), by fax 1-352-337-8612, or by email to [members@avmed.org](mailto:members@avmed.org).

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**ACHTUNG:** Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 1-800-882-8633 (TTY: 711).

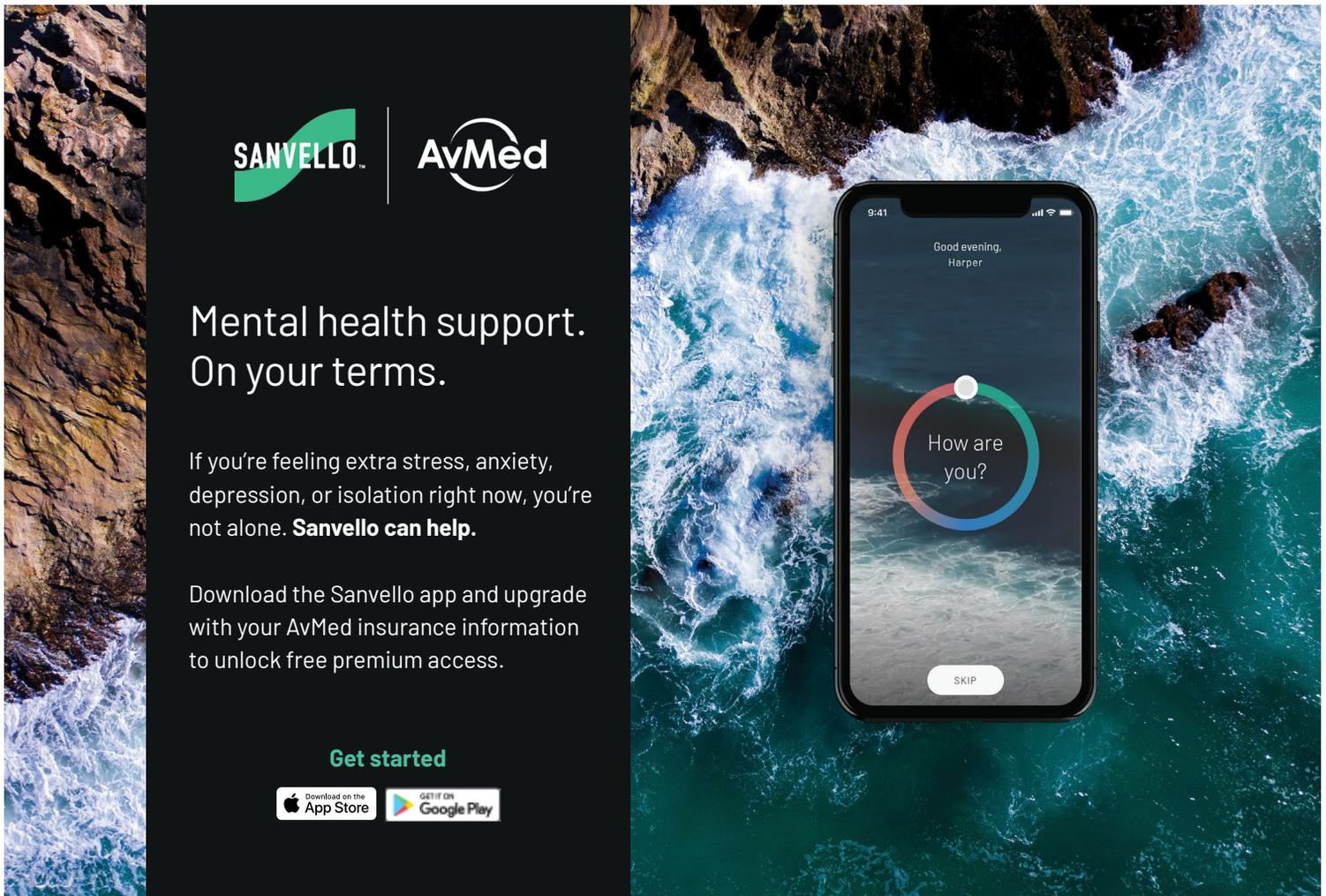
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- AvMed Nurse On Call: **1-888-866-5432**  
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If you're feeling extra stress, anxiety, depression, or isolation right now, you're not alone. **Sanvello can help.**

Download the Sanvello app and upgrade with your AvMed insurance information to unlock free premium access.

**Get started**

The smartphone screen displays the app's interface with the text: "Good evening, Harper", "How are you?", and a "SKIP" button at the bottom.

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Enrollment in AvMed Medicare depends on contract renewal.