

# EmployeeCare News

Keeping you informed from EmployeeCare, your employee assistance program, a benefit extended by your organization to all employees and their household members.

## Heart Disease, Cancer and Diabetes: How Intensive Outpatient Programs Assist

By Terry Griffin, Counselor

The American public continues to suffer from heart disease, cancer and diabetes in increasing numbers. Sometimes attacking these diseases with a medical approach alone is not enough. Sometimes the treatment can be equally as

stressful: e.g. chemotherapy, by-pass surgery and insulin injection often add to the depression and loss of will power the disease itself leaves in its wake.

What to do? Miami Valley Hospital, for example, has more comprehensive treatment methods available in addition to surgery, radiation and medication. Many hospitals, in addition to MVH, have what are called Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP). An IOP can address depression and lifestyle choices patients encounter that might have contributed to the development of these medical afflictions in the first place.

An IOP characteristically meets three days a week for three hours each day. The participants meet for much of that time in groups. Additionally, each member is screened for depression and other lifestyle behaviors that delay healing. The best heart doctor can not defeat depression or a person's choice to return to inactivity. A support group on the other hand (where patients know the other group members are confronted with the same challenges) can motivate one to change their diet and begin exercise. Additionally, the possible use of antidepressant medication can be considered in consultation with attending psychiatrists who work with the IOP treatment team.



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Studies have shown group members with cancer and other illnesses suffer depression in greater numbers compared with the amount of depression in the general population. And these studies also reveal that those heart, cancer and diabetic patients who are depressed, recover faster when they utilize antidepressant medication compared to those depressed patients who are not exposed to this type of treatment.

Coupled with medication and group support, an IOP also offers one-on-one counseling. This counseling helps spot unintended ways each person has increased their stress load in the past.

It does this by addressing such emotions as guilt, self blame, shame and feelings of hopelessness. Feelings like these often accompany the onset of these diseases and persist as a person is trying to recover.

Another behavior pattern addressed is relaxation. Many clients in these programs have never learned how to relax. Smoking, alcohol consumption and eating unhealthy foods have replaced more healthy ways to calm the nervous system. Sometimes we learn a person has an undiagnosed anxiety or depression condition. Previously the person was not aware of this diagnosis and used food, drink and smoking in unhealthy ways to medicate these psychological states. These self defeating coping strategies then lead to the more severe medical problems for which they are being treated.

An Intensive Outpatient or Partial Hospitalization program “reprograms” a person to be able to identify the conditions behind their medical problems and encourages them to practice new ways to cope with the stress of these conditions. The result is that an individual can now lessen the stress in their lives by practicing new recreational, nutritional and medication choices. These new behaviors replace the tobacco, alcohol and junk food a person used to rely on just to get through their day.

To find out more about MVH’s and other hospitals’ Partial Hospitalization Programs, call your EmployeeCare counselor at 800-628-9343 or locally at 208-6626. The EmployeeCare counselor can assist you in locating a rehabilitation program in your area.



# Trick or Treat

By Cindy Batie, Counselor Intern



Fall is a season of change. The leaves are turning, the air is crisp and cool, and there is a sense of anticipation in the air. It is a beautiful time of year. For some, it is their favorite season with football and tailgating, relief from the summer heat and the joy of the holidays right around the corner. A real TREAT for many is Halloween and the many parties dressing up and having fun with family and friends – children and adults alike.

But for many fall brings increased stress and challenges. Kids returning to school, saying good bye to college-age children, and looking ahead to the increased demands of the holiday season can be stressful financially and emotionally. Plus, things we do on a routine basis can be draining when combined with everything else. The days grow shorter and it is harder to get up in the morning for many. There seems to be less time to get everything done and it can feel like we don't

have the same energy available that we had in the summer.

This could be symptoms of SAD – Seasonal Affective Disorder, which is often characterized by:

- A change in appetite, especially a craving for sweet and starchy foods
- Weight gain
- A drop in energy level
- Fatigue
- A tendency to oversleep
- Irritability
- Avoidance of social situations and increased sensitivity to social rejection

According to the American Psychiatric Association, those with SAD may not experience every symptom yet it can significantly affect their daily life. It is a disorder that touches people all over the world.

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Here in Ohio we can expect 1 out of 20 people to be affected each year. Awareness and education regarding this disorder can go a long way in helping prevent unnecessary suffering.

Treatment options for the symptoms can include:

- Exercise and increased outdoor activities
- Being near windows in one's home or office
- Light therapy
- Use of antidepressant medication
- Seeking the assistance of an EmployeeCare counselor

If you are noticing any of these behavioral indicators make an appointment with one of our counselors today. You can be assured of confidentiality. Taking care of yourself by talking out your feelings and thoughts can go a long way in feeling better and helping you live a more satisfying and balanced life. Don't let the change of season play a trick on you. Seek assistance and treat yourself!

## Check Us Out on the Web!

Do you want to know more details about your Employee Assistance Program? Do you want more information about each counselor?

**Here's how to access our web site. Type in:**

1. [www.PremierHealthPartners.org](http://www.PremierHealthPartners.org)
2. Select: Miami Valley Hospital
3. Select: Services
4. Select: (A-Z)
5. Select: E
6. Select: EmployeeCare

## EmployeeCare

**Located:** 409 E. Monument St.  
Suite 201  
Dayton, Ohio 45402

We have satellite offices in Eaton, Springboro, Troy, Greenville and on the Good Samaritan Hospital campus

**Hours:** 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
Monday – Thursday  
8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Friday

All counselors provide evening appointment times

**Phone:** (937) 208-6626 or (800) 628-9343  
(24-hour, toll free)

### Services Include:

- Voluntary, confidential assessments. Short-term counseling and referral services for employees and household members covering a wide range of issues. Services are free and number of accesses unlimited.
- Substance Abuse and Wellness Education Groups
- In-service for sexual harassment, diversity, violence in the workplace
- Workplace wellness
- 24-Hour Crisis phone service
- Substance Abuse trainings that meet state and Bureau of Worker Compensation requirements for drug free workplaces

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*The Region's Leader*

EmployeeCare  
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Premier Health Partners  
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