



Virginia Department of  
Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Services

# **Importance of Annual Physicals aka. Wellness Visits & Routine Check-ups**

**The Office of Integrated Health – Health Supports Network  
at the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and  
Developmental Services**

# Annual Physicals

- A physical exam is also a wellness check and a time to touch base with your primary care provider.
- They can be called:
  - Physical / Annual Physical.
  - Annual Exam.
  - Wellness Visit.
  - Routine Check-up.



- There are many opinions about the value of annual physicals. However, people with IDD...

*“are more likely to experience increased rates of mortality and morbidity compared with the general population. They are vulnerable because of limitations in self-care, communication, and literacy, all of which can have considerable effects on their opportunities for good health and obtaining good health care compared with individuals without disabilities.”*




# A physical exam can be important because...



- It is a good time to ask the doctor questions.
- It is a good time to talk about issues or concerns which are bothering you.
- It is a good time to discuss any preventative screenings which might be needed:
  - Mammogram.
  - Bone Density.
  - Prostate Exam.
  - Coloscopy.
- It can help you and your primary care physician (PCP) plan for possible future health challenges.
- It can aid in detecting conditions early that can lead an early diagnosis and treatment to improve health outcomes.
- It can provide the opportunity to discuss accommodations which are necessary to reduce barriers to accessing care.
- It can ensure individuals with DD have access to the same level of care others in the general population are receiving, addressing barriers to specialty care if needed.

# To get the most benefit from an annual physical ...Be Prepared!

## You can prepare by...

- Writing down questions so concerns can be addressed.
  - Do you have a health goal?
    -  Lose weight.
    -  Stop smoking.
    -  Sleep better.
- Write down anything that has changed since the last physical to be sure the PCP knows.
  - New diagnosis.
  - Surgery.
  - Injury.
  - Vaccination.
  - Diet change.
- Write down current prescription medications or bring the Med Administration Record
- Write down any over the counter medications taken whether frequent or infrequent.
- Bring any logs that are kept. Such as:
  - Diet.
  - Blood pressure.
  - Menses calendar.
- Bring family history, especially related to immediate family if possible.



# During the exam you can expect:

- Vital signs (blood pressure).
- Body Mass Index Screening (weight & height).
- Cholesterol Screening.
- A review of various body systems and questions to assess functioning.
  - Are you having chest pain?
  - What color is your urine?
  - Do you have any unusual moles?
- Head to toe exam.
- A review and / discussion of activities that may increase health risks such as:
  - Substance use and abuse.
  - Smoking.
  - Sex.
  - Employment.
- Tips and guidance.



# Insurance Coverage

- Private Insurance.
  - Most private insurance covers annual preventative care visits.
  - It is important to ask your carrier about the covered benefits.
- Medicare.
  - Offers a free initial “Welcome to Medicare” visit which includes a medical history, recommended immunizations and screenings and “further tests depending on your health and medical history”.
- Medicaid: Virginia Managed Care.

Virginia MCO Providers include:

- Aetna Better Health.
- Anthem Health Keepers Plus.
- Molina Complete Care.
- Optima Health.
- United Health Care Community Plan [uhccp.com/Virginia](http://uhccp.com/Virginia).
- Virginia.



# All Medallion 4.0 health plans offer these benefits and services:

- Addiction and Recovery Treatment Services (ARTS) program.
- Behavioral health services.
- Care coordination services.
- Colorectal cancer screenings.
- Community Mental Health Rehabilitative Services (CMHRS).
- Complete assessment of medical, psychosocial, cognitive and functional status (HRA).
- Durable medical equipment and supplies (DME).
- Early Intervention (EI) services.
- Emergency and urgent care.
- Family planning services.
- Hearing (audiology) services.
- HIV testing and treatment counseling.
- Hospital and home health services.
- Interpreter and translation services.
- Mammograms.
- Mental health services, including inpatient, outpatient, community-based, and 24 / 7 crisis line.
- 1 eye exam for adults every 24 months.
- Organ transplants.
- Physical, occupational and speech therapies.
- Prescription drugs and some over-the-counter medications (when prescribed by doctors).
- Preventive and regular medical care.
- Prostate specific antigen (PSA) and digital rectal exam.
- Quit smoking programs.
- Reconstructive breast surgery.
- Rides to medical appointments.
- Smartphone (see the chart in this packet for data packages offered by each plan).
- Telemedicine services.
- 24 /7 nurse advice line.
- Visits to the doctor when you are sick.
- **Well visits, including routine checkups and annual exams.**
- Women's health services.
- X-ray, lab and imaging services.

# Documentation in the ISP

- The individual service plan (ISP) in Virginia has a place to record the date of the individual's last physical exam (aka. Annual Physical. Wellness Visit, Routine Check-up).
- The goal is for each individual receiving residential supports through the DD Waiver have an annual physical exam with their Primary Care Provider.
  - ★ Note: The same applies for an Annual Dental Visit.
- The status of annual visits completed is assessed during Office of Licensing inspections, under the DOJ Settlement Agreement studies and in Quality Service reviews.





# For help arranging or planning for an Annual Physical:

The Office of Integrated Health – Health Support Network  
Community Nursing Team can provide technical assistance.

For help email:

[communitynursing@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:communitynursing@dbhds.virginia.gov)



# References & Resources

- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) working group on preventive health screening guidelines to develop a set of consistent guidelines across the United States. <https://shriver.umassmed.edu/programs/cdder/dds-preventive-health-screenings-adults-intellectual-disabilities/>
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- Department of Medical Assistive Services (2021). *Medallion 4.0* <https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/providers/managed-care/medallion-40/>
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