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In This Issue

[Vitamins & Nutrition](#)

[Hot Topic: Health Care Reform](#)

[Medicare Reform](#)

[Announcements](#)

New Sunday Hours at Seattle Clinic

In an effort to increase access to Qliance clinics and services, beginning June 1, Qliance of Downtown Seattle will be open Sundays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. To schedule your visit please call (206) 913-4700.

Spring has sprung and Qliance has been busy! From investment funding to new staff, health care reform to clinic expansion, we're wasting no time moving forward. For this reason, we're renewing our focus and commitment to provide you with relevant content on current health topics.

In this issue, Qliance CEO Norm Wu discusses what the recent health care reform means for you and your Qliance membership. Dr. Reeves and Dr. Morgan weigh in on nutrition and vitamin supplements and special guest columnist Larry Cook offers his comments on Medicare reform. We hope you find this issue particularly informative!

A Healthy Diet Starts with B12 and Folate

Faith Reeves, MD & Rick Morgan, MD

Nutrition has been a major topic in the medical community and in the general health-conscious public for years. Recently, nutrition has seen a renewed interest relating to vitamin supplements. Most nutritionists believe that a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and limited animal protein and overall fat intake is ideal for maintaining a healthy weight and for the intake of essential vitamins and minerals. Yet if you have made a recent change to your eating habits or follow a restricted or special diet, you may need additional vitamin supplementation. Among the top supplements are Vitamin B12 and Folate. Both are important vitamins for normal red blood cell production and are affected by dietary intake and absorption.

B12

In young adults, low consumption of meat is the main cause of low vitamin B12 levels; in older adults, malabsorption of vitamin B12 from food is the most common cause. B12 can be found in fish, meat, chicken egg and dairy products.

Diets affected: Semi-vegetarian, Lacto-ovo-vegetarian, Lacto-vegetarian and Vegan

Folate

In pregnant or nursing mothers, Folate is especially important as it helps to prevent anemia with some evidence suggesting that Folate is beneficial for those with long-term rheumatoid arthritis. Folate is present in green.

leafy vegetables, fruits, cereals and grains, nuts and meats. The greatest risk for folate deficiency includes alcoholism, pregnancy and taking certain medications.

Diets affected: Lacto-ovo-vegetarian, Vegan

Heavily restrictive diets such as the Atkins diet, which call for low consumption of fruits and vegetables during the first phase, should be monitored closely by your clinician. And remember that caring for your health today by eating a balanced diet and supplementing when necessary will be less expensive and less painful in the long run than relying on a myriad of tests, pills and procedures to treat numerous health problems once they arise. Should you have any questions about which supplements are right for you, don't hesitate to call your Qliance clinician.

Faith Reeves is an internist at Qliance of Mercer Island and Rick Morgan is a family physician at Qliance of Downtown Seattle.

HOT TOPIC: Healing Health Care

Norm Wu, CEO

The first wave of health reform is now law and we believe Qliance patients are in a good position to realize some benefits.

Under the H.R. 3590, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010*, our country will be expanding insurance coverage to an additional 32 million people. As we have learned from the Massachusetts experience (when universal insurance coverage was enacted a few years ago using the same basic "insurance exchange" model for individuals and small businesses), there is a big difference between having *insurance* and having *access to health care*. By moving from 7% uninsured to 3% uninsured in the state, the [strain on the Massachusetts primary care system](#) increased significantly. Only 44% of internists can still accept new patients and only a slightly greater percentage of family physicians are doing so. The average lead time for a primary care appointment is a staggering 44 days, and there are reports that the cost of health care in Massachusetts is now among the highest in the country.

We expect the current shortage of primary care across the country to get worse. However, Qliance members will continue to get same or next day unhurried office visits, email access and 24 x 7 phone consults with a clinician for urgent medical issues.

Moreover, under Section 10104 of the Act, the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services "shall permit coverage in the exchange to be offered through a qualified direct primary care medical home plan." That means that **Qliance patients will be able to subscribe to our service as part of a comprehensive, affordable health care solution via the upcoming online insurance exchanges when they go live in 2014**. Congress recognized the significant impact our model can have on making quality health care more accessible and affordable to all and has allowed direct primary care medical homes like Qliance to be offered in the insurance exchanges when bundled with a wrap-around insurance policy that covers the 10% of patients' medical needs that fall outside of the scope of primary care. We expect this to have two benefits for our current and prospective members:

1. Members (or their small business employers on their behalf) will be able to subscribe to Qliance with a custom "wrap-around" insurance plan. We expect this bundle to be more affordable than a traditional insurance-only plan of comparable coverage, as the insurance premium will exclude primary care, care that Qliance already provides (the insurer also won't incur associated processing costs). More importantly, custom insurance plan pricing will anticipate lower claims for specialist, advanced radiology, hospital and emergency room visits due to our ability to nip potentially costly medical issues in the bud and avoid unnecessary downstream costs. We expect the wrap-around insurance plan to be offered with a variety of deductibles and benefits coverage to suit the needs of the market. However, consistent with our established philosophy, care directly provided by Qliance will not be subject to any deductible, co-payment or co-insurance so as to eliminate all financial barriers to seeking care early and frequently.

2. Individuals who purchase health care via the exchanges may qualify for income-based government subsidies. If so, we expect that those subsidies can be applied to Qliance's monthly care fees making our care affordable to even more people.

We would like to especially thank Senator Maria Cantwell, Senator Patty Murray and Representative Brian Baird for championing the inclusion of direct primary care medical homes like Qliance in the future insurance exchanges. They, along with others in our Washington delegation and Senators and Congressmen from across the country, have ensured

that the Qliance model will not only survive health care reform, but will be available to more and more Americans over time.

For more on how practices like Qliance can play a role in the future insurance exchanges, please see [Get Ready for More Direct Primary Care Medical Homes: Opening the Door to Insurance-Free Primary Care in State-Run Exchanges](#) in *BNA Health Policy Report*¹ written by our own Dr. Garrison Bliss.

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Ditching the Donut Hole: What Health Reform Means for Medicare

Larry Cook, President of the Seniors Insurance Group

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will positively impact Medicare with enhancements to Original (traditional) Medicare's medical benefits and Medicare's Prescription Drug Plan.

The existing prescription drug plan (Medicare part D) has a coverage gap, or doughnut hole, in which a Medicare beneficiary pays 100% of their drug costs. This year, anyone who reaches the doughnut hole will receive a \$250 rebate to help with payments. Beginning in January of 2011, drug companies will pay an increasing annual percentage of drug costs until the doughnut hole disappears completely in 2020.

Some Medicare Advantage plans though may feel a negative impact. Cuts to Medicare Advantage could reduce the number of plans available, affect the costs of plan premiums and co-pays and possibly eliminate the extra benefits many plans have been able to offer, such as dental and vision coverage.

The largest social policy change in over 40 years, the recent health care reform will cause many to take a closer look at how they will receive their health care. As more information becomes available, the options will become much easier to understand and the choices will be much easier to make.

For more information about Medicare reform, visit <http://www.healthreform.gov/> or call Larry Cook* at (206) 307-5585.

**Larry Cook is not affiliated with Qliance and receives no payment from Qliance for his services.*

Announcements

Qliance Celebrates New Investment Funding

We are pleased to announce that Qliance has successfully closed our round of [Series B funding](#). Thank you to all our investors for your generous support. What does this funding mean for patients? We hope to continue our clinic expansion, enhance clinic services and continue to improve our IT to better serve your needs.

New Partnership



Macaroni Kid and its family of Publisher Moms are dedicated to delivering the scoop on all the family-friendly events and activities happening in their communities each week. Qliance is pleased to partner with the Mercer Island Macaroni Kid chapter to help your family stay healthy and happy. Check out what's going on in this week's edition of Mercer Island Macaroni Kid at

<http://mercerisland.macaronikid.com/>

Have a Question for the Q?

Each quarter we will choose a patient question to be answered by a Qliance clinician. Please submit your questions to QPulse@Qliance.com.

Questions or Comments?

Clinical questions and appointments: (206) 913-4700. **Prescription refills:** (206) 913-4720 or refills@Qliance.com.

Membership or billing questions: (206) 381-3030. **Patient feedback:** feedback@Qliance.com