

## Thunderbird transitioning to a Patient Centered Medical Home

With increased attention being paid to the delivery of patient care, more effective models continue to emerge. It is clear that opportunities exist to better meet patients' needs. One model that has been proven to be effective in promoting patient health, safety and satisfaction is the *Patient Centered Medical Home* (PCMH). Thunderbird Internal Medicine is excited to be involved in making the transition to this model.

The PCMH model embraces many enhancements to the traditional

physician practice including improved access to care and information, care coordination with other providers, usage of health information technology (electronic health records), measurement and implementation of quality and safety.

While we at Thunderbird Internal Medicine have been doing many of these things for years, we will be putting even more energy into augmenting these services in the months ahead. We do so because we believe that an

*By Brian Riveland, MD*

empowered patient relationship greatly benefits all involved.

The entire Thunderbird team will continue to strive to be proactive rather than reactive about our patients' health. Much of this work may be invisible to the patient but others will become evident with time. We believe this will result in better health outcomes as well as enhanced satisfaction and patient experience. Please visit our web site to view a video on the Patient Centered Medical Home.

## Online hearing testing not recommended

One major health insurance provider recently announced that it will provide subscribers and the general public with online hearing testing and the ability to purchase hearing aids through the Internet. While this may sound like a huge convenience, this announcement sparked concern in the healthcare community.

"Hearing aids are not a one-size-fits-all approach," said Deborah Blaylock, MS, CCC-A, clinical audiologist with Thunderbird Internal Medicine. "Patients with concerns about hearing loss need to be screened by a licensed audiologist as recommended by the Academy of Doctors of Audiology. Hearing aids are not the only course of action for hearing loss."

Patients who notice hearing loss may have other conditions, including ear wax buildup, ear infections, tumors and many other conditions that can't be treated with hearing aids.

Don't leave your hearing to chance. If you have concerns about your hearing, contact us at 602-938-6960 to make an appointment for a hearing screening.

## Remember your flu shot

You can get the 2011-2012 flu shot at any of our locations by walking in weekdays between 10 am and 4 pm. Existing patients can have the shot billed to their insurance company or Medicare. The cash price is \$47. The Centers for Disease Control recommends receiving the vaccine as soon as it becomes available. The shot is an inactivated vaccine (contains viral particles that are not alive) and was created to counter flu strains most likely to spread during the coming flu season.



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