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### *The Informed Health Care Consumer: What Do I Need To Know BEFORE I Go To The Hospital?*

There may come a time when you need to be admitted to the hospital. The following information may help you understand how to manage this potentially confusing event. For questions specific to your personal situation, please be sure to contact your doctor or hospital. If at all possible, have a friend or family member come with you to the hospital. It is very helpful to have someone with you to speak up for you and support you. In addition, you have access to a Care Coordinator from Blue Cross Blue Shield who will act as an advocate. You can request to have a Nurse assigned to you by calling 1-877-789-2583. Either way, make sure that you have someone with you who is also listening to the information being provided to you and take notes to ensure accuracy.

#### **What information should I have before I am admitted to the hospital?**

You can and should play an active role in your own health care. Know your health status. Know what is being recommended and why it is best for you. You may prevent errors and get better care and results.

##### **Here are some questions to ask before being admitted:**

- Why do I need to be admitted to the hospital?
- What is my diagnosis?
- How long might I need to be in the hospital?
- Will my insurance pay for the hospital expenses? What will I owe?
- What work up or treatments will I need?
- Are there any risks to my admission?
- What are the risks if I don't agree to being admitted?
- Are there any other options?
- If you are being admitted to the Emergency Room, ask if your doctor has been contacted.

##### **Bring the following to the hospital:**

- Photo ID, personal insurance information and a Living Will (Advance Directives). Let your loved ones know what decisions to make on your behalf in the event you are suddenly unable to do so.
- An accurate medical history, a list of your medical problems, an allergy list, and a list of medications including names, doses and how often taken. Include any vitamin, herbal supplements and over the counter medications such as aspirin that you are taking.
- Your physician's name and phone number and personal items you may need (do not bring valuables, jewelry and regular prescriptions).

##### **Before leaving the hospital:**

- Find out if the hospital has a discharge planner, social worker or nurse who can help you plan your follow up care. Ask about referrals to home care services or skilled nursing facilities if necessary.
- Ask about medications you will need and any foods to avoid or potential side effects.
- If you work, ask your doctor when you are allowed to return to work (your employer may require a written release for you to return to work).

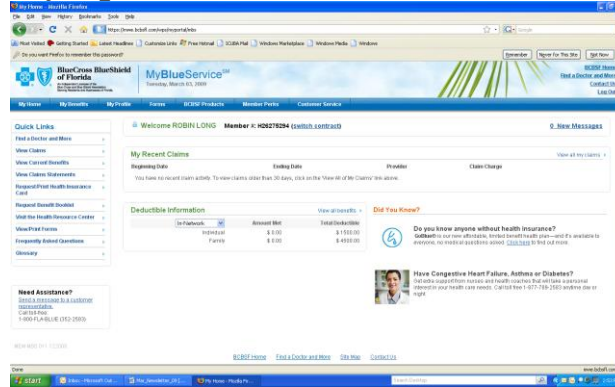
##### **Ask about what you might expect when you get home:**

- How soon should I feel better after leaving the hospital?
- Will I be able to walk, climb stairs, etc?
- Are there special instructions for daily activities? For example, should I take a shower instead of a bath?
- How much help will I need?
- What signs or symptoms should I watch for? If I have them, what should I do?
- Will I need special medical equipment at home? Is this covered by my insurance?
- Will I need physical therapy? If so, get written instructions.
- Will I need any follow up tests?
- Who can I call if I have problems after leaving the hospital? You may always call Health Dialog 24 hours a day at 1-877-789-2583.

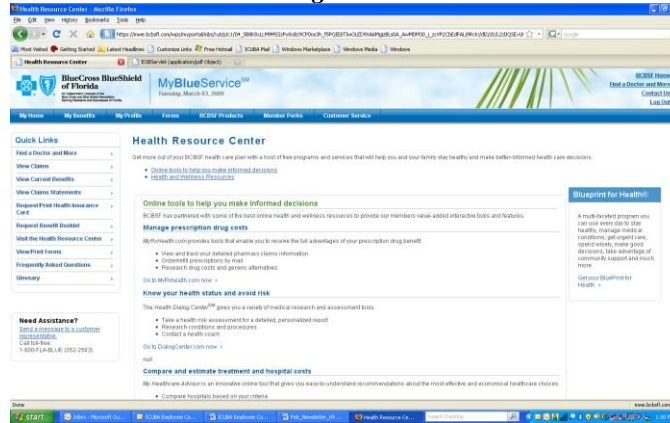
# Important Information to Improve Your Health

## Personal Wellness Profile

Earn \$25 on your Health Reimbursement Account or receive a \$25 Gift Certificate to [DrugsourceInc.com](http://www.drugsourceinc.com) by going online to <http://www.bcbsfl.com> and logging into the MyBlueService<sup>SM</sup> Portal by April 30<sup>th</sup>. \* First select Visit the Health Resources Center:



Once you are in the Health Resource Center, click on  
*Go to DialogCenter.com now*



Upon entering the DialogCenter, you will be prompted to accept a disclaimer then you will be routed to the site in which you can access your Personal Wellness Profile by selecting the Health Tools Tab at the top of the screen. Have your biometric information (i.e., height, weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels, etc.) available for input.



**BENEFITS FOR EDUCATED CONSUMERS: A NEWSLETTER TO HELP YOU MAKE INFORMED CHOICES**

**Celebrating Seven Years of Service to Florida Private Education Employees**

**March 2009**