

THE UNION

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Help with chronic pain: Western Sierra Medical Clinic launches care management services for Medicare patients with chronic conditions

Western Sierra Medical Clinic is now offering care management services for Medicare patients with two or more chronic conditions, the latest effort to improve community health and patient outcomes.

Western Sierra, the largest outpatient provider in Nevada and Sierra counties, with health centers also in Placer County, has started connecting Medicare patients to their assigned care managers. Medicare patients with two or more chronic conditions expected to last at least one year are eligible for the new program.

Care managers will help patients learn how to address and cope with their chronic conditions such as arthritis, asthma, diabetes, emphysema, heart disease, high-blood pressure and many others.

Western Sierra Medical Clinic has contracted with industry leader Vigilance Health for the care management services.

Care managers will encourage patients to make behavior changes to improve their health.

"Western Sierra's medical team is always looking at new, innovative ways to improve patient care," said Scott McFarland, chief executive officer of Western Sierra. "It's a patient-centered, team-based approach that has proven successful at other health providers, and we are expecting the same results with our patients."

The goal of the care management service is that patients will have significant improvements in their stress levels, diet, exercise levels, and physical and emotional health.

"Living with a chronic condition is difficult but people can improve their health when provided with guidance and a pathway," said Dr. Christina Lasich, chief medical officer of Western Sierra Medical Clinic. "We want our patients who are experiencing chronic conditions to have ongoing care management to help them achieve health goals. Care managers will teach patients about healthy choices, help to remove barriers to better health and partner with the patient on reducing the effects of their chronic conditions."

Western Sierra has seven health centers — from Auburn to Downieville and Kings Beach (Tahoe) — and all Medicare patients with two or more chronic conditions are eligible for the program, as well as those on Medicare and Medi-Cal. Patients with questions about care management services should contact their provider.

"We are looking forward to providing care management services to our eligible patients," McFarland said.

About Western Sierra Medical Clinic

Western Sierra Medical Clinic provides comprehensive medical, dental and behavioral health care in Nevada and Sierra counties, and recently expanded to Placer County with two Auburn health centers and a health center in Kings Beach in the North shore area of Lake Tahoe.

Founded in 1975, Western Sierra emphasizes preventive care, education and empowering patients to make informed decisions.

Learn more about Western Sierra Medical Clinic at <http://www.wsmcmed.org> and on Facebook at <http://www.Facebook.com/WesternSierraMedicalClinic>.

Source: Western Sierra Medical Clinic.