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# NAMCI

Your Healthcare Network Solution In Alabama  
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(256) 532-2755 (800) 636-2624  
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### In this issue:

- Nurse Practitioners
- Wellness Series
- New NAMCI Physicians

# NAMCI

# NEWS



NORTH ALABAMA MANAGED CARE, INCORPORATED - YOUR HEALTHCARE NETWORK SOLUTION IN ALABAMA

## Nurse Practitioners

Over the last several months there has been an increased interest by our members and medical staff offices for the recruitment and credentialing for Nurse Practitioners. These requests come from all medical specialties, but have been prevalent in the fields of Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Oncology, and Rural Health Clinics. The services of the Nurse Practitioners help the medical practice treat more patients, which is especially important in the locations where the need for physicians exceeds the number available for the population.

This dynamic is coming to the forefront of the news with the aging of the baby boomers, and the increased births recently experienced in Madison County. The Huntsville Times recently ran a story which showed that the North Alabama service area

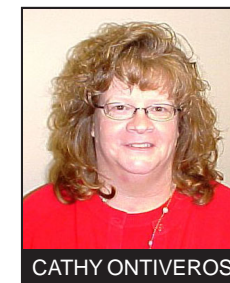
does not have an adequate number of pediatricians for our population and that many medical specialties will become stretched when the BRAC personnel begin to move into our area. There has been a decline in the number of physicians who are specializing in family practice and internal medicine. Most new physician graduates are working in specialties where the patient load is lighter and the income opportunities are greater than those in family medicine. Many physicians have a

large student loan debt which makes high income specialties look more attractive.

The State of Alabama has specific criteria established regarding the scope of service, number of Nurse Practitioners in a practice, education requirements, and recertification. Each practitioner is granted certification in a clinical specialty that is appropriate to their area of practice, and approval must be obtained for the Alabama Board of Nursing. The practitioner must be employed by a medical physician or rural health clinic and a collaboration letter from the physician must

be furnished to the Alabama Board of Nursing. Like physicians, Nurse Practitioners must also carry the appropriate medical malpractice insurance.

Reimbursement for these services varies by insurance plan specifications. In 2007, Medicare began authorizing Nurse Practitioners to bill for services furnished to both inpatient and outpatient hospital patients, in addition to office visits. Many commercial plans reimburse



CATHY ONTIVEROS

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## Nurse Practitioners (continued)

at a percentage of the physician rate or have a separate fee schedule for Nurse Practitioners. Hospitals often credential Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants under their allied health professional policy.

In recent years, Medicare, Medicare Advantage Plans, commercial insurance carriers, and Blue Cross have begun allowing reimbursement for nurse practitioners. Credentialing and reimbursing Nurse Practitioner services would be a way to assist in increasing the treatment options for our members whose medical plans allow for this type of

service. Planning is currently underway for the NAMCI network to begin credentialing Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants. This is another way in which your local NAMCI network is responding to the needs and concerns of members in the NAMCI service area.

*Cathy Ontiveros*  
*Provider Relations Representative*  
*(256) 532-2753*

### Welcome NAMCI's Newest Providers!

Douglas Adams, MD	Counseling	Yassin Mohamed, MD	Internal Medicine
Vidya Alapati, MD	Family Practice	Cynthia L. Monk, MD	Surgery, General
Amit Arora, MD	Neurology	Katherine Montgomery, MD	Radiology
Pamela N. Barber, MD	Internal Medicine	Mamoun I. Najjar, MD	Pulmonary Disease
Richard R. Cunningham, MD	Family Practice	Janice W. Neal, MD	Internal Medicine
Jeffrey D. Garrard, MD	Surgery, Orthopedic	Bhavesh Patel, DO	Internal Medicine
James C. Gilmore, MD	Surgery, Cardiovascular	Mark A. Plunkett, MD	Obstetrics & Gynecology
Lori D. Gledhill, MD	Family Practice	Michael Neel Roberts, MD	Internal Medicine
R. Rhys Harris, Jr, MD	Pathology	Kenneth E. Rose, MD	Internal Medicine
Rami Hawari, MD	Gastroenterology	Frank D. Scott, IV, MD	Nephrology
Tiffany M. Hendricks, MD	Family Practice	Andrew L. Sellers, MD	Internal Medicine
Jo Ann Brooks Johnson, MD	Pediatrics	William J. Suggs, MD	Surgery, General
Raycho G. Kurkchijski, MD	Family Practice	Mark A. Sweeney, MD	Internal Medicine
William S. Lynn, MD	Radiology	William P. Thomas, MD	Pulmonary Disease
James L. Masdon, MD	Otolaryngology, ENT	Rex C. Tuckier, MD	Surgery, General
Scott A. Matthews, MD	Internal Medicine	Merle L. Wade, Jr., MD	Urology
William A. McCrory, MD	Pulmonary Disease	Musarrat A. Yousuf, MD	Internal Medicine
Matthew J. Mick, MD	Cardiovascular Diseases		



Congratulations to Brenda Willoughby, Operations Manager for NAMCI, who has earned the Certified Provider Credentialing Specialist (CPCS) designation from the National Association of Medical Staff Services (NAMSS).

CPCS certification is a symbol of excellence within the medical services profession. Earning the CPCS signifies that an individual has demonstrated the knowledge and skills required to perform in today's complex credentialing environment.

We are so proud of you Brenda!

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**Customer Service** (800) 636-2624



## Wellness Series: Dealing With Stress

The term "wellness" is not simply based on the concept of exercise and a well-balanced diet. It encompasses many aspects of day-to-day life.

How often do we hear the phrase "I'm so stressed out"? For most people, it's at least once a day. In today's fast-paced world, it is more important than ever to establish a well-balanced lifestyle. Although stress is a natural part of life, how we manage it can be a significant attribute to a happier and healthier life.

People can sometimes become so overwhelmed that they do not know how to efficiently manage their stressful situations. They put themselves in a position where they let stress manage their lives rather than the other way around. Try these stress-management tips and see if they don't put you back in control of your life, and put you on track to a happier and healthier lifestyle.

**Tackle one task at a time.** Pick one task and work on it. Once you accomplish that task choose the next one. The feeling of "checking off" tasks will motivate you.

**Prioritize.** Identify what is most important. When is everything due? When you prioritize your work, you will be more efficient, thus less stressed.

**Don't procrastinate.** Putting off work will only make you more stressed. If you wait until the last minute, you will be stressed about finishing it in time.

**Get Organized.** By becoming more organized, you can reduce your stress level drastically. Make a daily schedule of all of your activities. Do you have a proposal due on Tuesday? Having to remember when to do something or what to do can increase your stress. Another way to become more organized is by getting your supplies and desk in order.

**Exercise.** Exercise gives you energy and relieves tension. Physical activity a few times a week will lower your stress level. It doesn't matter what you decide to do as long as you do something.

**Get plenty of sleep.** You need between seven and eight hours of sleep per night in order to rest your mind and body so they can perform well during the day. Although most people will tell you that this is unrealistic with their busy schedule, they don't realize that you really can't afford not to do this. Sleeping a consistent amount every night is one of the most effective tools you can utilize to cut stress and live a healthier life. Getting the proper sleep each night really is like taking time to sharpen your saw rather than cutting away with a dull blade for long hours.

**Talk about it.** If you are feeling overwhelmed, seek a stress-management counseling center. Talking about your problems will help you find more ways to deal with the culprits of your stress.



**Plan ahead.** Before you leave work each night, make a list of the five most important things you have to do the next day in the order you would least like to do them. This will get you right to work in the morning rather than having to think through everything and get organized. Think about what you're going to wear the night before to avoid being rushed, and plan your meals ahead of time to avoid being hungry or eating horribly. These little things really will make huge differences.

**Plan time to relax.** Everyone knows you should take time to relax-take a break. Taking this time will allow you to gather your thoughts and give you more energy afterward. The problem is no one does it. Plan little breaks in your day, 15 minutes to clear your head and read about your favorite team, do a Sudoku, or play a quick game of chess online. Clearing your head for a few minutes can get you back to higher productivity quickly.

**Realize you can say "no".** If you are swamped and can barely finish the work you already have, don't add something else. As long as you keep saying yes, they will keep piling on the work.

**Don't be a "control freak".** Don't expect perfection from yourself or others. Ask yourself what really needs to be done? How much can I do? Is the deadline realistic? Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it. Don't get frustrated, let down or disappointed when someone does not meet your expectations.

**Find your niche.** Find something that lets you unwind. This is going to be different for everyone. Some people like yoga, some reading, cooking, running or even knitting. Just 10 minutes or so of "you time" may bring relief from stress. Use the time to listen to music, relax and try to think of pleasant things...or nothing.

**Breathe.** When feeling stressed, relax and take deep, slow breaths.

*By Brandi Travis*  
*Health Insurance Underwriter*  
*July 2007 issue*