

# 3rd Quarter 2023 Benefits Corner

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By **Bill Dodge, CRA Benefits Chair**

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### Transition of Benefits Committee Chair

This is my last Benefits Corner as the Chair, CRA Benefits Committee. I am “passing the Chair baton”

so to speak to Jim Bonwell, a current CRA Benefits Committee member, who has agreed to step up and has been appointed to the position effective July 1, 2023 by the Association President, Brad McCullough. Jim retired from Chevron in December, 2020, became a CRA member and, in March, 2021, volunteered to serve on the CRA Benefits Committee. Jim has served as a valuable resource on the Committee due to his continued voluntary work with ChevRec’s BenefitHub and that he communicates frequently with Chevron retirees on the use of and questions about the BenefitHub website.

To assist Jim in his transition to the Chair position, I will be continuing to serve on the CRA Benefits Committee at least through the end of 2023. Please join me in welcoming Jim to his new role. Jim’s contact information is:

Email: [jbonwell@pacbell.net](mailto:jbonwell@pacbell.net) Phone: 925-997-6072

### **Organizing *Your Health* - A guide to maintain your family’s most important health records. \***

*There is nothing more important than your health and the health of your family, including your pets. However, it can be overwhelming to keep track of everything: appointments, copays, medications, deductibles, allergies, blood types, etc. The list goes on.*

*That’s why organizing your household’s health is so vital. To play a more active role in managing your family’s and pet’s well-being, you should keep an up-to-date medical history and appointment schedule for both. Use these tips to help keep your health information organized.*

#### *Records*

While your doctors have your health history, you should also keep track of you and your family’s personal medical records and sensitive information somewhere that is easily accessible. You can either create a binder to keep track of this information or log it digitally on your computer. Your health insurance plan or health care provider may even have an app to let you keep some of this information organized on your smartphone.

Important medical information to keep in your records includes but is not limited to:

- Family history of illness
- Blood types, immunization records, and allergies
- Hearing, vision, and dental exam results
- Dates and results of lab tests
- A list of chronic health problems, including symptoms and treatments
- Past and present medications
- Mental health treatment history
- History of childbirth
- Pet health history and vaccination records

#### *Additional records to keep handy*

In the same place, you should keep a history of any medical bills and payments, along with insurance information like your policy number and any paperwork you receive. You may even want to keep track of your progress toward your yearly deductible, as well as any legal documents, such as a living will or power of attorney.

In addition, keep tabs on the following information. If any is more than a year old, you can pack it away.

- Doctor's names, contact info, and role in your care
- Doctor's visit summaries and notes
- Hospital discharge summaries
- Pharmacy printouts of prescribed medications
- Emergency contact info for your family
- Veterinarians' names and contact info

#### *Appointments*

How often you and your family members need to visit medical professionals will largely depend on your age and overall health. You can follow these general guidelines to schedule appointments.

- **Physical exams:** Every two to three years if you're under fifty and in good health; at least once a year if you're fifty or older.
- **Dental exams:** Every six months.
- **Eye exams:** Every two years if you're under forty with vision problems, and every two to four years if you're forty or older.

*You may need to schedule appointments with specialists throughout the year depending on existing or emerging conditions, including OB-GYNs, ophthalmologists, allergists, dermatologists, psychologists, radiologists, and gastroenterologists.*

#### *Keeping track of appointments*

Make sure to write down the day and time of the appointment in a calendar that you look at regularly. You can create or buy a medical organizer to keep track of appointments and use it to take any notes about what to prepare ahead of time and what documents to bring along. If you need a more visible reminder, add a dry-erase board to a busy part of your home, such as your kitchen or office.

Your doctor or vet may provide appointment reminders, which can be helpful to keep you on track. Some offices will have a staff member call you a day or two ahead of the appointment, while others will allow you to register on a website for email or text reminders. Your health care provider may even offer an app that will remind you of upcoming appointments.

*Remember to take notes*

Before your appointments, write down any questions you want to address. By prioritizing questions, you can make the most of your time. It can also be helpful to take notes during these appointments, as it can be hard to remember everything you discussed. These notes can also help you prepare for future visits.

**It is important to spend time organizing your health records for yourself and your household. By keeping your medical records and appointments in order, you can help make sure everyone in your home, including the four-legged friends, stays happy and healthy.**

*\* Source: Start Healthy Magazine, May, 2023*

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