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JULY 2021

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**Visit [kcourhealthmatters.com](http://kcourhealthmatters.com) to learn how the Center for Practical Bioethics can help.**



### Take Action Against Germs — Your Hands Depend On It

**By Tenille L. Lawson PharmD BCPS**

Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others.

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By Patrick Sallee, CEO Vibrant Health

Learn how patient-centered care achieves higher levels of patient satisfaction, provider satisfaction and improved health outcomes.



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Articles in the magazine do not constitute medical advice. Always consult your physician or healthcare provider before making medical decisions. We do not endorse the views expressed in the articles, advertisements and websites, nor are we responsible for products and services advertised.

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# welcome

## TO THE TEAM

Imagine most people don't give much thought to how important they are to their own healthcare team. Depending on your needs, your healthcare team might consist of a primary care provider, medical specialists, nurse practitioner, nurses, medical assistants, patient navigator or advocate, physical therapist, behavioral health counselor, social worker, home health worker, YOU and a family member or trusted friend.

You are a vital member of your own healthcare team. It is important that everyone on your healthcare team has your best interests at heart. Be present and informed. Always ask questions if you don't understand a medical diagnosis, treatment plan or process.

As a patient, you have certain rights. Some are guaranteed by federal law, such as the right to get a copy of your medical records and the right to keep them private. Many states have additional laws protecting patients, and healthcare facilities often have a Patient Bill of Rights. An important patient right is informed consent. This means that if you need a treatment, your healthcare provider must give you the information you need to make a decision. See Page 12 for Health Information and Privacy Rights.

In this edition we share how Vibrant Health, a nationally recognized Patient-Centered Medical Home, is delivering quality healthcare for every patient. You can also learn how telehealth is eliminating some barriers to receiving timely and appropriate care.



Summer has arrived. Continue to social distance, wear masks where required, and don't miss an opportunity to get vaccinated. Our lives depend on it.

Stay safe and healthy.

**Ruth Ramsey**, Publisher and CEO

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### WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send us your suggestions for health topics you would like to see in *Our Health Matters*. Also share what you enjoy about the magazine.

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# Sometimes You Have to Drive a Little Farther

## TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THOSE YOU LOVE

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The Joint Commission Disease-Specific Care Certification in  
Brain Injury Rehabilitation, Spinal  
Cord Injury Rehabilitation and  
Stroke Rehabilitation



# Vaccines Are Highly Effective Against Severe Forms of COVID-19

Missouri is currently vaccinating anyone age 12 and up.

**M**illions of Americans have received both doses of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines, with the vast majority experiencing minor, temporary side effects. The safety and efficacy data has been reviewed by an independent expert committee called the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which also recommended the vaccines for emergency use.

## ALL VACCINES ARE GOOD VACCINES.

**You, your family and your community will be made safer by each individual who chooses vaccination. Vaccinations have been proven to prevent SEVERE ILLNESS AND DEATH CAUSED BY COVID-19.**

No safety concerns were identified for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines in subgroup analyses by age, race, ethnicity, underlying medical conditions or previous SARS-CoV-2 infection.

In addition, the single-dose Janssen vaccine has also met safety and efficacy standards.

The data from the Janssen's trials are based on tens of thousands of participants, and it shows that the vaccine is highly effective against severe forms of COVID-19.

SOURCE: [covidvaccine.mo.gov](https://covidvaccine.mo.gov)

## "I'll protect you, you protect me."



Register online  
at [MoStopsCOVID.com/navigator](https://MoStopsCOVID.com/navigator)  
or call the COVID-19 hotline  
at 877-435-8411.

## COVID-19 Vaccines Are Safe

- Get vaccinated.
- Wear a face mask.
- Stay 6 feet apart.
- Wash your hands.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services  
Office of Minority Health



MoStopsCOVID.com  
[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)



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# Eating to Live

# Evolves Into a Movement

Food is a basic necessity, but it can be challenging if there is a medical condition limiting what you can eat. That's what Emily Brown, founder of Food Equality Initiative (FEI) faced when her daughters were diagnosed with severe food allergies. Suddenly, she went from carefree grocery shopping to reading every product food label.

## ON A MISSION

In 2014, Emily Brown founded Food Equality Initiative (FEI) to help families like hers gain access to free-from food, foods that are safe for people with food allergies and/or celiac disease. FEI started the first food pantry in the US with Top-9 allergen-free or celiac diet items such as gluten-free bread, almond milk, and sunflower seed butter.

**"We treat food as medicine. Since insurance does not cover this medicine, we subsidize it for people that need the extra support."**

—Emily Brown,  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Food Equality Initiative

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR FEI ASSISTANCE

People with food allergies and/or celiac disease are eligible for services. They must be diagnosed as having a food allergy and/or celiac disease by a physician. FEI coordinates access to restrictive diet foods for once a month delivery through the Free-From Marketplace.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Your donations support education and advocacy initiatives as well as costs for shipping boxes of allergen-free and gluten-free foods nationwide.



## TO LEARN MORE

**CALL 816-800-0884**

**EMAIL CONTACT@FOODEQUALITYINITIATIVE.ORG**

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# WELCOME TO THE *Healthcare* TEAM

Patient-Centered Care  
**IS THE HEART**  
of Quality Healthcare

**T**he mission of **Vibrant Health**, a Federally Qualified Health Center, is to provide access to respectful, empowering, culturally sensitive and appropriate high-quality healthcare for those they serve, regardless of socio-economic obstacles.

Vibrant Health believes a person should always be part of their own healthcare team. Patients who have a direct relationship with their primary care provider and care team can make informed decisions about their care and is more likely to participate in self-care. They also become better informed about lifestyle choices that improve their health.

As a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), Vibrant Health in Kansas City, Kansas, is nationally recognized for their PCMH model of care. Vibrant Health's patients receive guidance to better understand their health and are actively involved through self-care. By providing patient-centered care, Vibrant Health achieves higher levels of patient satisfaction, provider satisfaction and health outcomes.

### Where does the patient fit on the healthcare team?

Vibrant Health meets patients where they are by communicating in their preferred language, respecting their unique cultures and values, building trust and reducing barriers that impact a patient's health and well-being. For patients who have difficulty advocating for themselves, Vibrant Health uses an integrated care approach. For example, they may add a behavioral health consultant to the team during a well-child or well-adult visit to uncover and assess issues that can be resolved during the visit. At other times, interventions are made to refer the patient for continued behavioral health services, specialty care or social services in response to food insecurity and housing, legal or financial assistance. They recognize that social-economic factors impact the health, well-being and quality of life of the children and adults they serve. They also partner with other qualified providers and community resources to provide "whole person" care.

### Self-care is encouraged

Every patient is encouraged to get involved with their care by improving their knowledge, self-management

and medication adherence. Adult patients diagnosed with hypertension are given a self-measuring blood pressure device (SMBP). They are shown how to use it and how to share the data with their doctor. The SMBP helps patients learn in real-time how food choices, exercise, and medication affect their blood pressure readings. The remote SMBP data helps the provider develop better informed hypertension treatment plans than can be done by relying only on blood pressure measures taken during in-person patient visits.



**By Patrick Sallee, CEO**  
Vibrant Health

*"There is a critical need for organizations like ours to partner with others to ensure that vulnerable children and adults have equitable access to patient-centered care, health and human services and social justice."*

— Patrick Sallee, CEO  
Vibrant Health

### Connecting with patients where they live

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Vibrant Health delivered personal therapy kits to the homes of behavioral healthcare patients. The kits included items useful for ongoing self-care, such as personal journal and pen, Play-Doh, coloring books and pencils, aromatherapy lotion and stress relieving gadgets.

Healthcare organizations such as Vibrant Health are committed to helping families learn how to maintain the best health possible. No matter where you receive care, you should always be an active participant with your healthcare team. To learn more about Vibrant Health's services visit: [vibranthealthkc.org](http://vibranthealthkc.org) •

# Is Telehealth Part of Your Diabetes Healthcare Team?

**T**he use of telehealth to care for people with diabetes had been increasing even before COVID-19. This is largely because management of diabetes is greatly dependent on people with diabetes helping to care for themselves and because they already use technology to keep track of blood sugars. Research shows that use of telehealth improves control of blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure in people with diabetes.

If you plan to use telehealth care with your provider for diabetes, here are some things to keep in mind:

**1. TELEHEALTH FOR DIABETES IS BETTER FOR FOLLOW-UP CARE NOT FIRST VISIT.** On your first visit for diabetes care, your doctor will want to get to know you and will

**“...use of telehealth improves control of blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure in people with diabetes.”**

do a complete in-person evaluation, which is better done in person. He or she may also recommend you attend a series of diabetes education classes that can be done using telehealth.

**2. SOME THINGS CAN'T BE DONE BY TELEHEALTH.** Doctors can't do a complete exam of your feet if you have sores, or listen to your lungs if you are short of breath. Make sure when you schedule your appointment the office personnel know why you are being seen so that the right kind of visit can be scheduled.

**3. BE PREPARED.** Before signing on have all of your medications with you and write down changes in medications

or changes in your symptoms. Ask if you need to find a way to weigh yourself or get your blood pressure checked. Ask if you need to get any lab work done before your appointment.

**4. TRACK AND REPORT YOUR BLOOD SUGAR.** If you have a blood sugar monitor that can send blood sugars electronically, send the readings at least several days before your appointment. You may need to

ask for advice to get the data from your monitor uploaded. If you can't send your blood sugar readings electronically, write down dates and times you tested your blood sugar. Show your written record at the time of your telehealth visit.

**5. TELEHEALTH IS NOT FOR EMERGENCIES.** Make a plan in advance about how to get care when you are sick, including urgent care for chest pain, very low blood sugars and so forth.

With planning and communication with your doctor's office, telehealth may be a good option for part of your care even after the pandemic. More tips for using telehealth for diabetes care can be found the diaTribe Foundation, [diatribe.org](http://diatribe.org).



**By Betty M. Drees  
MD, FACP, FACE**

Betty Drees, MD, FACP, FACE is Professor of Medicine and Dean Emerita UMKC School of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Department of Biomedical and Health Informatics.



# Telehealth Can Eliminate Some Barriers to Healthcare

**T**elehealth is a promising public health tool because of its potential to significantly increase access to health care for underserved populations. It is widely believed that it can reduce healthcare costs and improve health outcomes overall.

Telehealth — sometimes called telemedicine — is the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to provide care when you and your healthcare provider are not in the same place at the same time. To participate in a telehealth session with a provider, you need to have a phone or a device with internet access to get medical care or services through telehealth.

## Types of care you can receive through telehealth

You might be surprised by the variety of care you can get through telehealth. Services such as medication management and online counseling are particularly suited to telehealth, as consistent and regular visits improve outcomes. Your doctor will decide whether telehealth is right for your health needs. If you need care, it is worth checking to see what your telehealth options are. You may meet with a doctor in real-time to discuss:

- Lab test or x-ray results.
- Therapy and online counseling.
- Recurring conditions such as migraines or urinary tract infections.
- Skin conditions.
- Prescription management.
- Urgent care issues such as colds, coughs and stomach complaints.
- Post-surgical follow-up.

## Doctors may ask you to

- Send blood pressure, blood sugar or other condition monitoring information.
- Send images of how a wound, eye or skin condition is healing.
- Document symptoms.
- Request medical records that have been sent to another doctor.

## Your medical provider can send you information such as

- Notifications to remind you to do rehabilitation exercises or take a critical medication.
- Encouragement to stick with your treatment plan.
- New suggestions for improving diet, mobility or stress management.
- Detailed instructions on how to continue your care at home.

## Telehealth is growing in popularity because of these benefits

- Limiting physical contact reduces everyone's exposure to COVID-19.
- Visiting virtually can address health issues wherever patients are, even from the comfort of home.
- Using virtual health care tools can shorten wait times to see a provider and expand the range of access to specialists who live further away.

Telehealth is not a perfect fit for everyone or every medical condition. Make sure you discuss any disadvantages or risks with your doctor.

Source: Health & Human Services, [hhs.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)

Visit us at [www.kcourhealthmatters.com](https://www.kcourhealthmatters.com)

# HIPAA

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, a 1996 Federal law that restricts access to individuals' private medical information

## YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION PRIVACY RIGHTS

**M**ost of us feel that our health information is private and should be protected. That is why there is a federal law that sets rules for health care providers and health insurance companies about who can look at and receive our health information. This law, called the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), gives you rights over your health information, including the right to get a copy of your information, make sure it is correct, and know who has seen it.

### GET IT.

You can ask to see or get a copy of your medical record and other health information. If you want a copy, you may have to put your request in writing and pay for the cost of copying and mailing. In most cases, your copies must be given to you within 30 days.

### CHECK IT.

You can ask to change any wrong information in your file or add information to your file if you think something is missing or incomplete. For example, if you and your hospital agree that your file has the wrong result for a test, the hospital must change it.


Even if the hospital believes the test result is correct, you still have the right to have your disagreement noted in your file. In most cases, the file should be updated within 60 days.

### KNOW WHO HAS SEEN IT.

By law, your health information can be used and shared for specific reasons not directly related to your care, like making sure doctors give good care, making sure nursing homes are clean and safe, reporting when the flu is in your area, or reporting as required by state or federal law. In many of these cases, you can find out who has seen your health information.

Learn how your health information is used and shared by your doctor or health insurer. Generally, your health information cannot be used for purposes not directly related to your care without your permission. For example, your doctor cannot give it to your employer or share it for things like marketing and advertising, without your written authorization. You probably received a notice telling you how your health information may be used on your first visit to a new healthcare provider or when you got new health insurance, but you can ask for another copy any time. •

To learn more about your rights, visit [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy)



“The counselors at GateWay offered me acceptance and love. I found my worth. I have value.” GateWay of Hope saved my life.”

– Pam, a GateWay of Hope client

# A GATEWAY TO NAVIGATE LIFE'S UPS & DOWNS

There are many reasons why some women experience challenges that throw them off balance. It may be a failed relationship, loss of a loved one, loss of income, or a variety of mental health events. GateWay of Hope is a faith-based, mental health organization that specializes in mental health counseling, life-coaching, prayer groups and support groups. Their compassionate staff focus on helping teens and women — ages

15 and older — find hope, pursue healing and build resilience.

For more than 15 years, GateWay of Hope has been a beacon of light to women of the greater Kansas City area. GateWay offers a safe, home-like atmosphere for outpatient counseling and therapy. They help women to resolve many issues, such as learning to set healthy boundaries.



DACIA L. MOORE, MA, LPC, NCC  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## SERVICES OFFERED

GateWay of Hope offers individual mental health counseling, life-coaching, prayer groups and support groups.

**MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING** for women struggling with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, or dissociation. A Latina Spanish-speaking mental health professional is also available.

**PERSONAL GROWTH COUNSELING** to help with understanding boundaries, decision-making, relationships or loss and grief.

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION COUNSELING** for women who want to focus on their relationship with God and beliefs about God, as well as women who have struggled with spiritual abuse or negative experiences in the church.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Your donations support mental health counseling scholarships and ongoing mental health services. To learn more about GateWay of Hope, call 913-393-4283, or visit [gwhope.org](http://gwhope.org)



# GateWay of Hope

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## WHAT'S NEXT AUGUST 2021 CONGRATULATIONS 2021 GRADUATES OUR FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS.

A healthy community is one in which people and organizations from all areas of the community work together to prevent disease and provide healthy living options regardless of one's race, culture or socio-economic status. We look at factors that impact your family's health, including access to quality healthcare, education, employment and affordable housing. All of these contribute to a family's and community's wellness.

Summer has arrived. Find time to relax and enjoy life. And, remember to protect yourself and others by getting vaccinated and adhering to social distancing when necessary.

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## **COVID UPDATE**

**FACE COVERINGS ARE MOST ESSENTIAL IN TIMES WHEN PHYSICAL DISTANCING IS NOT POSSIBLE.**

**EVERYONE SHOULD FREQUENTLY BE REMINDED NOT TO TOUCH THE FACE COVERING AND TO WASH THEIR HANDS FREQUENTLY. ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING. ALTER YOUR WORKSPACE TO HELP WORKERS AND CUSTOMERS MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING AND PHYSICALLY SEPARATE EMPLOYEES FROM EACH OTHER AND FROM CUSTOMERS, WHEN POSSIBLE.**

**FOLLOW OUR HEALTH MATTERS COVID-19 UPDATES  
ONLINE AT [KCOURHEALTHMATTERS.COM](https://kcourhealthmatters.com)**