



Choose Well

Member Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE



sarsis

Health | Technology Solutions



★ AMERICAN ★
HEART MONTH
———— FEBRUARY ————

Established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February is American Heart Month. It is dedicated to bringing awareness, encouraging people to lead healthier lives and providing resources to support the efforts to end heart disease and stroke. Valentine's Day is linked with the celebration of love. Love has always been associated with the heart. As a part of self-love and care, it is fitting that one tends to their heart. The American Heart Association recommends "Life's Simple 7" for good heart health, which are to get active, control cholesterol levels, eat better, manage blood pressure, lose weight, reduce blood sugar, and stop smoking. Our general health is impacted by our lifestyle choices. To remain independent for as long as possible, the aim is to make an effort to lead an active lifestyle with healthy heart decisions.



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MEMBER COUNT

By HHSA region, this is how Choose Well membership is distributed countywide.

HHSA Region	Total in Region
Central	17
East	29
North Central	42
North Coastal	45
North Inland	71
South	23
County Total	227



EVENTS RECAP!

Lunch N Learn

Choose Well San Diego hosted a Lunch N Learn event on December 13, 2023. The instructor for this event was Regina New from Long-Term Care Facility Safety. The topic of the event was based on Emergency Preparedness. The event was broken up into two class sessions. The first session was titled “Comply with AB 3098” and the second session was “Long-Term Care Power Outage Preparedness Response & Recovery.” The discussion between the attendees and instructor was very informative. We had catered Chick-fil-A for the attendees to enjoy. All of the Choose Well San Diego members were welcomed to come to future events and spread the word about the Choose Well San Diego program. Choose Well San Diego members that attended were provided with static clings, brochures, magnets, and microfiber cloths.



East County Senior Service Provider Meeting

East County Senior Service Providers (ECSSP) organized the inaugural 2024 gathering to foster relationships and a network among East County aging service providers. ECSSP discussed the annual health fair occurring during fall 2024 and the support they will need. The meeting was a great start to learning about others in the community serving East County.

Recap on Winter Masquerade at Westmont at San Miguel

Choose Well San Diego attended the Winter Masquerade to show support to both Arena Home Care and Westmont at San Miguel. The event was wonderful with learning more about the community and home care services.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

in San Diego



In observance of Black History Month in February, the rich legacy and noteworthy accomplishments of San Diego's African American community is celebrated. It's a great time to learn, visit, and take in San Diego's fascinating Black history and all that the city has to offer.

- Visit any local [library branch](#) to see what programs are available.
- [Museum Month pass](#) can be picked up at a local library to visit the museums at Balboa Park and other participating museums with exhibits.
- Support [Black-owned businesses](#) in San Diego.
- Visit [San Diego History Center](#) to learn more about San Diego Black history and heritage.
- Keepers of the Culture 2024 on February 24, 2024 from 5:00pm - 7:30pm at the San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art will honor its recipients. Must [RSVP](#).
- [BLACK COM!X DAY 2024](#) is a free event hosted at the World Beat Center on February 3rd from 10am-6pm.



Keeping Aging Hearts Healthy

Learning about the health of your heart is important, especially if there is a family history of cardiovascular disease or risk of a diagnosis. The well-being of your heart involves understanding risk factors, making healthy heart choices, and taking steps to reduce the chances of getting heart disease. Cardiovascular disease can limit activity in one's daily living or cause a disability, which affects the quality of life one may have. Recognizing the symptoms of cardiovascular diseases helps with seeking treatment.

Symptoms to Look For

Here are some warning signs for a heart attack, stroke, and cardiac arrest symptoms.¹

Heart Attack Symptoms

- Chest Discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body
- Shortness of Breath
- Cold Sweat
- Nausea
- Lightheadedness

Stroke Symptoms

Spot a stroke by knowing the acronym F.A.S.T

- Face Drooping
- Arm Weakness
- Speech Difficulty
- Time to Call 911

Cardiac Arrest Symptoms

- Sudden Loss of Responsiveness or Collapse
- No Normal Breathing
- No Response
- No Pulse

Learn more about heart attack, stroke, and cardiac arrest symptoms on the [American Heart Association website](#).

Aging and the Heart

As a person ages, so does the heart organ system. When the heart ages, the performance of the heart can become irregular. The heart rhythm can go faster or slower due to changes in the blood vessels, blood pressure, stiffness of the arteries, and the growth of fat deposits around the heart.² Developing these conditions occurs over time and can increase the likelihood of a heart attack, stroke, cardiac arrest, or the development of heart disease. Routine visits to the doctor or cardiologist for examinations are encouraged for older adults, which helps with prevention or early detection of heart disease. Some lifestyle choices may also affect your cardiovascular system and overall body.

Healthy Heart Actions

Here are some ways to help prevent heart disease and keep a healthy heart: ²

- Be physically active or try to exercise for at least 2.5 hours each week.
- Follow a heart healthy diet. This includes foods that are low in saturated fats, added sugars, and salt.
- If you smoke, try to quit.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Keep diabetes, high blood pressure, and/or high cholesterol under control.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Manage stress.

Visit the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-health/heart-health-and-aging) to learn more about making heart-healthy lifestyle changes.



New Treatment Drugs

With the advances in technology and medicine, there has been great progress in interventions and treatments to slow the acceleration of heart disease, in addition to ongoing research to learn more about the aging process of the heart. This research includes lifestyle factors, cellular and molecular changes to the cardiovascular system, and the development of drugs for treatment.² For example, researchers have investigated advancements in pharmaceuticals, such as a new clinical drug that suppresses key protein needed for development of hypertension.⁴ Ongoing studies have produced discoveries that have deepened the understanding of various populations' causes of cardiovascular disease and influenced the development of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines.³

Learn more about the latest [coronary heart disease research](#) by the National Institute of Health.

Sources

www.heart.org/en/about-us/heart-attack-and-stroke-symptoms

www.nia.nih.gov/health/heart-health/heart-health-and-aging

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/research/coronary-heart-disease

www.heart.org/en/around-the-aha/aha-names-top-advances-in-cardiovascular-disease-research-for-2023



An Assessment of Home Care Services and Advocacy

By David Alcaraz, Client Services Manager
Arena Home care

Home care is a rapidly expanding trend that offers people non-medical support in the convenience of their own homes. Many people are considering home care as an alternative to traditional healthcare settings due to the aging population and the desire for individualized care. The choice to use home care services should not be made hastily. It is important to carefully evaluate one's own needs, health conditions, level of independence, resources, and support network before determining if home care is the right choice for them. A variety of services for everyday living activities are provided by home care, such as companionship, meal preparation, medication assistance, and personal care.

The person's health is the main factor taken into account when determining whether home care is appropriate. For people who need continuous care due to chronic illnesses or disabilities, home care is ideal. For instance, home care services can be extremely beneficial to an individual who needs assistance with everyday activities and has mobility issues. In these situations, home health care providers can offer the required assistance while guaranteeing the person's comfort and convenience.

The degree of independence possessed by the individual is another important consideration. Home care is especially appropriate for people who prefer to keep control over their daily routines and value their independence. Unlike institutionalized care settings, home care allows individuals to make decisions about their own care, such as when to eat, sleep, or engage in recreational activities. This level of independence can greatly improve the person's general well-being and quality of life.

When deciding if home care is the best option for a particular person, the presence of a support system is crucial. For those with a large support system of family and friends who can offer extra assistance, home care can be a great choice. In these situations, home health care providers can cooperate with the individual's network of support to provide all-encompassing care. This shared responsibility can alleviate the burden on both the individual and their loved ones while fostering a sense of community and shared commitment to the individual's well-being.

Take the example of an elderly person with dementia to demonstrate the appropriateness of home care. To protect their safety and well-being, this person might need specific attention and supervision. Home care providers can offer individualized care, carry out activities that improve memory, and establish a comfortable environment that supports cognitive function. The person can retain a sense of familiarity and comfort while receiving care at home, which helps to lessen the confusion and anxiety that are frequently present in institutionalized care settings. Home care is not just for older adults. A young adult who has a physical disability might need help with everyday tasks like getting dressed, taking a shower, and making meals. Professionals in home care can offer the required assistance while upholding the person's dignity and privacy. This enables the person to continue being independent and partake in pursuits that make them happy and fulfilled.

Improving quality of life, encouraging independence, and enhancing general well-being are the objectives of home care. The individualized attention and one-on-one care that home care providers offer can also be advantageous to them. Those recovering from surgery or hospital stays, as well as those with chronic illnesses and disabilities, can all benefit greatly from home care.

Home care professionals' caregivers are trained to provide personalized care tailored to the specific needs of everyone. They collaborate closely with the individual, their family, and their healthcare team to create a comprehensive care plan that addresses their medical, physical, and emotional needs. Depending on the needs of the individual, either full-time or part-time home care services can be offered. In addition to helping with practical duties, home care providers offer emotional support and social interaction. For those who might feel alone or isolated, this can be extremely helpful. Home care providers actively participate in each patient's care, which helps to avoid errors and misunderstandings. Verifying prescription dosages twice, getting clarification on any doubts, and asking questions about procedures give peace of mind to those near and dear.





In any healthcare environment, including home care, it is essential to be one's own advocate. Home care recipients should actively participate in their care and speak up for their needs, even though home care professionals are trained to deliver high-quality care. Individuals can let the home care professionals know their preferences, worries, and goals by actively engaging in their care. This ensures that their needs are successfully met and helps to customize the care plan to meet their specific requirements. The key to self-advocacy is effective communication. In addition to fostering a cooperative relationship with the home care team, open and transparent communication ensures that the care given is in line with the needs of the individual. Self-advocacy in home care encourages self-reliance and gives people the ability to actively participate in their own care. Individuals are better equipped to make decisions about their daily routines, lifestyle choices, and treatment options when they are able to effectively advocate for their needs. The individual's overall well-being is improved by this degree of involvement, which cultivates a sense of autonomy and control.

Older adults and loved ones should educate themselves about their condition, available resources, and treatment options in order to be an effective advocate. This includes being aware and understanding the diagnosis, medications, and potential side effects. Older adults who are knowledgeable can take an active role in their care and make wise decisions. They can maintain their organization and knowledge by keeping a record of their prescriptions, therapies, and appointments. This includes keeping track of all the medications that are currently being taken, recording any changes in symptoms or adverse effects, and writing down any questions or worries that need to be addressed with the home care providers. These documents are an invaluable resource and support strong self-advocacy. Older adults can effectively advocate for their needs during home care by using techniques like self-education, open communication, and record-keeping. Individuals can get the most out of their home care experience and improve it by taking initiative and being involved.





Helping Families Find Distinguished Assisted Living Facilities


Choose Well is a free, innovative, web-based program that helps older adults and their families make informed decisions when selecting assisted living facilities.

Quality Measures

Discover specially evaluated Choose Well facilities that have voluntarily agreed to be scored on 11 measures of quality.

Contact Us

Learn more details about the Choose Well program:

 (858) 221-4862

 info@choosewellsandiego.org

 choosewellsandiego.org





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**Do you know a facility that would benefit from being a
Choose Well Member?**

Send them our provider brochure by clicking [here](#).

Choose Well is a free, innovative, web-based program that helps older adults and their families make informed decisions when selecting assisted living homes.

For information on other programs and resources for older adults and people with

disabilities, visit www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov or call 800-339-4661.