

Spring 2023

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Welcoming  
Kristina Kaufmann  
to Brighton Marine

Our Provider  
Network Expands

Learn About Our Extras

On the Move in  
Allergy Season



Casey Van Huysen with  
Aaron Van Huysen, CW04, USCG (Ret.)  
and Madyson, Victoria, Olivia, Ethan, and Sahara

# spring calendar

## MARCH

12

Daylight Saving Time begins  
(set clocks ahead)

17

St. Patrick's Day

20

Spring begins

22

Ramadan begins (est.)

## MAY

14

Mother's Day

20

Armed Forces Day

29

Memorial Day

## JUNE

6

D-Day Remembrance Day

14

US Army Birthday  
Flag Day

18

Father's Day

19

Juneteenth

21

Summer begins!



April is the Month  
of the Military Child

## APRIL

2

Palm Sunday

5

Passover begins at sundown

7

Good Friday

9

Easter

17

Patriots Day (Massachusetts)



## COMMUNITY



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## FITNESS



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US Family Health Plan members choose from a network of over 2,000 civilian primary care providers and thousands of specialists, plus a large network of civilian hospitals.

## Who We Are



US Family Health Plan of Southern New England is a Department of Defense TRICARE Prime option, and one of six regional US Family Health Plan programs across the nation. Our large network of civilian doctors, hospitals, and other health providers serves Plan members who live in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and parts of southern New Hampshire and northern Connecticut.

We pride ourselves on friendly, personal service. If you have questions, call us at **1.800.818.8589**. You can also get to know us better at **usfamilyhealth.org** or at **facebook.com/USFHP.SouthernNewEngland**.



a message from Gail Schlesinger,  
our Senior Vice President and Plan CEO



There is nothing more beautiful than watching the return of spring.

## How's the Weather Today?

As I write this article, the Boston area just experienced record-breaking cold on Saturday, February 4, that saw temperatures plummet into the negative double digits. It wasn't the only record that was broken over the weekend. Boston also experienced the largest temperature swing ever recorded — going from -7 to 50 degrees in less than 30 hours! I experienced my own version of that swing, from “why do I live here?” to “this isn't so bad!”

This did remind me that I really do enjoy living in New England. Okay, maybe I could do with a little less winter and more of the other seasons, but each has its own beauty. I love the summer heat. But there is nothing more beautiful than watching the return of spring — the blossoming of nature, the increased daylight, and the rise in temperatures.

Just like those animals that spend the winter in hibernation, humans tend to do the same. We keep ourselves protected from the cold. But once the weather begins to warm, we shed our winter coats and get outside. I personally like to walk, and each day during the spring I love to see how the trees have changed, what new flowers have appeared, and how many boats have returned to their moorings.

But this recent “swing” also reminded me how quickly things can swing in our own lives. Whether it's a change in your health, the arrival of a new baby, sending a child off to school, or losing someone close to you, events like these can cause dramatic changes to your “temperature.” Although some of these changes are welcome and wonderful, others might not be.

I hope that all of you can get out and enjoy the beauty of spring. But if you're finding it hard to see and enjoy the pleasures of the new season, please reach out to your Primary Care Provider for assistance. Don't forget that our members can self-refer to mental health providers for the first eight visits in a Plan Year (January 1– December 31), but remember to call **1.800.208.9565** for a current list of authorized network providers before you obtain services.

As always, I thank you for your loyalty to and confidence in US Family Health Plan and wish you warmth and contentment in the coming months. ■





FOCUS ON  
SERVING

YOU

## Welcoming New Providers to Our Network

We're pleased to expand our provider network even more! To switch to a provider at one of these locations, call Member Services at **1.800.818.8589**.

### FAMILY PRACTICE

#### **Atul Soreng, MD**

21 Dwight Road, Suite 104  
Longmeadow, MA 01106  
**413.795.4555**

#### **Justin Quinlan, DO**

325B King Street  
Northampton, MA 01060  
**413.387.4100**

#### **Shauna Dunton, DO**

197 Adams Road  
Williamstown, MA 01267  
**413.644.5710**

#### **Patricia Raney, MD**

81 Old Colony Way, Suite D  
Orleans, MA 02653  
**508.240.1141**

#### **Kim Crawford, MD**

33 Danielson Pike, Suite B  
North Scituate, RI 02857  
**401.647.2840**

### PEDIATRICS

#### **Kelsey Hart, MD**

1272 West Main Road  
Middletown, RI 02842  
**401.847.2290**

#### **Angela Mancini, MD**

604 Main Street  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545  
**508.842.1500**

### INTERNAL MEDICINE

#### **Hammad Bhatti, MD**

444 Montgomery Street  
Chicopee, MA 01020  
**413.598.7090**

#### **John Shapiro, MD**

1565 North Main Street  
Fall River, MA 02720  
**508.973.9500**

#### **Amanda Ortengren, DO**

495 Station Avenue  
South Yarmouth, MA  
02664  
**508.552.3208**

#### **Benjamin Levin, MD**

204 Main Street  
Orleans, MA 02653  
**508.255.8825**

#### **Ibrahim Abubeker, MD**

245 Chapman Street  
Providence, RI 02905  
**401.444.5280**

## Rhode Island Coverage Expands with Lifespan Physicians

We've added dozens of physicians from Lifespan health care including physicians in Jamestown, Lincoln, Newport, Providence, Portsmouth, Tiverton, and Warwick. Call Member Services at **1.800.818.8589** for more information. ■



# Extras!

## The Full TRICARE Prime® Benefit Plus More



Because we believe in caring for the whole person, US Family Health Plan provides extras beyond the usual TRICARE Prime benefit, including:

- **Chiropractic visits.** Up to 12 spinal-manipulation visits by a network chiropractor in a Plan Year (January 1 – December 31). Available to members over age 12. No referral required. Copayment of \$36 per visit for retirees and their family members without Medicare Part B.
- **Acupuncture discount.** 25 percent off a participating provider's usual and customary charges.
- **Massage therapy discount.** 25 percent off a participating provider's usual and customary charges or pay \$15 per 15 minutes of massage therapy, whichever is less.
- **Nutritional counseling.** 25 percent off visits with participating registered dietitians and licensed nutritionists. (This discount is in addition to the medically necessary nutritional counseling visits covered by US Family Health Plan.)  
*More information, including names of participating providers of the extras above:* Call Member Services at **1.800.818.8589**.
- **Eyeglasses, contact lenses, and corrective vision discounts.** 35 percent off the cost of frames, lenses, and sunglasses when you see an EyeMed network provider. EyeMed also offers 5 to 15 percent off the cost of LASIK and PRK laser vision correction.  
*More information:* Go to **[tuftshealthplan.com/eyemed](https://tuftshealthplan.com/eyemed)**.
- **Meditation 101.** Free 10-part audio series on meditation practices.  
*To access:* Go to **[app.wellable.co/Meditation101](https://app.wellable.co/Meditation101)** and enter access code **thp**.

We'll add more extras in the coming year and will let you know about them in future issues of this magazine. ■





# Help for Postpartum Depression

According to a national survey, about one in eight women experience postpartum depression after having a baby. Anxiety during and after pregnancy is as common as depression and may happen at the same time as depression. Signs of these conditions may include feeling:

- Extremely sad or angry without warning
- Unable to complete tasks
- “Robotic,” as though they’re just going through the motions
- Very anxious around the baby and their other children
- Guilty and like they are failing at motherhood
- Unusually irritable or angry

Call your health care provider if you experience symptoms like these.

## Call 911 for help now

If you’re thinking about harming yourself or the baby, or if you’re concerned about someone else, call **911** now.

## Call 1.833.943.5746

The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline provides free, confidential access to trained counselors and resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ■

### Additional Behavioral Health Resources

#### 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**988 + 1 Veterans Crisis line**  
(specialized help for military veterans and families)

#### Behavioral health and substance use disorder

Self-refer to a Plan network mental health or substance use provider for the first eight outpatient visits in a Plan Year (January 1 – December 31). Call **1.800.208.9565** for a list of authorized providers.



Charles Rollinger, MD,  
is our Vice President of  
Medical Management  
and Quality

# Why Do We Survey Our Members?

## What do we do with the information?

Besides being a doctor, I'm a consumer, like our members. It seems that every time I buy something or get services somewhere, I'm contacted by telephone or email for a "quick survey." I get "survey fatigue," but I also realize that the information I provide is important to the vendor.

US Family Health Plan does an annual survey of our members to determine how well we're doing with our responsibilities. Not everyone is surveyed every year. We take a random sample of members, which means that some may be surveyed two years in a row, while others may never be surveyed. We're required to administer this survey and report the results to the Defense Health Agency, which you may know as TRICARE.

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) is used to measure the patient experience in health care. This annual survey lets health plan members report and evaluate their experiences with health care facilities, providers, and health plans. This national program allows us to compare our results with health plans across the country, including other TRICARE programs. The idea is to use the results of the survey to improve the patient care experience. US Family Health Plan uses the annual CAHPS® performance rates to identify opportunities for us to do better by developing quality-improvement projects, initiatives, and clinical studies.

Generally, we do well on this survey, but in the past few years we've noticed that one area, "How well doctors communicate," has shown a decline in its score. Initially, we thought this might be a result of issues related to COVID-19, with office closures and staffing issues. But the problem has continued, even with offices getting "back to normal." Now we are asking for your help in trying to figure out why.

To get to the source of the issue, we are asking you to complete yet another survey (separate from the CAHPS® survey)! Sorry, but we think this is the best way to get the information we need. We will use this information to determine what our providers can do to communicate more effectively with our members. We hope that this will result in improved communication and improved scores on the CAHPS® survey.

The survey is available online at **[surveymonkey.com/r/DocComm](https://surveymonkey.com/r/DocComm)** or you can scan the QR code below. If you aren't comfortable taking the survey online, you can call **617.562.5396** weekdays from 9 am to 4 pm. A staff member will talk you through it or mail a copy to you. We hope to report back on the results in a future issue of U Magazine. Thank you in advance for your help. ■



Scan QR code above  
to access our online survey





## What Does “Out of Network” Mean?

Most hospitals in Massachusetts and Rhode Island are in the US Family Health Plan network, but a few are not. You can find a complete list of our network facilities at **usfamilyhealth.org** (Click on “Our Network,” then on your region). Mass General Brigham and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (Boston) are among the facilities that are not in our network.

There may be some confusion when a provider is listed as a participant in the network but works out of more than one hospital. Please check the provider search (click on “Our Network,” then on “Find a Doctor”) to make sure both the provider and the facility are in the US Family Health Plan network or check with Member Services at **1.800.818.8589**.

Note also that a primary care provider may not be aware that an in-network specialist is using an out-of-network facility. Using an out-of-network facility or provider can significantly increase the cost to a member. ■



## PTSD

### Expert Online Information

If you or someone you care about has symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the National Center for PTSD at **ptsd.va.gov** provides resources. Whether the condition results from combat experience, sexual assault, or other trauma, you'll learn about symptoms and treatment, and you'll also learn how friends and family can help.

Free mobile apps include PTSD coach, PTSD Family Coach, and Beyond MST (for survivors of military sexual trauma). There's also a PTSD Treatment Decision Aid, and videos of veterans describing how PTSD has affected them and treatments that have worked. ■



*Brighton Marine is the nonprofit founding organization of US Family Health Plan. We're happy to introduce you to the new leader at their helm.*

# Welcoming Kristina Kaufmann

Chief Executive Officer of Brighton Marine, Inc.

Determination and hard work led Kristina Kaufmann from high school in New Rochelle, New York, to a gymnastics scholarship at the University of California, Berkeley. The same qualities informed her life as an Army spouse during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, inspiring her, along with Major General Alan Salisbury, USA, (Ret.), to build the Code of Support Foundation in 2011, a tech-forward nonprofit that helps military and veteran families navigate a complex system of support. Today she brings the same skills, drive, and ardent service ethic to her new role as Chief Executive Officer of Brighton Marine, Inc.

During a time of intensely difficult combat deployments for many service members, Kristy, like many military spouses, took on demanding volunteer responsibilities. At Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma, she served as a Family Readiness Group leader and participated in traditional military-spouse activities. But with rising rates of traumatic brain injury, suicide, combat stress, and family-relationship issues, she wanted more to be done to help service members, veterans, and their families. In 2009, the *Washington Post* published her article, "Army Families Under Fire."

The points she raised in that piece included the need for the Army to fund its mandated Family

Readiness Group directly, for Army directors to be willing to ask and listen, and for leadership at the unit level to step up and fulfill obligations for providing basic family support. "Our military families deserve better," she wrote.

Kristy's article touched a national nerve and brought recognition to deeply important issues. She was asked by the White House, the Pentagon, and Congress to provide additional insights about the mental health impact of war and repeated deployments on families. Working with the Code of Support Foundation, she parlayed her knowledge and strengths into practical support for the military community and those who serve it.

At Brighton Marine, Kristy will nurture and grow the organization's existing services to make sure that at-risk veterans and their families have a home and the wraparound support they need. She plans to dive deeply into identifying the most important needs of today's military community and tackle them head on. She also plans to foster the public-private partnerships that are key to meeting those needs.

"Coming to Brighton Marine and taking on Colonel Hawes's tradition of facilitating quality care for military families is truly compelling to me," she says. "Serving our community has always filled me with purpose, and the opportunity to scale impact in the region was a challenge I couldn't pass up." ■



# Do You Have Seasonal Allergies?

## Plan before you exercise

With warmer New England weather comes pollen season. To stay fit but avoid being waylaid by hay fever and other pollen allergies, keep this information from the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy in mind:

- **Watch the weather.** If it's dry and windy, exercise inside, either at a well-ventilated gym or on home equipment. During high pollen season, the best time to exercise outdoors is during or right after the rain.
- **Keep the time of day in mind.** Early morning dew helps to reduce the release of pollen.
- **Consider the kind of activity.** Outdoor yoga or walking are easier for the allergy-prone than something more strenuous like long runs. Be sure to shower afterward to remove pollen from your skin and hair, and wash your exercise clothing, too.
- **Use nasal saline spray after outdoor exercise** during pollen season to remove allergens from your nose.
- **Be aware that pollen exposure can trigger your asthma.** Exercise-induced asthma is caused by a narrowing of the lungs' airways. It can cause shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and other symptoms. Consider some preventative measures such as using your asthma medications (short-acting beta-2 agonists such as an albuterol inhaler) 10 minutes before exercising.
- **Avoid lawn mowers.** They kick up pollen and even mold. Steer clear where possible, which may mean crossing the street to avoid them. ■

### What's Today's Pollen Level?

The Weather Channel provides a 15-day allergy forecast. Go to **weather.com** and click on "more forecasts," then "allergy tracker." Pollen counts are categorized as tree, grass, or ragweed forecasts.





## Making a Warm-Weather First-Aid Kit

Spring means getting out and exploring. It also means cuts, scrapes, tick bites, and bee stings.

If you keep a first-aid kit in your car, you'll be prepared. Think of including:

- **Ibuprofen, Tylenol, and Benadryl**, including children's versions
- **30+ SPF sunblock**
- **Hydrocortisone cream**
- **Hand sanitizer**
- **Alcohol wipes**
- **ACE bandages**
- **Band-Aids**
- **Small scissors**
- **Ziploc bags**
- **Tweezers to remove splinters**

Remember to keep your kit inaccessible to young children. Store it in a locked glove compartment, for example. ■

*Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics/Healthy Children.*

## Is Screen Time Affecting Your Eyes?

If you're like most people, you spend much of your day looking at digital screens. And spending uninterrupted time with computers or cell phones can cause eye strain. Your vision may blur, and your eyes may feel dry and achy.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends taking these steps to reduce the impact:

- **Remember to blink.** Blinking helps distribute moisture to the eye's surface. Artificial tears can also refresh your eyes.
- **Follow the "20-20-20" rule.** Every 20 minutes, shift your eyes to look at something at least 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds.
- **Adjust screen brightness and contrast.** Adjust brightness to match the level of the light around you. Try increasing contrast, too.
- **If you wear contact lenses**, occasionally change to eyeglasses.

If your eyes are consistently red, blurry, watery, or become sensitive to light, talk with your health care provider. ■







# April is the Month of the Military Child

If you're the parent or caretaker of a military child, these resources can give you guidance about the special concerns of military families:

**National Military Family Association (NMFA)**  
**[militaryfamily.org](http://militaryfamily.org)**

The NMFA website provides information about childcare, education, and more, including the new *Field Guide to the Military Teen: A Guide to Military Teens by Military Teens for Communities with Military Teens*.

**Military Kids Connect**  
**[Militarykidsconnect.health.mil](http://Militarykidsconnect.health.mil)**

This site provides engaging tools and games that help children and teens prepare for the challenges around military family transitions. ■





# Simple Springtime Farro Salad

**Farro**, a whole-grain wheat, stays chewy after it's been cooked. Combined with your favorite spring vegetables—roasted, steamed, or raw, and tossed with a little olive oil and lemon juice—it makes an easy salad that's packed with fiber and nutrients.

The ingredients listed here play well together, but don't be afraid to substitute your own favorite chopped vegetables. If you don't have fresh ones on hand, remember that frozen vegetables, especially peas, after you've given them a quick simmer, are a great addition.



*Makes 2 large servings*

1½ cups dry pearled farro

3 cups water

½ cup olive oil

1 tablespoon lemon juice

10 asparagus stalks, washed, roasted, and cut into 1-inch pieces

1 yellow bell pepper, rinsed, dried, and chopped

1 red bell pepper, rinsed, dried, and chopped

2 handfuls salad greens, rinsed, dried, and slightly torn

Bring the 3 cups of water to a boil, add the farro, reduce to a simmer, and cook for the amount of time specified on the package. Drain, then transfer the grains to a salad bowl.

While the farro is still warm, drizzle the olive oil and then the lemon juice over the top, and toss slightly.

After the farro has cooled, add the asparagus and bell pepper pieces, and toss slightly. Line two smaller bowls with the torn greens and spoon the farro-vegetable mixture over the top. ■



*at ease*

Service is the rent we pay  
for the privilege of living  
on this earth.

— Shirley Chisholm, member of the  
U.S. Congress, 1969–1983





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## Look Up!

Because my husband is a birdwatcher, I've gotten into the habit, too. Now I can tell the difference between a red-tailed hawk and a Cooper's hawk, a sparrow and a wren, a mourning dove and a catbird. I also know where the great blue herons hang out at Mt. Auburn Cemetery, 174 acres that straddle the line between Watertown and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a paradise for birds.

If you'd like to get your birdwatching bearings this spring, the free Merlin® app from the Cornell Ornithology Lab at [merlin.allaboutbirds.org](https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org) helps you identify birds from their sounds and lets you build a digital "life list." The National Audubon Society's free Bird Guide app at [audubon.org](https://audubon.org) (click on "Birds & Guides") provides information about over 800 species of North American birds.

Do you have tips for birdwatchers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island? Let me know at [kerry.tucker@usfamilyhealth.org](mailto:kerry.tucker@usfamilyhealth.org) and I'll share them with other members in an upcoming issue.

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[usfamilyhealth.org](https://usfamilyhealth.org)

