



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 14, 2017

Contact: Cynthia Townsend
cynthia.townsend@globalhealth.com
(Office) 918.878.7335

Oklahoma HMO provides tips to detect and manage rheumatoid arthritis

GlobalHealth helps raise awareness of rheumatoid arthritis among Oklahomans

OKLAHOMA – Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is the most common form of autoimmune arthritis, affecting more than 1.3 million Americans, and 75 percent of those affected are women, according to the American College of Rheumatology. RA can cause a person’s immune system to attack healthy cells by mistake, which results in painful swelling in the affected parts of the body. GlobalHealth, a health maintenance organization (HMO) based in Oklahoma, is providing awareness tips and educational materials for early detection and management of the disease.

“RA is a chronic disease that causes joint pain, stiffness, swelling and decreased movement of the joints,” said Dr. Wesley Williams, medical director at GlobalHealth. “In some cases, this disease also affects organs, such as eyes, skin or lungs. Fortunately, RA can be effectively treated and managed with medication and self-management strategies that help patients reduce pain, allowing them to pursue the activities important to them.”

To help, GlobalHealth is offering the following tips:

Get tested. RA can be detected early on by conducting a variety of tests, including blood evaluations and X-rays. Blood tests can help identify the following signs of RA: CBC-Anemia (low red blood cell count); Rheumatoid factor (an antibody, or blood protein, found in approximately 80 percent of patients with RA in time, but in as few as 30 percent of them at the start of arthritis); Antibodies, pieces of proteins called citrullinated peptides (anti-CPP) found in 60-70 percent of patients with RA; and elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR), a blood test that, in most patients with RA, confirms the amount of inflammation in the joints.

Learn arthritis self-management strategies. Learning proper self-management techniques will help you manage pain, exercise safely and take charge of your condition.

Be active. Research shows that physical activity decreases pain, improves function and delays disability. Patients experiencing RA symptoms should consult with their doctor before engaging

in physical activity; however, it is generally recommended that patients undertake 30 minutes of moderate activity at least five times per week.

Watch your weight. Maintaining a healthy weight can limit disease progression and activity limitation. For every pound lost, for instance, there is a four-pound reduction in the load exerted on the knee. Moderate weight loss can also help reduce pain and disability for RA patients.

See your doctor. Early diagnosis and professionally guided disease management is critical to maintaining a good quality of life, particularly with people with RA. Essential disease modifying drugs are also beneficial and available by prescription. Consult with your physician to ensure the most adequate treatment based on your needs.

About GlobalHealth

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering more than 44,000 individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with each member, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved healthcare as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state and education employees, federal employees, municipal employees and Medicare Advantage members. GlobalHealth employs more than 250 associates throughout Oklahoma. To learn more, visit www.GlobalHealth.com.

###