



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Cynthia Townsend  
[cynthia.townsend@globalhealth.com](mailto:cynthia.townsend@globalhealth.com)  
(Office) 918.878.7335

## **GlobalHealth Provides Tips to Oklahomans on How to Stay Out of the Hospital this Winter**

*With COVID-19 hospitalizations at an all-time peak, Oklahoman Medicare beneficiaries should take steps to maintain their health*

**OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.** – GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health insurer, is raising awareness about how Oklahomans, especially Medicare beneficiaries, can take steps to maintain their health to minimize the chance of being hospitalized this winter. With Oklahoma COVID-19 hospitalizations at all-time peak, it is critical for Medicare beneficiaries to take care of their health.

At the time of this release, the Oklahoma State Department of Health website reported 95% of ICU beds are in use across the state and there is a high risk of hospital overload as cases increase. Now more than ever, it is important for you and your loved ones to take steps to reduce the risk of hospitalizations. Medication adherence, keeping current with recommended immunizations and vaccines, quitting smoking, and reducing the risk of falls all help to reduce your risk.

“As part of our mission to help our members reach their optimal health, GlobalHealth has care managers who proactively call to check in, person to person,” said Scott Vaughn, President and CEO at GlobalHealth. “We use predictive modeling data to help us identify those members that could likely have an emergent event and we reach out in advance to help prevent it from happening.”

GlobalHealth is providing a checklist to help Oklahomans stay out of the hospital.

### **1. Get your flu and pneumonia vaccinations.**

The seasonal flu impacts millions of people in the U.S. each year. In Oklahoma, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health, nearly 90 deaths and 3,600 hospitalizations were reported for the 2019-2020 flu season. The flu is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and, in some cases, death. Every flu season is different, but millions of people get the flu every year, with hundreds of thousands being hospitalized and tens of thousands dying from flu-related cases. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to help protect against influenza. Another serious illness with a recommended vaccine is pneumococcal disease, or pneumonia. The disease is common in young children, but older adults are at the

greatest risk of serious illness and death.

**2. Take your medication when and how your physician prescribed them.**

Taking your medications as prescribed is important in helping control long-term chronic conditions and improving your overall health and well-being. The easiest way to stay on track with your medications is to set up a routine for when you take them.

- Make taking medications part of your morning or bedtime routine or with meals.
- Use pill organizers that can hold up to a week's worth of medications at a time. Some pill organizers have space for medications for up to four times a day.
- Ask your pharmacy if they offer services to pre-package your medications that show the day and time to be taken.
- If you like smart phone apps, both Apple and Android systems have medication reminder apps available for free.
- Talk with your physician or pharmacist if you are having problems paying for your medications. They can help you decide if there are less expensive options such as generics and they may know about medication assistance programs.
- 90-day prescriptions, automatic refills and mail order are other ways to save money and help ensure that you don't run out of your medications.

**3. Quit smoking and manage your Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).**

According to the American Lung Association, COPD is the third-leading disease-related cause of death in America and killed more than 156,000 in 2018. Approximately 75% of COPD deaths are attributed to cigarette smoking per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). So, the most important first step to reduce risk of COPD is to quit smoking. Avoid exposure to air pollutants in your home, which includes secondhand smoke, as well as toxic fumes in the workplace.

**4. Reduce your risk of falling.**

Falls can result in hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries and may often require hospitalization. In fact, the CDC states that over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury. According to the National Council on Aging, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for people 65 and older. As you get older, age-related changes can impair the systems in your body that are involved in maintaining balance and stability. Other factors can also increase your risk of falling, such as walking on a slippery surface, hurrying to answer the phone, or moving around in a new home. Some medications may make you feel drowsy, cause dizziness or may cause blurred vision, all of which may increase your risk of falling. Follow these tips to prevent falls:

- Staying active helps you lower your risk of falling. Simple activities and exercises improve your strength, balance, coordination, and flexibility.
- Wear sensible shoes and avoid shoes with slick heels or walking in slippery socks. Wear properly fitting, sturdy shoes with non-skid soles and skid-resistant socks when you are walking around without shoes.
- It is also important to get your vision checked regularly and ensure your vision prescription is up to date. Wear glasses or contact lenses as advised by your health care provider.
- Make your home safer by removing items from walkways, repairing loose floorboards and carpeting, storing clothes, food and other necessities within easy reach, and using non-slip mats in your bath or shower. Ask a friend or family member to do a walk-through of your home to ensure it is clear of potential hazards.

- You should also keep your home brightly lit to help avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see. Always turn on lights before going up or down the stairs, place a lamp within reach of your bed and make clear paths to light switches.
- It is recommended that those 65 and older schedule a fall risk assessment annually. This assessment can also be coordinated at the same time as your Medicare Annual Wellness Visit.

### **About GlobalHealth**

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma by providing genuine care and optimal health for the members it serves. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health insurance provider covering individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with its members, 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 health care as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes individuals who are eligible for Medicare, state, education and municipal employees and federal employees. To learn more, visit [www.GlobalHealth.com](http://www.GlobalHealth.com).

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