EMERGENCY ROOM or URGENT CARE?

If you’re faced with a sudden illness, accident or emergency situation requiring medical attention should you head for the nearest hospital or should you seek out an urgent care center? Here are some helpful guidelines to help you decide…

The Emergency Room

In life threatening situations such as severe or sudden pain, difficulty breathing, or sudden numbness in the arms or legs, the only option is to go straight to the emergency room or contact 9-1-1 for emergency assistance.

Under the Natural Select program, a $100 co-payment applies to Emergency Room visits that do not result in admission to the hospital or are not the result of accidental injury (union represented employees’ benefits may differ). If you have HAP HMO the co-payment is waived if admitted to the hospital but not for accidental injury.

The Urgent Care

If you are faced with a non-life threatening situation, for example rash or skin irritations, sprains and strains, ear infections or animal bites you might consider an Urgent Care Center. If in question, you can call ahead. Urgent Care Centers can provide treatment for a variety of illnesses and minor injuries in a much more cost effective manner than a hospital emergency room. Urgent Care Centers typically have evening and weekend hours, and require less waiting time to see a doctor. In addition, the co-payment is typically the same as a regular office visit when you use an Urgent Care facility. If in doubt, call ahead.

Many of Oakland County’s medical plans offer a 24/7 nurse-line. You can also utilize this service as another source of information of whether you should select an Emergency Room or an Urgent Care Center.

Additional guidelines for determining Emergency Room vs. Urgent Care can be found at: http://www.urgentcare.org/UrgentCareDefined/ERvsUrgentCare/tabid/253/Default.aspx.

For a listing of urgent care centers through Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan: Go to www.bcbsm.com and select Find a Doctor.

For a listing of urgent care centers through HAP HMO: Go to www.HAP.org and select Find a Doctor/Facility.

For a listing of urgent care centers through ASR: Go to www.ASRhealthbenefits.com and select Search for Providers. Note: Providers may be in the Physician’s Care/HAP, CIGNA, or Multiplan networks.

NOTE: This article has been provided for informational purposes only. Your decision on where you should go should not be made based strictly off the general guidelines provided here.