



Winter Cardiovascular Wellness

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Heart Disease Overview

- Coronary artery disease
- Heart failure
- Cardiomyopathy
- Congenital heart disease
- Myocardial infarction
- Heart valve dysfunction
- Cardiac arrhythmia
- Endocarditis
- Myocarditis
- Pericarditis

(Harvard Medical School, n.d.)

Causes of Heart Disease

- High cholesterol
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Family history of cardiac disease
- Illicit drug use
- Smoking
- Poor dentition
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Chronic inflammation
- Congenital

(Harvard Medical School, n.d. & Duquesne University, 2024)

IDD & Heart Disease

✔ Down Syndrome

✔ Turner Syndrome

(Duquesne University, 2024)



Symptoms of Heart Disease

- Fatigue
- Unexplained aches & pains
- Shortness of breath
- Swollen extremities
- Heart palpitations
- Chest pain
- Persistent coughing
- Asymptomatic
- Nausea
- New onset confusion
- Irritability
- Diaphoresis
- Weakness
- Dizziness



(Harvard Medical School, n.d. & Independent Living Association, Inc., 2023)

Prevent Heart Disease



CONTROL
BLOOD
PRESSURE



DIET



EXERCISE



HEALTHY
WEIGHT



SLEEP



SMOKING
CESSATION



LIMIT
ALCOHOL

(Harvard Medical School, n.d. & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024)

How Does Winter Weather Affect the Heart?



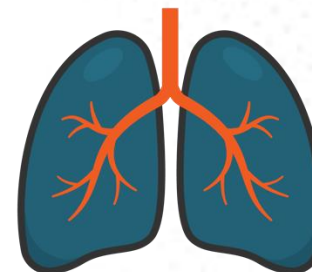
Cold air results in peripheral constriction of blood vessels to prevent heat loss and shunt blood to the core.

As blood vessels shrink, resistance increases, raising blood pressure.



Cold temperatures cause blood to thicken.

Individuals are more prone to blood clots.



Cold weather results in inflammation of airways and shortness of breath.

Placing further stress on the cardiovascular system.

The Perfect Storm

The strain of shoveling heavy snow is similar to the stress of a treadmill stress test.

- Arm work is more taxing than leg exercise.
- When lifting heavy snow we hold our breath, increasing blood pressure and heart rate.
- Cold air constricts blood vessels, raising blood pressure and constricting coronary arteries.

(American Heart Association, 2025)



Who is at an increased risk of complications related to the weather?

- ✔ Individuals with lower muscle mass.
- ✔ People who have underlying blood clotting or circulatory conditions.
- ✔ Those who may be forgetful or have a cognitive delay.
- ✔ Individuals who struggle to communicate.
- ✔ People with conditions that make it difficult to regulate temperature.

(Williamson, 2025)

How to Maintain Temperature?



APPROPRIATE
CLOTHING



WARM
BEVERAGES



STAYING
ACTIVE WHILE
OUTSIDE



EXTRA
BLANKETS

(Williamson, 2025)

HOW CAN PHP SUPPORT THE CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH OF THE IDD POPULATION?

What is Partners Health Plan?



Partners Health Plan is a not-for-profit health plan, dedicated solely to providing supports and services for persons with Intellectual and other Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

PHP-FIDA IDD has been operational since April 2016. PHP is governed by 3 entities: CMS, DOH and OPWDD. PHP incorporates all the benefits of a CCO and a mainstream health plan.

Eligibility requirements:

- Must have Medicare and Medicaid
- Must be **21 years or older** at the time of the enrollment
- Must reside in the PHP catchment area (NYC, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland)
- Must be eligible for OPWDD services and Determined to be eligible for ICF-IID level of care

Two-Person Care Coordination Team



Families always have a person to contact that is familiar with their loved one.

Our CM Team will expedite authorizations and ensure that the member keeps their Medicare/Medicaid coverage renewed and active. Ongoing assessment ensures that members changing needs are met and addressed.

- **Care Manager:** QIDP level staff, responsible for completion of IAM assessments, Life Plans, DDP-2, LCEDs, primary contact for a member, coordinates services (transportation, medical appointments, etc.), advocates on member's behalf, authorizes waiver and other services
- **Clinical Team Leader:** licensed professional (RN, LMSW/LCSW, Psychologist, LMHC), direct supervisor for CM, responsible for clinical aspects of care, transitions of care, primary contact for high needs members

PHP Benefits and Services



PHP integrates medical, behavioral health, dental, waiver and long-term services including:

- OPWDD Waiver Services – PHP CM Team approves the services (not OPWDD)
- Medical, Dental, Vision, Pharmacy coverage
- Behavioral Health
- Audiology
- Long term support (PCA, CDPAS home care)
- Durable Medical and Adaptive Equipment
- Non-Emergency Transportation for community members
- OTC cards for community members
- Telemedicine Visits and 24-hours Nursing Line available

Value Added Benefits for PHP Members



OTC Flex Card – helps save money for families

- \$150 month towards food or OTC items at store or pharmacy
- Prepared microwavable meal delivery and fresh produce boxes also available
- Can be used at: Stop & Shop, Lidl, BJ's, C-Town, Walmart, Dollar Tree and smaller stores
- \$65 month towards utilities (rent, phone bill, electric) carries over and accumulates

Transportation exceeds typical Medicaid benefit – we provide:

- 120 rides a year to supermarket
- 24 rides to community events (church, SEMP)
- Easy website/phone call to arrange transportation with Ride Health

Dental

- BeneCare is new dental provider
- Enable Dental provides at-home dental care for qualified members

PHP Enrollment Process



PHP enrollment is voluntary and Members can disenroll at any time

- Enrollments are managed by NY Medicaid Choice at **1-844-343-2433** (TTY: 1-888-329-1541)
- Help is available Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM, and Saturday, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
- Enrollments are done via phone

PHP has an Outreach Team that can provide education and answer all plan benefits questions.

- Our team will qualify the providers used and facilitate the enrollment as well
- Team is led by Annrose Bacani, Director of Outreach and Enrollment abacani@phpcares.org
- PHP website is www.phpcares.org for more information

References

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- **Harvard Medical School. (n.d.).** Heart disease: Knowing different types and how to prevent it. Harvard Health Publishing. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/heart-disease>
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- **Williamson, L. (2025, January 3).** What cold weather does to the body and how to protect yourself this winter. American Heart Association. <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2025/01/03/what-cold-weather-does-to-the-body-and-how-to-protect-yourself-this-winter>



Q&A





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