

Health Policy Newsletter

Volume 13 Number 1

March, 2000

Article 8

Premier Years Launches throughout the Jefferson Health System

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Suggested Citation:

Casey M. *Premier Years* launches throughout the Jefferson Health System. *Health Policy Newsletter* 2000; 13(1): Article 8. Retrieved [date] from <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/hpn/vol13/iss1/8>.

Premier Years Launches throughout the Jefferson Health System

The leadership of the Jefferson Health System (JHS) has long recognized the importance of building relationships with older adults. One of the largest and most comprehensive senior membership programs in the Mid-Atlantic region, Premier Years, has been in place at Albert Einstein Healthcare Network for over 12 years. The Jefferson Health System has chosen to implement this program system-wide.

Premier Years, a free wellness membership program for people 55 and older, was launched throughout the JHS on October 15, 1999. The program provides members with benefits such as monthly health screenings and lectures, health and wellness information, a quarterly newsletter, notary service, low prices on prescriptions, and discounts on retail products. Medical insurance counseling is another valued benefit. Members can call with questions or make an appointment to meet with a counselor to discuss insurance options, review a current policy, or receive help with claims filing. In addition, each member organization of the JHS offers a site-specific package to meet the needs of their community. Some of the benefits provided by the organizations are discounts on parking, cafeteria, and gift shop prices; free Internet access; resource lending libraries; and fitness programs.

Premier Years' site managers help to develop, implement, and evaluate programs and benefits within the JHS service regions. Site managers, in the western suburbs; in center city; in north, northwest and northeast Philadelphia; and in lower Bucks County, serve the community in these areas and are available to help members by phone or in person. The goals of Premier Years are twofold: to promote health by educating members about topics related to physical, emotional, psychosocial, and spiritual wellness; as well as to empower members to effectively utilize JHS services. In doing so, Premier Years will highlight JHS senior services and help to strengthen the current relationship between the JHS and the older adult population. In 1997, a study commissioned by the JHS predicted that office visits and inpatient admissions would increase 35% in the population belonging to a senior membership program. It is anticipated that Premier Years will help to increase business for inpatient, outpatient, and ambulatory services.

Members of existing senior clubs in the JHS were automatically converted to Premier Years so that the program began with over 60,000 active members. It is anticipated that 22,000 new members will be recruited by the end of fiscal year 2000. Recruitment efforts included direct mail to 90,000 persons over age 60 living in the JHS service area. It is expected, however, that the majority of new members will be recruited through grassroots marketing carried out by Premier Years' regional site managers.

Internally, recruitment is taking place at JHS organizations. Employees, board members, and auxiliary members are encouraged to register themselves, their family, their friends, and their patients. Recruitment is also taking place within senior housing, senior centers, physician offices, churches, and synagogues as well as at health fairs, health screenings, and special events. New members can register for Premier Years in person with a site manager, with the direct mail brochure, on the

Maureen Casey: Premier Years Launches throughout the Jefferson Health System

Jefferson Health System Web site (www.jeffersonhealth.org/premieryears), or by calling 1-888-JEFF-777.

About the Author

Maureen Casey is the Director of Premier Years. She works at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in the Jefferson Health System