

1 Welcome to BCHC

Your Medical Home



Thank you for choosing Berks Community Health Center (BCHC) as your medical home.

This booklet gives you information about being a patient at BCHC and what it means to have us as your medical home. Please keep it handy.

Having a primary care medical home means everyone works as a team.

You are the most important person on your health care team.

We get to know you and your health concerns so we can offer you the best possible care. We will work together to help you make better choices to improve your health.

If you are getting ready for your first appointment see #4 on page 2

TO #4

2 What Health Care Services Does BCHC Offer?

BCHC welcomes newborns through seniors to our primary care practice. Primary care providers aim to help people live longer, healthier lives and achieve better control of any chronic medical problems. Chronic health problems include conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and asthma.

BCHC care delivery is based on guidelines from some of our country's leading experts who practice medicine at top medical centers and universities. In addition, we use information from world-leading organizations like the American Academy of Family Practice, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control, and state experts like the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition to help guide our practice.

BCHC offers these primary care services:

Adult care

- Preventive health and wellness
- Care of chronic medical problems
- Work, driver's and other physicals
- After hospital and emergency room follow-up care
- Preventive dental care for adults

Pediatric Care

- First/newborn visits
- Annual, school and sports physicals
- Vaccinations
- Sick visits
- Preventive dental care for kids

Specialty Care

Podiatry: Care of your feet by a specially trained doctor.

Behavioral Health: If you need to talk with someone about your emotional health, we have professionals who can help.

Women's health care

- Annual gynecological exams and cancer screenings
- Family planning services
- Pregnancy testing
- Prenatal/obstetric care

Labs

The draw station at BCHC is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM.

• Most BCHC patients can have blood drawn right here, as long as the tests were ordered by one of our providers. If the labs can be done the same day as your visit, the lab is right down the hall. If you need the lab work before your next visit, there's no need to make a lab appointment. Just come any time that the lab is open to have your blood drawn. It's that simple!

Some insurance companies assign patients to another lab, so please check your insurance card to see if you must go somewhere else. Ask at the front desk if you are not sure.

3



How To Schedule A Visit

BCHC sees patients at the time of their scheduled visits. Each day, a number of appointments are available for same-day visits. This allows us to see patients who are sick and need to be seen that same day.

If You Are Sick

If you are having a serious or life-threatening emergency, you should call **911** or go directly to the nearest Emergency Room.

If you or your child is sick, call your Nurse Care Coordinator. You can also call the main number:

610-988-4838

and **press #2** for the Sick Line. If a nurse does not answer, leave a message with your name, date of birth, your symptoms and the phone number for a return call.

If You Need A Routine Or Well Visit

If you or your child is not sick but needs a routine visit, well child check or physical, call your Patient Services Representative (PSR). If your PSR does not answer, leave a message with your name, date of birth, reason for the visit and your phone number for a return call.

Special Visits

• Annual well visits for children:

Even if not needed for school, we want to see each child age 2 and older at least once a year. Younger infants and children will need to be seen more often to make sure they are up to date with their vaccines. Call to schedule these visits two to three months ahead of time, especially during peak times such as return to school.

• “Welcome to Medicare” visit:

If you are in the first year of being covered by Medicare, you can receive a very thorough exam intended to make sure that all preventive care tests are done and any vaccines you need are given. Schedule this visit as soon as you receive your Medicare card. After your “Welcome to Medicare” visit you should schedule a wellness exam at least once a year.

• Annual GYN Exam:

This is an important visit for every woman to make sure that you are free from any signs of breast or cervical cancer. We can also discuss pregnancy planning and screening for sexually transmitted infection.

4



Before Your First Visit To BCHC

If you are coming for your first visit, please fill in all of the forms included with this booklet ahead of time, including:

- Registration form
- Medical History form
- Permitted Contacts form
- Medical Record Release Authorization, so we can get records from your previous provider

Make sure to bring these forms with you to your first visit.

For every visit, you should always bring:

- Your health insurance card(s)
- A valid photo ID, such as driver’s license, state-issued ID, or military ID
- A list of your current medications
- Any co-payment required by your insurance

If you do not have insurance, we will schedule you to

meet with a member of our staff who will review your situation. Please see more information in section #9 titled “How to Pay for Care at BCHC” on page 4. Please keep in mind that some insurance plans require that you have Berks Community Health Center, or one of our providers, listed on your insurance card. Please call your insurance company’s Member Services Department at the number listed on the card to make sure you have chosen BCHC. This choice must be effective before your first visit.

If you cannot afford your co-pays, deductibles or other out-of-pocket costs because of your financial situation, you can still receive care at BCHC. We have a Sliding Fee Discount Program based on income and family size. Please see more information in section #10 titled “Sliding Fee Discount Program” on page 4.

Someone from BCHC may try to contact you a few days before your first visit to review information with you.



We have Spanish translators on staff. We also use a phone translation service for other languages. If you need an American sign language interpreter please let us know so we can make sure one is here for your visit.

5 Your Care Team



As a BCHC patient, you will choose your Primary Care Provider (PCP). This is the doctor or nurse practitioner who you will see for your regular visits. If you are sick, we will try to schedule you to see your own provider, but that may not always be possible.

Your PCP works with the members of your health care team to manage your care with other doctors and hospitals. Other members of your BCHC health care team include your:

- **Patient Services Representative (PSR):** This person greets you and signs you in when you arrive, checks that the information we have in our system is correct and gets any paperwork signed that we need. They will check you out after your visit and help make appointments for tests and other doctor's offices.
- **Medical Assistant (MA):** This person takes you to the clinical area, and gets you ready to see your doctor or nurse practitioner. They will also help you with any referrals for specialists and x-rays or other tests you may need.
- **Nurse Care Coordinator (NCC):** This person works closely with your PCP to manage your care. They will also meet with you in between your regular visits to review your health care goals and track your progress. Call your Nurse Care Coordinator if you have questions about any of your health care needs between visits.

6 Your Role On The Health Care Team



Remember, you are the most important person on your health care team. Here's what you can do to take charge of your health and help your team provide you the best care:

- Give us as much information as possible about your health.
- Come to all visits. If you cannot come to a scheduled visit, please call at least 24 hours before to let us know.
- Tell us about all pills you take, including those ordered by other doctors and those you just buy yourself.
- Try and follow the plan your PCP has ordered for you. Do not stop taking any medications or change the dose without talking to us first.
- When not feeling well after hours try calling us first. Talk to us before going to an urgent care or the emergency room (unless it is a true emergency). Even if BCHC is closed, call our main number at:

610-988-4838

You can always reach one of our providers after hours for advice and direction over the phone.

- Of course, if you are having serious, life-threatening symptoms, call **911** and go to the nearest Emergency Room.

We are here to work with you and give you the support you need.

Free Classes And Programs

BCHC offers many health and wellness programs all year long. They are free and open to the whole community. Classes focus on areas of interest to patients at BCHC such as ways to control diabetes, lower blood pressure, cope with depression and quit smoking. Please check the Free Programs Calendar at BCHC to see what is available. And, ask your Health Care Team members which classes might help you achieve your self-management goals!

7 **If You Can't Keep Your Appointment**

Every patient receives a phone call 2 to 3 days before your scheduled visit at the phone number you have told us you prefer. This is to remind you of your upcoming visit. If you have given us a phone number for text reminders, or an email address, you can receive a reminder by those methods, too.

We know that there may be times when you need to cancel or change a visit. Please call us at least 24 hours before the visit to let us know. This way we can give the appointment time to another patient who needs to see their doctor or nurse practitioner.

If you give us less than 24 hour's notice, the canceled or missed visit will be marked as a "No Show." We will send you a letter each time that you have a visit that is marked as a "No Show."

If you have three "No Shows" in any 12-month period, you will be placed on the No Show List. When this happens, you will no longer be able to make appointments in advance. When you need to be seen for routine or sick care, you will have to come in that day and wait for a space to open up on the schedule of one of the providers. There is no guarantee that a space will be available on that day, or that you will be able to see your own Provider. In order to avoid this, please make sure to come to your appointments.

If you are more than 20 minutes late for a visit, it may not be possible for your Provider to see you that day. If this happens, we will work with you to schedule another visit.



8 **Your Medical Record And Privacy**

All of the information about your care at BCHC is stored in a computerized medical record system. We protect your health information and follow all the privacy laws and regulations.

We will need you to fill in a form giving us the name and contact information of anyone who is allowed to see or hear your private health information. We need you to tell us in writing who can drop off and pick up items like forms, test orders, referrals and prescriptions. Only someone listed on the form will be able to get anything from BCHC for you.

You may ask for a copy of your medical record for yourself, or ask to have a copy sent to someone you choose.

There may be a fee for the copy. You can get the form to request medical records at the front desk.

If you have any questions about your medical record, we are here to help you. You can reach Medical Records directly at 610-988-4838, extension 1035.

9 **How To Pay For Care At BCHC**

BCHC provides care to all, regardless of income, insurance status, or ability to pay.

We accept Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, and most of the insurances in our area such as Amerihealth Caritas, Gateway and UPMC.

If your insurance has a co-pay (an amount set by your insurance company that you pay for each office visit), you will be asked to pay that at the time of service. We will bill your insurance and send you a statement for any balance.

If you have questions about your bill, a payment plan, insurance or any other money matter, our Billing staff is here to help you. You can call the Billing Department directly at **(610) 988-4838**, extension **1034**.

10 **Sliding Fee Discount Program**

BCHC is a Community Health Center. It is our mission to ensure that health care is available and affordable for anyone who needs it. At registration, we will ask you to tell us your family or household size and annual income. These questions will help us determine whether you can receive a discount on the cost of your care at BCHC. This is called the Sliding Fee Discount Program. If you qualify for one of the levels of discount, you will pay less than what your care costs. Based on income and family size, we will apply the discount to your out-of-pocket costs, insurance deductibles and co-pays.

In order to use the Sliding Fee Discount Program, you must complete an application. So, whether or not you have insurance, please get information from your Patient Services Representative about the Sliding Fee Discount Program.

11 **Prescriptions**

You may be eligible for a prescription program through BCHC that will have your medications delivered right to your door. Ask a member of your Health Care Team for information.

Save this booklet so you always have the information below when you need us.



● “Welcome Home” My BCHC Health Care Team

My Provider is _____

My Nurse Care Coordinator (NCC) is _____

and can be reached at 610-988-4838 x _____

I will call my NCC if I:

- Am sick and may need to see my PCP
- Have questions regarding my health care goals

My Medical Assistant (MA) is _____

and can be reached at 610-988-4838 x _____

I will call my MA if I:

- Need a refill on a medication before my next visit
- Need assistance with a test, procedure or referral to a specialist

My Patient Services Representative (PSR) is _____

and can be reached at 610-988-4838 x _____

I will call my PSR if I:

- Need to cancel or reschedule my appointment at BCHC
- Change my address, phone number or health insurance
- Want information on the Sliding Fee Discount Program
- Want to check the status of a form I have asked my Provider to fill out



CLOSED If You Need Care and BCHC Is Not Open

When BCHC is closed, there is always one of our providers on call by phone. Please call BCHC’s main number at 610-988-4838. Our on-call provider will give you advice and direction by phone.

Of course, if you are having a serious or life-threatening emergency, you should call 911 or go directly to the nearest Emergency Room.



When Is BCHC Open?

Monday.....7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Tuesday.....7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Wednesday.....7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thursday.....7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday.....7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday.....9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Once in a while, there may be a day when we have to open later or close earlier. We will post signs with any change. If the change affects your next visit we will call you.



The lab at BCHC is open

Monday through Friday from
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM.



Important Phone Numbers

BCHC Main Number... 610-988-4838

Billing DepartmentExtension 1034

Medical Records.....Extension 1035

**We are on
the web**

www.berkschc.org

Find out what’s happening at BCHC (and like us!) on **Facebook**:

www.facebook.com/berkschc



Our Mission:

Berks Community Health Center provides exceptional patient-centered primary and preventive healthcare for all residents of Berks County, regardless of economic status.

Our Vision:

We are committed to improving the health of our community through the delivery and coordination of affordable, comprehensive, culturally sensitive patient- and family-centered healthcare.

Our Values:

Respect for People, Quality, Integrity, Community Focus

