



Web Project Albemarle County - Adult Education



HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN ALBEMARLE COUNTY

A Publication for ESOL Residents in Albemarle County

The American Healthcare System

Healthcare and Public Safety in
Albemarle County

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Although the healthcare system in the United States is one of the most advanced in the world, it can be very confusing and intimidating to those from other countries. Like other aspects of American life, the healthcare system is more individualized and less centralized than in most other countries. Healthcare decisions are made by patients, their doctors, and, in some cases, their health insurance provider. Health insurance is very important because the costs of healthcare are very high. Most people have healthcare, and some-

times dental care, insurance through their work. Employees can choose a plan for only him/herself, a plan that includes a spouse, or a family plan that covers the entire family. The cost of employee plans is still high, but because it is part of a group, it is less expensive than buying private individual coverage. Low income patients have access to a variety of government supported healthcare plans, like Medicare and Medicaid. The American healthcare system is the subject of a lot of debate. Changes are being discussed at all



levels, and no one is satisfied 100%. But if you learn as much as possible about the options, you will be more comfortable if you need a doctor's care.

How to Find a Doctor

There are many different methods of finding a doctor in the United States. The choice will often be dependent upon whether you have insurance or not.

Insured Patients

If you are covered by insurance, either through your employer or on your own, the insurance company will provide you with a list of participating doctors. From this list, you can make a decision for a Primary Care Physician (PCP). The best way to choose a PCP is to ask

friends or colleagues. They will be able to tell you their opinions about the different doctors they have seen. Many policies require you to have a PCP. If you need to see a specialist for any reason, many insurance providers require a recommendation or referral from your PCP before you can see the specialist.

Uninsured Patients

If you are not covered by insurance the choices become much more limited. Many doctors will not see patients that are not covered unless

they can pay for the visit the same day. If you cannot pay and do not have insurance, there are options. There are different clinics available for disadvantaged families that provide services based upon income. This means that if you have a low income, your fee will be reduced or you will not be charged anything. For the Charlottesville and Albemarle areas, the Thomas Jefferson Health District provides services to those who are uninsured. For further information, please call (434)972-6269 or visit at 1139 Rose Hill Dr.

Healthcare Facilities in Central Virginia

We are very lucky to have two excellent hospitals in this area. Both **Martha Jefferson Hospital** and the **University of Virginia's Health System** have been recognized nationally for excellence. Which hospital to use will depend primarily on who your doctor is and what the medical condition is that needs to be treated. If there is a very complicated, rare, or experimental treatment, the patient would generally go to the University Hospital. More routine procedures are typically done at Martha Jefferson. Both have excellent websites and publications, and they both can refer you to a doctor. For Martha Jefferson, the website is:

www.marthajeffererson.org and the number to call for a referral to a doctor is: Health Connection at (434)982-7009 or toll free at 1-888-652-6663. The University Hospital's website is: www.med.virginia.edu and the number to call for a referral is (434) 924-DOCS. The University has a Spanish-speaking nurse practitioner for general obstetrics and routine gynecological care (434) 924-1669. The University also has an International Family Medicine Clinic. For more information call (434) 243-6635. The **Thomas Jefferson Health District** on Rose Hill Drive also offers comprehensive healthcare services. Among many

other things, they offer an immunization clinic to provide current vaccinations. The **Charlottesville Free Clinic** provides non-emergency treatment to working people with no health insurance or access to free health services. For more information call (434)296-5525 or visit www.cvillefreeclinic.org. The **American Red Cross** www.centralvirginia.redcross.org located at 1105 Rose Hill Drive, provides emergency help in the case of natural disasters or national emergencies. The Red Cross phone number is: (434)979-7143.



JAUNT provides transportation to local residents including those who are disabled: (434)296-3184.



Child Safety Seat

For more information on Child Safety Seats, visit the National SAFE KIDS Campaign website at www.safekids.org

Child Health and Safety

One of the most important issues in today's society is the health and safety of our children. There are many different steps that we can take to insure proper care of our children.

Pediatrician Visits

Having regularly scheduled visits with your child's doctor is one of the most important things that you can do to protect your child. The doctor will make sure that your children are up to date on their immunizations, which protect them from various diseases, as well as ensure that your children are receiving all of the nutrition and nourishment that they need. Pediatricians may also be able to answer questions that you have about other aspects of child health. If you cannot afford to take your children to a private pediatrician for their vaccinations, please contact the Thomas Jefferson Health District, 1139 Rose Hill Drive, in Charlottesville. Their phone number is (434)972-6269.

Child Safety

There are many ways that you can protect your children from the dangers of today's society. First, teach them their full name, phone number, including the area code, full address, and how to call 911 for help in an emergency situation. If they know this information they will be much more likely to reach you if they get lost or meet some danger. You should also teach them about strangers and how they can be dangerous. Tell them to always travel with a friend if they are going somewhere. Also, if they ever do get into a situation where they are uncomfortable, tell them to shout "fire" or "911", not "help." People will be more likely to respond and help if they hear those two words.

Another important aspect of your children's safety is their car safety seat. Virginia law requires that children under the age of 8 be restrained in an appropriate child safety or booster seat. Children under 40 pounds (18.14 kilograms) must ride in

a safety seat. A booster seat is highly recommended for children that are too big for safety seats, but are too small for regular seats. The biggest problem with safety and booster seats is that they are installed incorrectly or that they have been recalled for a malfunction. If you want to make sure that your child's seat is safe, contact the Seminole Trail Fire Department at (434)973-1717. For more information about safety seats, visit the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles at www.dmv.state.va.us. Virginia law also requires that children under the age of 16 wear a seat belt and that the driver and all passengers in the front seat wear one as well.

Please remember to never leave children unattended in a vehicle for any amount of time. First, children are curious and could put the car in drive or knock the emergency brake off. Also, if it's very hot or very cold outside, their body temperature can vary too much, and the end result could be death.

Emergency Medicine and Safety

Emergency Medicine

Emergency Medicine is available to all persons in the United States. By law, if you enter an emergency room, or call for emergency assistance, the doctors must treat you even if you are not covered by insurance. But, it is very expensive to receive care in an emergency care facility, so you must be careful in your decision to seek help there. For example, if you have a minor problem such as a common cold or poison ivy, it is best that you treat the symptoms yourself or contact your regular physician. But, for chest pains or severe

bleeding that won't stop, you should call for medical assistance or visit an emergency room. The number that you should call in these situations is 911. This is a service that is available to everyone in order to provide prompt care for those in emergencies.

Emergency Situations and Safety

Although this is a relatively safe area, there are uncomfortable or dangerous situations that can arise every day. In order to protect the people who live here, the community provides emergency help. If there is an emergency where you need the

police, fire department, or ambulance, do not hesitate to call 911. The person who answers the 911 calls has access to police, fire, and emergency medical technicians. He or she makes the decision about who to send to assist you while speaking with you on the phone. Be prepared to provide 911 with your address and phone number as well as a description of the situation that is occurring where you are. In Charlottesville/Albemarle County, there are no charges for police, fire, and ambulance services, but **never call 911 unless it is a true emergency**

Top 10 Poisons Nationwide

1. Analgesics (medicine that you can buy without a prescription)
2. Cleaning Products
3. Cosmetics & Personal Care Items
4. Solid Non-food Items
5. Plants
6. Cough & Cold Preparations
7. Bites (snake bites for example)
8. Sedative Hypnotics
9. Skin creams/salves
10. Pesticides

Poison Control Center
1-800-222-1222

Open 24 hours a day,
365 days a year.

Programs for the Disabled

There are many programs that are available for disabled persons in this country. Their purpose is to help and enable these people to live a more normal and productive life. Provided below are a few of the different programs and their contact information. An excellent place to start is the:

Independence Resource Center
(434)971-9629

For Suicidal Individuals
Region Ten Community Services
(434)972-1800
www.regionten.org

For Mentally Retarded Individuals
ARC (Association of Retarded Citizens)

(434)977-4002
www.thearcofthepiedmont.org
Charlottesville/Albemarle Mental Health Association -

(434)977-4673
www.avenue.org/mha
Homebound Individuals
Adult Day Healthcare JABA
www.jabacares.org
(434)817-5222

Paraplegic Individuals
Department of Neurosurgery, UVA
(434)924-2203

Deaf Individuals
Department of Rehabilitative Services
(434)296-5621
www.vadrs.org

Individuals with AIDS
AIDS/HIV Services Group
(434)979-7714
www.aidsservices.org

Blind Individuals
Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic
(434)293-4797
www.rfbid.org

United Way Information and Referral
The United Way can refer you to appropriate sources of help. (434)972-1703
www.unitedwaytja.org

Promote safety and prevent crime by calling the Albemarle County Crime Prevention Office at (434)972-4001

Natural beauty is one of Central Virginia's biggest assets. There are, however, some elements of nature here that can be dangerous and harmful to your health and safety.

Weather - Although the possibility of hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and blizzards exists here, the probability of being hurt in one is quite low. But this area often has strong thunder and **lightning (electrical) storms**, usually between May and September. In the U.S.A. every year, approximately 1000 people are hit by lightning, and lightning is the second most frequent cause of weather-related deaths. Lightning also starts forest fires and damages homes, businesses, and equipment. Although the chances of being hit by lightning are low, you should know some safety rules to protect yourself and your family. If you are **outside** go inside as quickly as possible. Go to a building, and house, or even a car. If you cannot get inside, don't be the tallest object around and don't stand near water or metal. Avoid tall trees, metal poles or fences, bicycles, golf clubs, etc. Get out of a swimming pool, lake, or boat immediately. If you are **inside**, stay away from open doors and windows. Get out of the shower or bathtub. Don't use the telephone and unplug computers and valuable electronic equipment. Don't rely on surge protectors or lightning rods. A direct strike of lightning can carry 30 million volts of electricity! After the storm passes, be sure to check your home for



any damage. If someone is hit by lightning, the most important thing is to start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) as soon as possible.

Flash floods often result from heavy storms. When very heavy rain falls in a short period of time, the drainage system cannot carry all the water off, and it overflows into normally dry roads and other areas. Many people are hurt or killed every year in the U.S.A. by driving into standing water and being caught in the flood. Never drive into such areas, and don't allow

your children to swim or play in streams or rivers during or after a heavy rain. For information on current weather conditions, WVIR TV (Channel 29) and WINA radio (1070 AM) give frequent weather alerts. A "**Watch**" (Thunderstorm Watch, etc.) means that there is a **possibility** of problem weather. A "**Warning**" means there is a **probability** of bad weather and you should move immediately to safety. **Forest fires** can also be a problem in this area. They can start easily - sometimes by lightning or sparks from a train. But many are started by careless people. There are strict burn laws here and you should learn the laws before you start a fire. Also, do not throw lit cigarettes away. Be sure to completely extinguish cigarettes and, if you are camping or cooking outside, be very careful that all coals are completely cool before leaving the site.

Animals and Insects - Central Virginia is home to a large variety of wild animals, birds, and insects. It is a thrill for many to spend a summer afternoon in the country and see a deer run through the woods, a hawk soar in the sky, and a butterfly land on a wildflower. But, we also have some wildlife that is not so nice and, in fact, can cause health and safety problems. Although it is rare, occasionally **bears** will be seen in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. They are searching for food and are often seen near garbage cans. A more serious problem is **deer**. They cause many car accidents and you should be very careful when driving. Watch for deer crossing the road suddenly, especially



in the early morning and late afternoon hours. **Ticks** are small spider-like parasites. In the spring and summer, it is common to find one crawling on people or embedded in their skin. Ticks can carry two diseases, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Lyme disease. Every year in Virginia, about 150 people get sick from one of these diseases so it is good to know what to do if you find one on yourself or a family member.

Ticks usually live in tall grass and shady areas. After being outside, check yourself and your children by feeling in your hair and looking carefully. Ticks are very small, so it is often difficult to find them visually. If the tick is crawling, remove



it and carefully dispose of it. If it is embedded in your skin, use tweezers to slowly pull it out. Put the tweezers as close as possible to the head and gently pull. Wash the area and your hands, and remember that you were bitten. If in a week you get sick or if you develop a red rash, tell a doctor about the tick bite...it may be related. Finally, there are two poisonous **spiders** common in this area, the Black Widow and the Brown Recluse. There are also two poisonous **snakes** that are common, the Rattlesnake and the Copperhead. It is very unusual to encounter any of these, however, so don't let fear of them stop you from enjoying the wonderful nature of Virginia.

Plants - Poison Ivy is a very common plant in this area. It can cause a severe rash and terrible itching. Except in the most extreme cases, you can treat it yourself, without seeing a doctor. There are many treatments available in the drug stores. A good source of



information about natural hazards of the area is the Virginia Cooperative Extension at (434)872-4580 or visit their website at www.ext.vt.edu.

If you see a bear or other problem animal call Animal Control at (434) 977-9041.

Immunization Clinic

Thomas Jefferson Health District
1138 Rose Hill Drive
(434)972-6269

(All immunizations required by state law for school are free.)

Mondays

8:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
3:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Thursdays

8:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
1:00 pm.—3:30 p.m.

Students need the following vaccinations before enrollment in public schools:

DPT (diphtheria), Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Influenza (Hib), Hepatitis B, MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), and Chicken Pox.

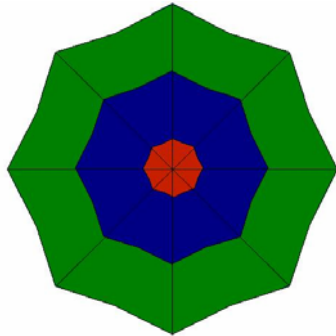
Government Aid

Medicare and Medicaid are two government programs that are available for qualifying individuals. Medicaid is for certain groups of people who have low income. Medicare is available for older adults (65 or older.) For more information about either program, please visit: <http://cms.hhs.gov>

Did you know that drowning is the second leading cause of death of healthy children? Watch your kids carefully around swimming pools, lakes, and even bathtubs!

HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC
SAFETY IN ALBEMARLE COUNTY

The Web Project



907 Henry Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22903

(434) 296-3872 ext. 2
rsnider@k12albemarle.org

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The Albemarle County Office Building

This publication is part of a series of informational materials prepared by the students of the Albemarle County Adult Education *Web Project*. The *Web Project* was made possible through an English Literacy/Civics Grant awarded by the State of Virginia Department of Education.

The information contained herein is intended for general informational purposes and guidance. Mention of a particular institution, vendor, or service does not imply endorsement on the part of Albemarle County or Albemarle County Schools.

Useful Numbers

All phone numbers listed below are 434 area code unless otherwise noted.

To find a doctor in the UVA Health System, please call: 924-DOCS (924-3627)

Thomas Jefferson Health Department: 972-6219

United Way Information and Referral and Insurance for Children Project: 972-1703

Child Health Partnership: 295-3171

Health Promoters/Promotores de Salud: 962-0730

Albemarle County Dept. of Social Services: 972-4010

Charlottesville Dept. of Social Services: 970-3400

Fire, Police, Rescue Emergencies: 911

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Alcoholics Anonymous: 293-6565

Al-Anon Family Group: 293-6565

Child Safety, Albemarle County Crime Prevention Office: 972-4079

National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information: 1-800-729-6686

Charlottesville Free Clinic: 296-5525

Children, Youth, and Family Services: 296-4118

Region 10 Community Services Board: 972-1800

Hospice of the Piedmont: 817-6900

American Red Cross: 979-7143

Martha Jefferson Hospital: 982-7000

Animal Control: 977-9041

Independence Resource Center: 971-9629

MACAA/Hope House: 295-3171

Salvation Army Medical Assistance: 295-4058

Domestic Violence 24 Hour Hotline: 293-8509

Sexual Assault Resource Agency: 295-7273

Emergency Food Bank: 979-9180

JAUNT: 296-3184

Charlottesville/Albemarle Mental Health Association: 977-4673

Children's Dental Clinic: 972-6255



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