

# ENGAGE

*Connecting the community to health*

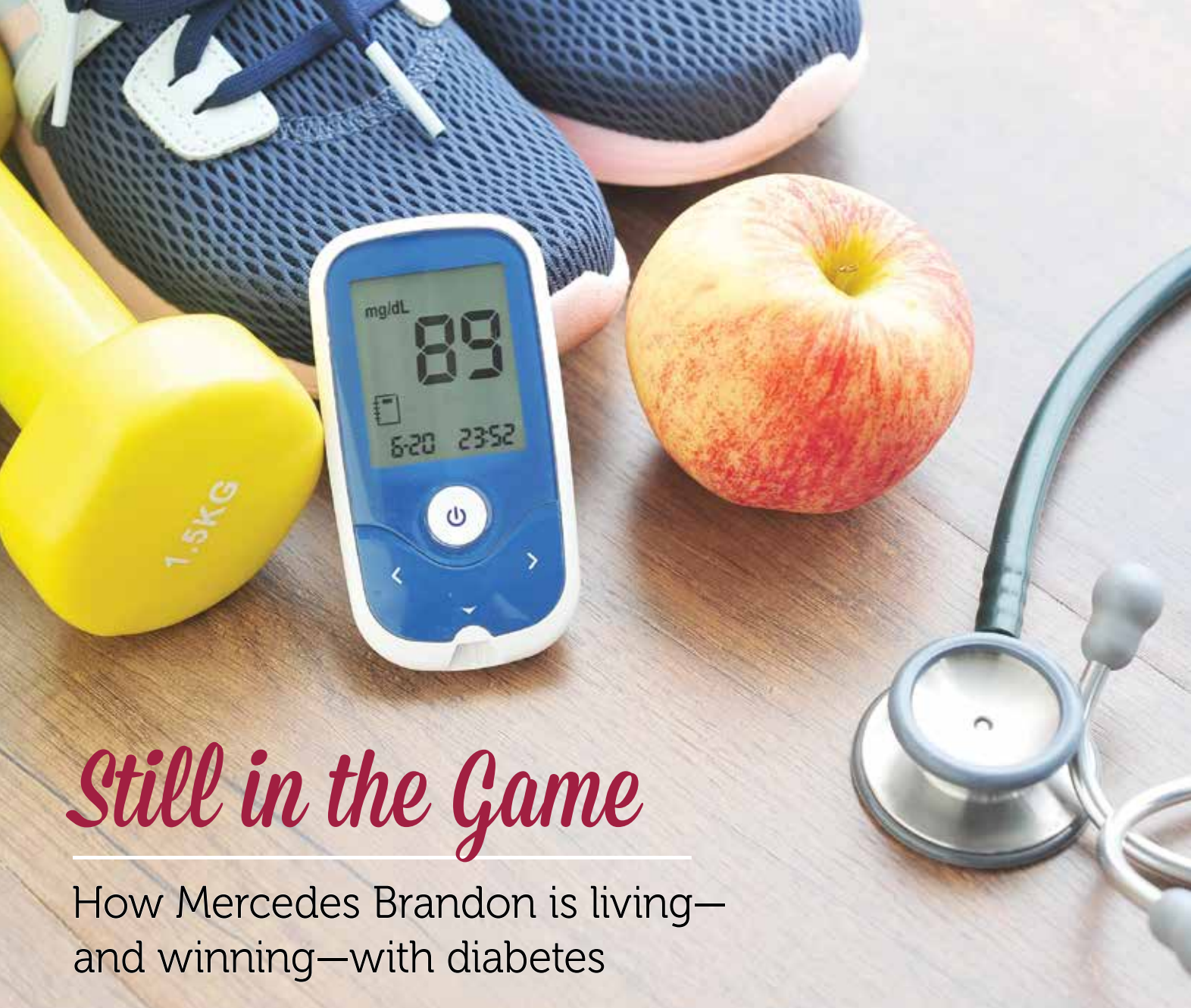


**Important  
Screenings**  
for your family



**Howard**Memorial  
hospital

*Spring 2019*



# *Still in the Game*

How Mercedes Brandon is living—and winning—with diabetes

Mercedes Brandon had no idea she had diabetes. “I never knew,” she says. “I had no symptoms at all.”

Then one remarkable day, she went in for her sports physical. She was playing basketball for school and needed to have the routine check-up.

“They found I had Type 1 diabetes,” says Mercedes.

Mercedes says the news was a complete surprise. “It was shocking. The news that I had diabetes and then thinking about what was next. I knew it was going to be hard,” she says.

Although she was shocked and it did take some getting used to, twelve years later, Mercedes is doing great.

“Howard Memorial Hospital explained it all to me,” she says. “They told me how to manage it and what medicine to try.” At this point, Mercedes is handling her insulin injections just fine, but in the future she may transition to an insulin pump.

For the time being, Mercedes is feeling fine. She checks in with her primary care provider often while continuing to do the things she loves, namely, “shopping and playing basketball.”

“Diabetes isn’t the end of the world,” she says. “It’s a hard thing to manage at first, but when you manage it right, you’re fine. You’re just like anybody else.”





## Diabetes Resources at Howard Memorial Hospital

### Diabetes and You

This is a FREE diabetes education course that meets once a week for six weeks at CCCUA.

To register contact Kim Turbeville at **870-845-8006**.

### Home Health

If you've been recently diagnosed, you may qualify for home health visits while you learn to manage your diabetes.

Ask your doctor about home health, or contact Southwest Arkansas HomeCare at **870-845-8206** or **1-800-465-5663**.

### Fast Facts on Diabetes

- Almost 450 million people have diabetes
- Diabetes is the leading cause of death in the world
- Type 2 diabetes is preventable, Type 1 diabetes is not
- Diabetes can cause blindness, amputation, and kidney failure
- Signs of Type 1 diabetes can include: extreme weakness, fatigue, weight loss, thirst, wounds that don't heal, and blurry vision
- The first mention of what we now know as diabetes was found on papyrus scrolls from 1500 BCE
- Women can develop gestational diabetes during pregnancy which increases your risk for Type 2 diabetes later in life
- Regular visits to your primary care provider can help you prevent developing Type 2 diabetes





## Screen Now, Save Later

Your physical and financial health will *thank you*

It's no secret that health screenings save lives, but it can also save your bank account.

"People live longer, healthier lives when disease is prevented," says Dr. Ngozi Wilkins of Howard Memorial Hospital. "Preventive services can also help those with early stages of disease keep from getting sicker."

Prevention, says Dr. Wilkins, is good for you and your finances. Most insurance and Medicaid cover preventative screenings, which includes testing for cancer, mental health, heart health, and more.

"Diseases caught in early stages are more treatable," says Dr. Wilkins. "This improves outcomes and minimizes the amount of care and intervention a patient will need."

Another benefit to preventative screenings are the vaccines that often accompany them: "Routine vaccinations obtained with your doctor's recommendations can help prevent infectious diseases such as measles, chicken pox, meningitis, flu and certain kinds of pneumonia," says Dr. Wilkins.

Preventative screenings are not only good for you and your personal health and finances, but for the economy as well. According to the CDC, "health problems are a major financial drain on the economy. Sixty-nine million workers reporting missed work days due to illness each year." The economic output, therefore, is reduced by about \$260 billion per year. By focusing on prevention, greater productivity in the workplace can be achieved.

# Important Screenings for your family



The following are some of the issues and conditions we screen for in children, men, and women:

## CHILDREN SCREENINGS

**Development:** As your child grows, his behavioral and social development will be evaluated along with . . .

**Height and Weight:** These two measurements will be charted to determine BMI (body mass index), which is the best way to identify a child's risk for being overweight or obese

**Hemoglobin:** Your toddler will be tested for hemoglobin to make sure she's getting enough iron

**Lead:** Exposure to lead can affect your child's IQ and even be toxic

**Eye sight:** Children as young as nine months may be screened for vision strength

**Scoliosis:** Older children will be screened for this condition starting at around age nine

**Safety:** As important as other health checks are the questions your doctor will ask about your child's home: Are there pets, medications, tobacco use, guns, a pool? He or she will also ask about helmets and seatbelts

## MEN & WOMEN SCREENINGS

The types of screenings vary by gender, but men and women can expect to be screened for the following at certain points in their lifetime:

Cancer

Cardiac Health

Diabetes Risk

Colon Health

Infectious disease

Obesity

Mental health

Sexually transmitted infections

Blood pressure

Cholesterol levels





# Care for the Long Haul

## *Chronic Care Management at HMH*

When you're dealing with a chronic illness, you and your family can have a lot of questions and concerns about how best to take care of yourself. For that reason, and to prevent the progression of disease, Howard Memorial Hospital is pleased to provide chronic care management (CCM) for patients since 2017 at the HMH Medical Clinic.

"Chronic care management includes education and support for patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, COPD, high cholesterol and other conditions," says Cherie Craig, RN, CCRP, Care Manager. "It is an extra resource provided to help patients understand how to manage their conditions on their own."

A main goal of CCM, says Cherie, is to keep patients out of the Emergency Room and out of the hospital by preventing possible complications. Patients are assigned a care manager who is responsible for regularly checking in with them. She will call patients weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or ever six months, depending on the condition. During her calls, she evaluates if there is any cause for concern or additional appointments.

The care manager at HMH is able to provide individualized care plans and education specific to each patient's needs.

"For example," says Cherie. "If the physician or nurse practitioner changes a medication, the patient may be provided a log sheet to track their progress with this new medication. He or she can work with her care manager to discuss progress or concerns."

Since the program started, Cherie says they've received a lot of positive feedback: "We've received many compliments from patients and their family members that this service has helped them to better understand their condition. It helps them feel more capable of self-managing those conditions with the help of their health care team," she says.

“Patients utilize the service multiple times a day, either by phone, email, or faxed correspondence. They have reported they are glad to have this service as an addition to their health care team, and we are glad to provide it.”

# Medicare without the Headaches

## Finding the right plan between Medicare and Medicare Advantage

Insurance questions can confuse even the best of us: Am I covered? Do I have enough insurance? Will my insurance cover this procedure? Fortunately, for people 65 and older, Medicare has them covered. Medicare will cover a portion of healthcare expenses including hospitalization, doctor visits, tests, and screenings. There is an optional add-on to Medicare, Medicare part D, that covers prescriptions.

Medicare is a great “safety net” when it comes to your health. But is there a better option? For some, there might be. Medicare Advantage plans are policies that are offered by private insurance companies but are overseen by the government. These policies are required to offer similar coverage to Medicare and often include prescriptions as well.

### Which is right for you?

In general, Medicare Advantage plans have a lower monthly premium (some as low as \$0), but higher out-of-pocket costs and co-pays. Medicare Advantage works well if you rarely get sick and won't develop a chronic illness—or if you're willing to bet that you won't.

If you take a lot of prescription drugs, you'll have to do the math to determine if Medicare with part D or a Medicare Advantage plan makes more financial sense.

Many Medicare Advantage plans cover vision and dental as well. Determine if these things being covered is a priority for you.

Medicare Advantage generally offers less flexibility in terms of who your providers are and what kind of referrals you're required to have for care.

There are a lot of factors to consider when determining what is the best coverage for you or your loved ones, but with a little math and a rationale look at your health profile, you'll be able to make a decision that minimizes cost while maximizing coverage.

#### **NOTE:**

- With MA it will require a Prior authorization for most diagnostic testing.
- Medicare and a supplemental coverage is better coverage for your healthcare needs instead of the Medicare Advantage plans.





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## 24/7 ER

At Howard Memorial Hospital, our emergency department is staffed 24/7 by experienced physicians and nurses who are trained to respond at a moment's notice to trauma and acute medical conditions in both children and adults.

