



Neighborhood Health Plan™

June 2006

Dear Provider,

Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP) is committed to ensuring that NHP members receive high quality state of the art healthcare based on scientifically proven methods. On a regular basis, we discuss with providers, our Patient Care Assessment Committee, and members the need for disseminating tools such as practice guidelines that are pertinent to the needs of many NHP members.

As part of this regular educational promotion, this letter contains information on a clinical practice guideline for Major Depression.

Selection of this guideline was based on several factors:

- Primary Care Providers detect depression in only 1/3 to ½ of their patients with major depression.
- The guideline addresses an important clinical issue pertinent to NHP members.
- Our Patient Care Assessment Committee and member input supported the selected guideline.
- The guideline represents usual and customary practice, and therefore, should not be burdensome to providers.
- The guideline was developed through an evidence-based process that included review and consensus by a panel of experts.
- The guideline addresses diagnoses that are frequently seen in both primary care and behavioral health practices. Continuity and coordination of care between behavioral health and primary care providers promote better outcomes.

We selected a practice guideline that provides clinically sound, evidenced-based options in the treatment of one of our most prevalent diagnostic category: Depressive disorder and we urge you to screen patients with any chronic condition, especially those with diabetes, cardiovascular disease or chronic pain. The ICSI (Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement) a nonprofit collaboration of health care organizations whose mission is to provide healthcare quality improvement services to help providers implement the best clinical practices for their patients, developed a useful guideline on the treatment of Major Depression in Adults in Primary Care. An update of this guideline was completed in May of 2006. We encourage you to access the full guideline on the Internet and employ it where clinically appropriate with your clients.

To access the guideline, please refer to the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement [web site](#).

If you have any questions or comments please contact us.

Sincerely,

Paul Mendis, MD
Chief Medical Officer

