

Newsletter for Parents

Welcome to Calvin College! Whether this is your first, or repeat experience as parent of a college student, it is probably an exciting time for you. In addition, having a daughter/son at college raises new issues, one of which may include health care. Calvin's Health Services is an on-campus service that exists to support and enhance students' health. Our physicians and nurse practitioners address acute and chronic health problems. We also provide immunizations, travel health consultation, allergy shots, women's health services, and more. We work closely with Broene Counseling Center to provide mental health services. Although your student will begin to assume more and more responsibility for his/her health, our staff is happy to support them while they are at Calvin. We look forward to the opportunity to serve them.

Who May Use Health Services?

Any student enrolled at Calvin College. We regret we are unable to serve Calvin staff, visitors, & graduates.

Are Appointments Necessary?

Health Services operates like a primary care office and, in general, appointments are necessary to receive services. If a student has a serious problem, we make every effort to see them promptly or refer them to an urgent care center.

What Methods of Payment Are Accepted?

Charges for services may be paid with cash, check, applied to a student's college miscellaneous account, or billed to KnightCare insurance if the student carries it. Students with private insurance will receive an itemized statement that can be used to file a claim with their insurance company.

My Student Has Private Insurance. What if S/he Needs Care in the Community?

Grand Rapids is home to three acute care hospitals, one children's hospital, and an abundance of specialists. Let us know if we can help with your student's anticipated need for these services.

We encourage you to check your insurance policy for coverage for "out of area" emergency or specialist care, the need for pre-approval, designated locations, etc. Some policies require that your primary care provider make all referrals. Discuss these issues with your student in the unlikely event s/he has to access emergency care. Give them an insurance card or policy information as well.

Confidentially Speaking

Sometimes parents are surprised to learn that their 18-year-old son or daughter can legally seek health care as an adult. This means they have a confidential medical record that cannot be shared in any form without their written permission. Most students want to discuss health concerns with their parents. We think this is wise. In the event of serious illness, we will ask the student to call his/her parents. If they are unable to, we will ask for written permission for our staff to call.

Self Care

Each residence hall has a first aid kit with basic supplies for treating cuts and scrapes. In addition, it may be helpful to prepare a small "self care kit" for your son/daughter. Consider:

- ✓ Over-the-counter medicines (pain reliever, cough lozenges, cough medicine, a decongestant, Pepto-Bismol, etc.),
- ✓ Thermometer
- ✓ Sun screen
- ✓ Neosporin/antibiotic ointment

Students may also purchase over-the-counter medications from the college bookstore, local grocery stores and pharmacies, and vending machines found in each residence hall.

Being Alert About Alcohol

Most of us trust that our children will make responsible decisions when they leave home, especially those involving alcohol and other drugs. Certainly, college policy and state laws exist to discourage drinking. However, research shows that a large majority of students consume alcohol during their college years. Availability of alcohol off-campus is a factor here.

It is reasonable to anticipate that your student will find him/herself in situations where a decision about alcohol needs to be made. Therefore, we believe it is very important for parents to communicate openly and matter-of-factly about drinking with their son/daughter.

Some ideas:

- **Ask and listen before they get to college:**
 - What will you do if you find yourself at a party with only alcohol to drink?
 - How will you respond when your roommate repeatedly asks you to go to someone's house where alcohol is often consumed?

- **Discuss values and expectations**
 - About attending class
 - About drinking and driving
 - Study vs. social time
 - Staying in touch

- **Encourage involvement** in on- and off-campus activities (plays, intramurals, athletic events, on-campus concerts, art shows, etc.)

- **Once at college, ask and listen:**
 - How are you doing?
 - Do you like your classes?
 - What activities are available?
 - Do you like the residence hall? Why? Are you getting along with your roommate?
 - Is there anything we can do?

Know Michigan Law: Michigan has *zero-tolerance* laws for alcohol offenses. For persons under age 21, it is illegal to buy, possess or transport alcohol. It is illegal to allow someone to drive your vehicle if they've been drinking. Calvin College Policies regarding alcohol in the dorms, students who serve minors, intoxicated persons of any age, etc. are found in the Student Handbook.

How to Reach Us: If you have questions about our services, insurance, immunizations, etc. don't hesitate to call us at (616) 526-6187.