

THE PATH AHEAD

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Let's clear the path ahead.

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SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM TMG!



As we reach the final days of 2018, it's nice to look back on the things that made this year great. For TMG, there was so much to be excited about! This was our Year of Quality, and we made it our mission to find ways to improve the work we do with special quality improvement projects. We also gave all of our IRIS Consultants a refresher course on how to write good outcomes so that we can help you successfully identify and achieve your goals. We were happy to find out that our Screeners passed their annual Long-Term Care Functional Screen certification reviews with flying colors. Finally, this year was the IRIS program's 10th anniversary. As the first IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA) in the state, we're proud to have been a part of IRIS since the beginning, and we were thrilled to celebrate this milestone.

Of course, we have lots to look forward to in 2019 as well. Our main goal is to be the best partner we can be. To make that happen, we're starting two TMG Citizen Advisory Councils next year — one in the Northeast and one in the Southeast part of the state. We are currently going over applications, and appreciate everyone who applied.

I also wanted to take a moment to let you know that Gwendolyn Dunkin is the new Senior Director of IRIS Consultation Services. I was honored to be promoted to TMG President earlier this fall, and I'm very happy to have Gwen take on her new role. Gwen has been with TMG

since 2013, and for the past four years she has been an Area Associate Director in Southeast Wisconsin. She is a strong leader and will do a wonderful job making sure that the TMG ICA continues to help you clear the path ahead.

As we make our way into 2019, I wanted to say thank you for being a part of TMG — you're the reason we do the work we do. Have a wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy new year!

Shanna Jensen
TMG President



ONLINE HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES



Sometimes figuring out the best way to take care of yourself can be tricky. There are so many things to think about like, “How do I get the right healthcare? Am I prepared to see my doctor? Did I take my medicine correctly?” All of this can make taking charge of your health very confusing and stressful! We have gathered a few online resources to help you take charge of your health and well-being. To find the links to these websites, visit tmgwisconsin.com/health-and-wellness.

Health Resources

Covering Wisconsin: This site provides how-to sheets about health insurance. Learn how to sign up for insurance, how to figure out what health services your insurance pays for, how to find a good doctor, where to go if you need medical attention, and much more.

Quality Medical Appointments Page: Find out what you need to do before, during and after your doctor’s appointment to make sure you have a successful visit.

Self-Directed Health Care Kit: This kit, created by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental

Disabilities (BPDD), is another tool to help you prepare for your doctor’s appointments so that you get the care you deserve.

Common Health Terms: Doctors and nurses often use words that the average person might not know. Learn some of these common medical terms so that you can better understand what your doctor is telling you. (And, never be afraid to ask them to explain things that don’t make sense!)

Wellness Resources

Crisis Text Line: If you are facing a crisis, text the Crisis Text Line at 741741 anytime, day or night. You’ll be connected with a trained Crisis Counselor who will work with you to find ways to solve your problem.

Mood 24/7: This app helps you track your daily moods by sending you a text message asking how you’re feeling. The app then keeps track of your moods with charts, and you can share this information with doctors or trusted friends and family.

MindShift: Do you struggle with anxiety? Then check out MindShift, an app that helps you change the way you think about anxiety so that it no longer overwhelms you.

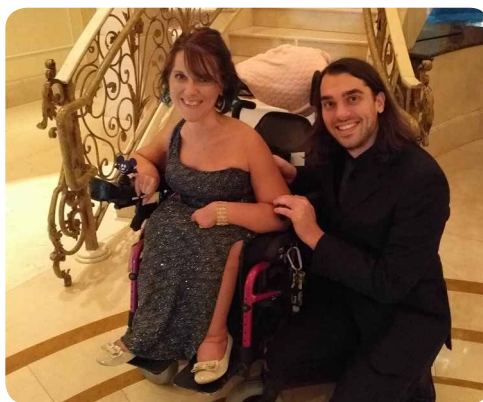


MEET ERICA: LIVING LIFE ON HER TERMS

For Erica Andres, self-directing her personal care has given her a life that's truly her own.

As someone who loves her independence, Erica has worked hard to fill her days the way she chooses. That means having a job she's passionate about as a TMG IRIS Consultant, and spending time and traveling with her wonderful family and friends. Erica also has muscular dystrophy, which causes muscles to weaken. This means that in order to do all the things she enjoys, she needs help with certain physical tasks.

Erica didn't always have a choice in when and where she received the help she needs. When she first enrolled in the IRIS program in 2010, she was excited to begin self-directing her care. At the time, she received personal care through an



agency, and found it was not as flexible as she needed. The agency she hired set her workers' schedules, and she could only receive care in her home. This meant that if she needed help while she was working at the office, she would have to ask her coworkers for assistance.

“That’s more than you want to ask your random friend at work!” jokes Erica.

While using agency-hired personal care workers is a good option for

many people, Erica decided that it was not the best choice for her. So, when someone told her about IRIS Self-Directed Personal Care (SDPC), Erica knew she had to try it out. With IRIS SDPC, people who need physical assistance with things like bathing, dressing, or going to the restroom can hire the workers they choose to help with these tasks. The person sets their workers' schedules so that it's convenient for them. They also can have their workers help them both at home and at their work place — which was one of the main reasons Erica signed up for the IRIS SDPC option.

“It was a huge thing that I could have care outside of the house, and I could schedule my own time,” says Erica.

Having the flexibility to choose her own workers has also been very helpful. This gives her the chance to hire people who are available during

the times Erica needs them. It also lets her choose people who are a good fit with Erica's personality.

“I get people that I know and I like, so they care more about me and want to be there,” says Erica. “So, when I am sick, they’re more apt to stay around to make sure I get the care I need.”

By taking charge of her personal care with the IRIS SDPC option, Erica has become a more independent, happier, and healthier person. Today, she lives a fulfilling life with her boyfriend Michael in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. She gets out into her community and explores new places. And, as a TMG IRIS Consultant, she also supports others who want to self-direct their personal care. She has shared her IRIS SDPC success story across the state and nationally, showing how, with the right kind of support, people with disabilities can have the freedom and choices they prefer.

“I think the IRIS SDPC option is a fantastic thing, and I’m still thankful for it,” says Erica. “I can live my life on my terms.”

VISIT TMG’S NEW HEALTH & WELLNESS LIBRARY



Looking for information about health issues or details about the medicines you use? Then, check out Healthwise — the new health and wellness library that you can access through the TMG website.

Here you will find facts to help you make better health decisions. You can also learn about the side effects and risks of your medicines, and generic options.

Healthwise offers interactive tools. Use these tools to see if your symptoms require a doctor's visit, compare your treatment options, and more. Remember, Healthwise is just a resource, and you should always consult your doctor for more information.

Want to try it out? Visit tmgwisconsin.com/healthwise today!

BUILDING YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUPPORT TEAM

Your health and wellness play a major part in your overall quality of life. When you feel good physically, mentally and emotionally, everything else seems a bit easier and more enjoyable. Of course, good health and wellness don't just happen — you need to actively do things to stay healthy. That means making sure you're eating good foods, getting enough rest, exercising, spending quality time with family and friends, and doing what you can to make life less stressful. It also means being an advocate for your own health and wellness, and knowing when and how to ask for help.

Cindy Bentley, Executive Director of People First Wisconsin, understands this very well. Her organization focuses on helping people with disabilities advocate for themselves



on important issues, including healthcare. She says it's very easy for anybody facing health challenges to get overwhelmed and confused. However, there are things you can do to help make the best choices for your health.

One of the most important things you can do is to build a support team of people who will help you clear the path on your health journey. Cindy says this team can include trusted healthcare providers, and

family and friends who can help you out if you have medical issues. You can also find resources at advocacy organizations like People First Wisconsin (which currently has 18 chapters across Wisconsin). You can talk to your support team about your health goals and the health issues you have. Let them know the kind of care you do and don't want from your healthcare providers.

“If I don't tell them how I really feel, how can they help me?” says Cindy.

Once you have your support team, it's important to have them around when you're dealing with health challenges. Cindy suggests you take trusted family or friends to your doctor appointments so that they can understand what's going on with your health. Ask if they have questions for your doctor that you might not have

considered. Let your doctor, clinic or hospital know if you have a guardian or power of attorney who can speak on your behalf if you're not able to do so. When Cindy faced her own health challenges recently, she was grateful her sister was there to make sure Cindy got the care she needed when she was too sick to do so herself.

“Take somebody with you,” says Cindy. “Do not go to the hospital alone.”

Always know that you're the person calling the shots for the healthcare you receive. As someone who has an intellectual disability, Cindy knows that sometimes doctors and nurses don't always believe that people with disabilities can make their own decisions about their health. But that's not true, and Cindy makes sure to let them know that people with disabilities have

the right to make choices about their healthcare.

“(We want to be) treated like any other patient coming through that hospital,” says Cindy.

With the help of a strong support team and the willingness to speak up and advocate for yourself, taking charge of your health and wellness can be a goal you have. And, when you have achieved good health and wellness, you can do the things you love more easily. So, take the time to take care of yourself — you're worth it!

“I think why I'm healthy is because I have a meaningful life,” says Cindy. “I have something to look forward to every day, and I have good people in my life.”



WINTER TIPS

Dress warmly. Before leaving the house, be sure to dress in layers.

Eat and drink safely. Eating well-balanced meals will help you stay warm. Avoid drinking alcohol outdoors as it can make it difficult to monitor and control your body temperature.

Watch out for frostbite. When you're outside, keep your skin covered. If your skin turns red, blue or white, or becomes painful, head indoors to warm up!

Walk carefully to prevent falls. Walk slowly and be aware when getting in and out of vehicles. Watch for wet floors coming in and out of buildings.



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WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

At the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA), we value the fact that our employees live and work in communities all around Wisconsin. Our Area Associate Directors provide local leadership for our TMG IRIS Consultant Teams throughout the state. If you have questions about TMG and the services we provide, please contact us at info@tmgwisconsin.com.



For information about the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency, visit: tmgwisconsin.com or [facebook.com/TMGWisconsin](https://www.facebook.com/TMGWisconsin).

Or call our toll-free number: **(844) 864-8987**.