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# **Healthcare Navigation 101: A Guide for College-Bound Students (and Parents!)**

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## DISCLAIMER

The information provided within this eBook is for general informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for medical advice. The reader should consult a physician or other licensed healthcare professional for matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

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## INTRODUCTION

Going to college is a huge accomplishment, preceded by many years of hard work and perseverance. Whether you are attending a school in your home state or thousands of miles away, this transition will be marked with anticipation, excitement, and likely some degree of anxiety. Most students and parents focus heavily on preparations for move-in day, scouring stores for the best deals on extra-long sheets and micro-fridges. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle, a very important transition is often overlooked. **This will be the first time you are responsible for managing your health and navigating the healthcare system independently.**

Perhaps you're asking yourself, "Why do I need to know how to manage my health?" For starters, you will no longer have the benefit of your trusted pediatrician or family doctor who greets you with a friendly and familiar smile and knows all of your medical history. In addition, you won't have the benefit of your parents, who have been communicating with the doctors and nurses and filling in the gaps during medical visits your entire life. There's a very good chance you will get sick during the first couple of months of school due to being in close proximity to a large number of students, heightened stress levels, sleep deficiency, and a suboptimal diet. Have you ever scheduled a doctor's appointment on your own? Do you know how to fill a prescription? Maybe you're one of the 2 million adolescents in the U.S. with a chronic illness. In that case, you will need to understand how to manage your illness while you're at school, which may include finding new doctors to care for you while you're away.

I recommend that you and your parents each purchase a copy of this eBook because they have a lot to learn as well. They still see you as their "baby" and they may have a hard time letting go. They're used to being heavily involved in

your healthcare, but when you go to college there will be special privacy laws that prevent doctors from freely sharing your medical information with your parents. In addition, the health insurance policy they pay for every month may not cover the healthcare services you receive while you're away at college. This can lead to unexpected medical bills with significant financial implications at a time when they're paying for tuition, room and board, and countless other expenses associated with this new phase of your life.

This eBook is meant to be a guide, a GPS of sorts, for you (and your parents) during your college years. My hope is that you will enjoy good health and academic success. As the saying goes, however, "life happens". I am sure you will find yourself in situations where the advice provided in this eBook will be helpful. Whether you experience a little sniffle or a serious injury, this book is full of useful information to help you along the way. Newly introduced terms appear in bold font to draw your attention. When applicable, there are hyperlinks that will take you directly to useful web-based content. Throughout the book, you'll see two symbols to draw your attention to particularly important information you need to know.



This symbol designates key tips and useful hints to help you and your parents along this journey.



This symbol alerts you to potentially dangerous mistakes and common pitfalls to avoid.