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Healthy and connected member newsletter

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Healthy and Connected Member Newsletter - Oct. 28, 2021

Healthy and Connected is the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (SCDHHS) member e-newsletter. Healthy and Connected features tips and tools to help you and your loved ones connect to resources and live healthier lives.

Introducing Community Connections

We have a new way to help Healthy Connections Medicaid members, through a new program called Community Connections. It is a free, online tool you can access any time to find help in your area. This search tool can help you look for:



- A local health care provider;
- A job or job training;
- Education resources;
- Food aid;
- Housing assistance;
- Childcare;
- Transportation help (remember, non-emergency medical transportation is a covered benefit for Healthy Connections Medicaid members);
- Financial aid and financial education options; and,
- Community support services.

You can search for resources by category, location, age group and more. Learn more by clicking the link below!

[Community Connections](#)

Please Make Sure We Have Your Contact Information

To comply with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, SCDHHS has not performed annual eligibility reviews during the current COVID-19 federal public health emergency (PHE). This means Healthy Connections Medicaid coverage has continued for anyone receiving Medicaid benefits now or for anyone who is determined eligible for Medicaid benefits during the PHE.

There is no current end date set for the PHE. After the PHE is over, annual eligibility reviews will resume. If we do not have correct contact information, you may miss important mail from us related to your Medicaid eligibility after the PHE. To help ensure continued coverage when the PHE ends, SCDHHS is sending out review forms to give you the chance to update your contact information now. Please fill out and return the form when you receive it in the mail. You and/or your family member(s) will continue to receive Medicaid during the PHE whether you fill out the form or not. If you do not complete the form now, we will send you a review form after the end of the PHE.

If you have any questions, or would like to update your contact information over the phone, please call the Healthy Connections Medicaid Member Contact Center at (888) 549-0820.

Protect Yourself This Flu Season



While last year was a mild flu season, experts expect a rise in flu cases as restrictions have relaxed, people are going out, children are back in school and adults are back at work. Also, ongoing COVID-19 cases will compound the flu season this fall and winter. Many of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are alike so if you have symptoms, you may need to test for both as it may be hard to tell the difference.

The best way to keep yourself safe from the flu and COVID-19 is to get your shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a flu shot for everyone six months and older and COVID-19 shots for people 12 years and up. These shots can make the illness milder and lower the chance of more serious problems that can lead to hospitalization or even death.

The CDC also recommends other easy tips to protect yourself and slow the spread of germs that cause illnesses, like flu and COVID-19.

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid large groups of people. Keep six feet apart.
- Wear a mask.

Healthy Connections Medicaid full-benefit members can receive a free flu shot. Children can receive their shot from their pediatrician or their primary care doctor. Adults can receive their flu shot at any in-network pharmacy or through their primary care doctor. You can also visit the [South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control \(DHEC\) website](#) for a list of [places to get your flu shot](#).

[Flu FAQs for the 2021-2022 Season](#)

Do You Know the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?

You may know pink is the color for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. You have likely seen pink ribbons, light bulbs, football cleats and more this October. Did you also know breast cancer screenings and treatment are covered Medicaid benefits? Or that one in eight women are diagnosed with breast cancer?

The good news is that breast cancer is treatable. When caught early, women diagnosed with breast cancer have a 99% survival rate. Part of catching breast cancer early is looking for symptoms yourself. The National Breast Cancer Foundation has a [free guide](#) that can help you

recognize symptoms. It is also important that you go to your regular doctor's appointments and let your doctor know right away if you notice a symptom of breast cancer.

If you know someone who needs treatment for breast cancer and does not have health care coverage, we may be able to help. SCDHHS' Breast & Cervical Cancer Program offers full Medicaid benefits to adults who need treatment but are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid. Learn more about this program below.

[Learn More About Breast Cancer Coverage](#)

Learn How to Control or Prevent Diabetes



Since its introduction in 1975, Diabetes Awareness Month occurs annually each November. Diabetes is a disease that affects how your body turns food into energy. There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes. Type 1 is usually diagnosed in children and young adults and is treated

with insulin injections. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes. Cases of type 2 diabetes have been on the rise with the increase in childhood obesity rates. It can affect people of any age but is most common in those over age 45. Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that is first found when a woman is pregnant. It can lead to an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Nearly 30 million Americans have some form of diabetes.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in South Carolina. Around one in six African Americans in South Carolina have diabetes. Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to many complications including blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, strokes and amputations.

There are several ways to prevent diabetes. Most people who have type 2 diabetes developed pre-diabetes first. Prediabetes is common in adults, but it can be reversed. Prediabetes means you have a higher-than-normal blood sugar level that can lead to type 2 diabetes unless lifestyle changes are made. Creating a nutrition plan, setting fitness goals and tracking your progress all

can help reverse prediabetes and prevent the development of type 2 diabetes. If you are pregnant, your doctor will talk to you about gestational diabetes.

Help with managing all types of diabetes is a covered benefit for Healthy Connections Medicaid members. For more helpful information regarding diabetes and ways to prevent it, visit Diabetes Free SC's website by clicking on the button below.

[Diabetes Free SC](#)

Keep Your Baby Safe, Practice Safe Sleep

October is Safe Sleep and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month. About 3,500 babies in the United States die each year while sleeping due to SIDS or accidental deaths from suffocation, entrapment or strangulation from unsafe sleep.

To decrease sleep-related infant deaths, the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) recommends the following tips when putting your baby to sleep.



- Always place your baby on their back for all sleep times, both for naps and at night, until his or her first birthday.
- Use a firm, flat sleep surface, such as a mattress in a crib or bassinet covered with a fitted sheet. Make sure the crib or bassinet meets set safety standards. Never place your baby to sleep on a soft surface, such as a couch, sofa or pillow.
- Your baby should sleep alone in their own safe sleep space. The crib or bassinet should be bare. There should be no other people, pets or items in the same sleep area. This means all toys, stuffed animals, bumper pads, blankets and pillows should be removed from a baby's crib. Babies can suffocate or choke on these items.

Everyone who cares for your baby should know the right way to put your baby to sleep.

For more safe sleep tips, visit the [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Safe Sleep website](#)

Infant Safe Sleep Basics

Easy Tips to Protect Your Teeth and Gums



October is Dental Hygiene Month, the perfect time to remind you about the important part good oral health plays in your overall well-being.

Adopt these key habits to help you have strong teeth, healthy gums and fresh breath.

- **Brush your teeth.** The American Dental Association recommends you brush your teeth twice a day, for two minutes with a soft-bristled brush.
- **Floss daily.** You should floss between your teeth at least once a day to help remove plaque.
- **Use mouthwash.** Rinse with mouthwash to help get areas of your mouth that you miss even with normal brushing and flossing.
- **Chew sugar-free gum after meals.** Chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes after you eat can help stop tooth decay.
- **Visit the dentist.** Regular check-ups and cleanings are important for healthy teeth and gums. Children should see a dentist as soon as their first tooth comes in.

South Carolina Healthy Connections Medicaid covers some dental care services, like annual cleanings, for adults and children. These services must be medically necessary and provided by a dentist that accepts Healthy Connections Medicaid.

To learn more about covered dental services or to find a dentist in our program, call DentaQuest at (888) 307-6552 or visit www.dentaquest.com and click on the Members tab.

You Can Quit Smoking, We Can Help



Lung Cancer Awareness Month happens every November. This is a great time to quit smoking and improve your health.

Smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer. People who smoke cigarettes are 15 to 30 times more likely to get lung cancer or to die from lung cancer than people who do not smoke. Even smoking a few cigarettes a day or smoking every now and then increases the risk of lung cancer.

Quitting smoking also helps your loved ones. Secondhand smoke from cigarettes can cause cancer in children and adults who don't smoke. People who quit smoking have a lower risk of lung cancer. Quitting smoking at any age can lower the risk of lung cancer.

E-cigarettes and vapes are dangerous tobacco products too. Using e-cigarettes and vapes increases health risks for youth, young adults, pregnant women and other non-smoking adults. Users inhale toxic chemicals, heavy metals like tin and lead, and flavors that cause lung disease. Most e-cigarettes/vapes have large amounts of nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and hard to quit.

Healthy Connections Medicaid gives you benefits that can help you quit smoking. This includes coaching sessions and free medicines that can help you quit. If you need extra help, you can call the South Carolina Tobacco Quitline (800)-QUIT-NOW / (800) 784-8669. It's free, available 24/7, and Quitline experts are trained to help you quit cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes/vapes or dip/chew. Access Quitline services online at www.quitnow.net/southcarolina, over the phone

(800)-QUIT-NOW/ (800) 784-8669 / TTY (877) 777-6534), or by texting “READY” to 200-400. Visit www.quitnowsc.org to learn more!

[Quit Now SC](#)

En español: <https://www.quitnowsc.org/?lang=es>

Thank you for reading Healthy and Connected. Follow SCDHHS on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for regular updates. You can also view the Medicaid Member Handbook [here on SCDHHS’ website](#) to learn more about what is covered, where to go to ask questions and more.

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