

# MEDICAID C O N N E C T I O N



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## New Leadership for Healthy Connections

In November 2014, Tony Keck left after nearly four years of service as the head of Healthy Connections. He and I worked together closely during his leadership of the agency. I know that I speak for many in South Carolina when I say that his service will leave a positive legacy for our state.

I am proud to have been nominated by Gov. Nikki Haley to replace Director Keck so that all of us at Healthy Connections can continue to build upon the progress that we have made in improving health care during the past few years.

More than 1 million South Carolinians rely on the Medicaid program for their health needs. Many of our members are among the most vulnerable members of our society. In fact, a majority of those we serve are children. I point this out because it shows the importance of our work. We must serve you as effectively as we possibly can.

In this edition of the newsletter, you can learn about new dental benefits for our adult members (page 4), resources that are available to connect the Latino community to health and social services (page 5) and the importance of getting a flu vaccination (page 3). I hope you will take the time to learn about these exciting developments.

I appreciate the opportunity to be part of a dedicated Healthy Connections team. I look forward to what we will accomplish in the future.



Christian L. Soura

*Gov. Haley named Christian L. Soura interim director of Healthy Connections on Nov. 20, 2014. He previously served in a leadership position in the governor's office since 2011. Before coming to South Carolina, Soura served in a variety of positions in Pennsylvania state government beginning in 2001. He and his family live in Irmo.*



Christian L. Soura  
Healthy Connections  
Interim Director

## Online Medicaid Application and Tools

Healthy Connections has a website that provides a simple Medicaid application and other helpful tools. The site is located at [apply.scdhhs.gov](http://apply.scdhhs.gov). As a current Healthy Connections Medicaid member, you do not need to reapply. In addition to being able to apply for Medicaid, here are ways the site can help you:

- Use the assessment tool to see if your family members may qualify for Medicaid
- Get answers to common questions about South Carolina Medicaid
- Find contact information for Healthy Connections and the Federal Marketplace



Using the site just makes sense. You can avoid traveling to a local Healthy Connections office and avoid waiting in line. In some cases, you can receive a decision on eligibility more quickly.

## Flu Vaccines for Better Health



Flu season is underway, but there is a simple step you can take to protect yourself and your family from the disease. That step is a flu vaccination, either through a shot or nasal spray. Flu shots and nasal sprays are covered for adults and children with full Medicaid coverage. Adult members can receive a vaccination at many local pharmacies or doctor's offices. Children can get a flu shot through their doctor's office. Both children and adults can also receive the vaccination without a prescription at CVS Minute Clinics or Walmart Care Clinics.

Getting vaccinated can help not only yourself, but also the people you come into contact with, such as family members. Flu vaccination helps reduce the number of people who get the disease. The flu vaccine can help prevent trips to your doctor's office for treatment. And the vaccine can reduce or eliminate missed school or work due to the flu. It's important you get a flu vaccination each year. Flu shots from earlier years become less effective the more time passes. In addition, many years' flu vaccinations are changed to provide protection against different flu viruses.

You should keep in mind that a flu vaccination does not guarantee you won't get the flu. However, a vaccination does protect you against some types of the flu virus. Certain individuals with high-risk health conditions should be sure to see their doctor quickly if they experience any possible flu symptoms. This includes people with heart or lung problems, asthma or diabetes. Getting to the doctor quickly at the first sign of the flu is important because doctors can provide medicines that will help fight the flu.

## Annual Reviews Are Underway

Healthy Connections reviews your case annually to determine if you and your family still qualify for Medicaid. We also use this opportunity to learn if other changes in your situation may qualify additional household members for coverage. If you have received your annual review form in the mail, please complete and return it within 30 days of the date on the form to ensure that your coverage is not stopped.

The Annual Review form has been redesigned for 2015. You will notice that we may have already completed parts of the form with information on your household that we already have on file. Simply follow the directions on the form to learn what further information we need from you.

It is very important that you complete your annual review. If you have any questions, we are happy to assist you. Please call the Member Services Center at (888) 549-0820 if you have any questions.

## New Adult Dental Benefit

Dental health is a key part of improving and maintaining your health. The health of your teeth and gums can affect the health of the rest of your body. Healthy Connections recognizes this fact, and now covers dental services for adult members up to a maximum of \$750 worth of services each year. The new services offered are:

- An annual cleaning
- Oral exams
- X-rays
- Pulling of teeth
- Fillings

These new services are available to members age 21 and older who have full Healthy Connections Medicaid benefits. If you use these services, there is a \$3.40 copayment for adult Healthy Connections Medicaid members toward the cost of preventive care.



Services that are not covered include, but are not limited to:

- Crowns
- Root canals
- Periodontal scaling and root planning
- Teeth whitening
- Dentures

Members can locate a participating dental provider by visiting Dentaquest's website at [dentaquest.com](http://dentaquest.com) or by calling (888) 307-6552. You should have your Healthy Connections ID number ready before you call.

Your dentist can take care of most dental problems and you do not need to go to the emergency room. However, adult emergency dental services are covered for Healthy Connections members and will not change as a result of the new preventive dental benefit.

## Help Available For Latino Community



South Carolina has one of the fastest growing Latino populations in the United States. Language and cultural differences can keep Latino families from getting the health care they need. PASOs is a group that can help address this problem. The group helps the Latino community and service providers work together to build strong and healthy families. PASOs can provide you and your family:

- Classes in Spanish on family health and parenting skills
- Information and help using community resources

PASOs community health workers educate their communities about available resources and how to be healthy. These workers are called *promotores* in Spanish.

The group also helps the Latino community and health care providers understand each other better. This understanding can improve your care.

Last year, the PASOs team worked with more than 1,700 Latino families from all over South Carolina. With tools and support from PASOs, many families made healthier decisions and achieved their health goals.

If you want to learn more about being healthy and getting the care you need, PASOs can help. Visit the PASOs website at [scpasos.org/contact-us](http://scpasos.org/contact-us) or call Executive Director Julie Smithwick at (803) 777-5466 to find the Spanish-speaking area coordinator closest to you.

## Healthy Connections Checkup Can Help Friends, Family and Co-workers

Healthy Connections needs your help to spread the word about an enhanced package of benefits available to men and women in South Carolina. The program is called Healthy Connections Checkup. The program covers Family Planning benefits including birth control and screenings and exams. For example, Checkup covers a physical exam once every two years. Checkup also covers screenings such as those for diabetes and cholesterol.



The Checkup program is not for full Medicaid members. But Healthy Connections understands that many of the people you know and work with may not qualify for full Medicaid. Individuals who do not qualify for full Medicaid may be eligible for Checkup. This is where you come in. Healthy Connections needs your help to reach individuals who may be eligible for Checkup. If you know someone who does not have insurance or does not qualify for full Medicaid, please tell them about Checkup. Urge them to apply for the first time or apply again at [apply.scdhhs.gov](http://apply.scdhhs.gov). You can help someone gain access to the Checkup program and improve their health.

## Winter Driving Tips

Winter weather can make driving more dangerous. Be sure to take extra care when driving in winter conditions.

In addition to being extra cautious on the roads during this time of year, you should:

- **Avoid driving if possible.** If you can, do not drive your vehicle in dangerous weather conditions. Wait until conditions are safer.
- **Brake earlier.** It takes more time for brakes to work in sloppy conditions, such as roads with snow or ice. This is true even if you have a vehicle with four-wheel drive.
- **Slow down.** Speed limits provided on road signs are based on dry surfaces. Driving the speed limit in winter road conditions can be unsafe.



- **Be cautious on bridges.** Bridges can have frozen surfaces even when normal road surfaces are fine.
- **Leave more space for other motorists.** Following too closely in poor driving conditions could lead to a collision.
- **Do not brake or accelerate during turns.** Doing so could lead to your vehicle losing traction. Instead, brake before making a turn and wait until you have completed the turn to accelerate.
- **Do not use cruise control.** You should always have direct control of your vehicle at all times.
- **Remove snow and ice from your vehicle before driving, including the top.** This step makes sure your view outside your car will not be blocked.
- **Use common sense.** Always keep this in mind when driving in winter conditions. Driving in winter conditions is much different than normal conditions. You should adjust the way you drive.

It's never completely safe to drive in winter weather conditions, but keeping these steps in mind can help make driving safer.

## Have Questions or Need Help? Keep in Touch With Us!

Use the phone numbers and websites below to call us for information, ask for help or keep up with the latest Healthy Connections news and information.

- Healthy Connections Member Services Center ..... (888) 549-0820  
(8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday)
- Healthy Connections Website ..... [scdhhs.gov](http://scdhhs.gov)
- Like us on Facebook ..... [facebook.com/scmedicaid](https://facebook.com/scmedicaid)
- Follow us on Twitter ..... [twitter.com/scmedicaid](https://twitter.com/scmedicaid)
- Follow us on Pinterest ..... [pinterest.com/scmedicaid](https://pinterest.com/scmedicaid)



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