



## Healthy and Connected Member Newsletter - Oct. 27, 2023

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.

### The ABCs of Safe Sleep for Babies



The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) released its [annual report](#) earlier this year on South Carolina's infant mortality rates. The report showed the number of babies who died of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in 2021 more than doubled from the previous year. This makes it the fourth-leading cause of infant deaths in the state.

It also showed the number of infant deaths, 416, was the highest in almost a decade. The cause of SIDS in babies is unknown. Though, there are ways to monitor sleep factors that can help keep babies safe. October is Safe Sleep and SIDS Awareness Month. There are easy ways parents can keep their babies as safe as possible during sleep. When in doubt, just remember the "ABCs."

**A** – Babies should sleep ALONE in their own sleep space. This means no other people, pets, toys or blankets.

**B** – Put your baby to sleep flat on their BACK with no props, for both naps and at night. This helps keep the baby's airway open.

**C** – Use a flat sleep surface like a CRIB, bassinet or play yard with a firm, flat mattress. It should have a tightly fitted sheet. Never place the baby to sleep on a couch, sofa, air mattress or armchair.

It's important for all caregivers, not just parents, to know about and practice safe sleep. Talk to your healthcare provider if you need help creating a safe sleep space for your baby. Learn how to reduce a baby's risk of sleep-related death from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's [website](#).

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## **New Services Available for Members at [apply.scdhhs.gov](http://apply.scdhhs.gov)**

Healthy Connections Medicaid members can now check their annual eligibility review status online at [apply.scdhhs.gov](http://apply.scdhhs.gov). Members can also complete their review, update their contact info or turn in documents online.

Members can learn more on how to use these online functions by viewing new how-to videos. These videos take you through the steps to create an account. They also show how to use each of these services. You can access them on the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services [website](#). Links to the videos are below.

- [How to sign up for a Citizen Portal \(\[apply.scdhhs.gov\]\(http://apply.scdhhs.gov\)\) account](#)
- [How to complete an annual eligibility review online](#)
- [How to update contact information, check annual review status, submit documents or use other quick tools](#)

People can also apply for Medicaid at [apply.scdhhs.gov](http://apply.scdhhs.gov).

Annual eligibility reviews restarted April 1. For more information on annual eligibility reviews, click [here](#). You can also call the Healthy Connections Member Contact Center for help with Medicaid. The number is (888) 549-0820. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. You can also visit your county office. A list is available [here](#). They are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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## **Managed Care Organizations' Annual Star Rating**

Healthy Connections Medicaid has five managed care organizations (MCOs). An MCO is a healthcare company, often called a health plan. They cover many types of

providers like doctors, hospitals and specialists to meet our Medicaid members' healthcare needs. Members may choose to enroll in one of five MCOs.






The five MCOs for South Carolina Medicaid are:

- Absolute Total Care
- Healthy Blue by BlueChoice of South Carolina
- Molina Healthcare of South Carolina
- First Choice by Select Health
- Humana Healthy Horizons in South Carolina

Each one is different. Medicaid members may choose which one is best for their own health needs.

All MCOs are reviewed each year by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). The NCQA grades health plans on the quality of care patients receive. They also rate how happy patients are with their care. All factors of their evaluations go into their final score.

The 2023 ratings are available in the table below:

MCO		Star Rating
Molina	3.5	
Healthy Blue	3.5	
First Choice	3.5	
Absolute Total Care	3	
Humana	3	

Read more about MCO coverage at [SCChoices.com](https://www.sccchoices.com).

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## Medicaid Offers New Benefits

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Your health is important to us. Healthy Connections Medicaid added new benefits to help. These changes apply to Medicaid members enrolled in a managed care plan. They also affect those who are not in a plan.

For full-benefit and family planning limited benefit Healthy Connections Medicaid members:

- Members 19 to 45 years old can now get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. The vaccine was already covered for members between nine and 18 years old. Some types of cancer, like cervical cancer, and HPV infections are more preventable after receiving the HPV vaccine.
- Cologuard® is now covered. It is a preventive colorectal screening test. This test provides a way for you to check your colon health.

For full-benefit Healthy Connections Medicaid members:

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) group treatment services are now covered. This group option increases access to ASD treatment.
- Members can now receive dialysis in end-stage renal disease clinics. This adds access for members by providing a new place to receive treatment.
- Optometry services can now be delivered in mobile units at Title I public schools. This allows children on Medicaid another way to receive vision services, such as eye exams.

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## Breast Cancer Awareness and Warning Signs

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. Breast cancer is the second-most common cancer found in women in the U.S. It is key to know the warning signs and effects of breast cancer. Understanding the importance of breast cancer awareness is the first step to ensuring your own health is not at risk.



What are key symptoms to look out for? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), breast pain, tenderness and any new lumps in the breast area are all signs to be aware of. Want to lower your risk? There are ways to help reduce your risk of breast cancer. These include limiting alcohol consumption, maintaining a healthy weight and breastfeeding your children, if possible.

The best way to know if you have signs is to complete a screening. A screening is a test or exam that shows if you have the disease. Healthy Connections Medicaid benefits cover breast cancer screenings and treatments. People who are not eligible for Medicaid could still qualify for Healthy Connections Medicaid's Breast and Cervical Cancer program. It covers treatment for those with breast cancer who meet the program's requirements. Read more about it [here](#).

[Learn More About Breast Cancer](#)

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## Knowing Signs of ADHD

Millions of children in the nation have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It can sometimes carry on into adulthood. People with ADHD have a hard time paying attention, hyperactivity and impulsive behavior. Kids with ADHD could struggle with schoolwork. They may have lower self-esteem and trouble with relationships. Symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe.

Even though treatment won't cure ADHD, it will help symptoms. Getting an early diagnosis can also help. According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), symptoms can include:

- Impulsiveness
- Disorganization
- Poor time management skills
- Problems focusing
- Restlessness
- Getting easily upset
- Problems completing tasks
- Hot temper
- Trouble coping with stress

Seeing some of these symptoms in your child does not have to mean they have ADHD. It is only diagnosed when signs are serious enough to cause ongoing problems in more than one area of their life.

If you think your child may have ADHD, speak with their doctor. Ask for a developmental screening. This should be part of their well-child check. Visit the Child Mind Institute's [website](#) to know better what ADHD looks like for kids.

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## Staying Healthy this Flu Season



Flu season in South Carolina has begun. The flu can cause mild or severe sickness, and at times can lead to death. People who have the flu usually show [symptoms](#) like fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, fatigue or headaches. Vomiting and diarrhea are also common symptoms for children.

Getting a flu vaccine every year is the best way to help reduce the risk of getting the flu and any of its complications. Once a person gets the shot, it causes antibodies to develop in their body. This takes about two weeks. The antibodies provide protection against the flu. Some people who get the vaccine could still get the flu. However, it can help reduce the severity of the sickness.

Healthy Connections Medicaid full-benefit members can receive a flu shot for free. Children can get the shot from their doctor. Adults can get their shot from any in-network pharmacy or through their primary care doctor.

DHEC tracks the spread of the flu across the state. They check to see what impact it has on our health. The agency releases a weekly report called Flu Watch. The report shares how many people are hospitalized due to the flu, any deaths and more. View more info about DHEC's flu watch activity [here](#).

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

