

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Healthy Connections
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Healthy and Connected Member Newsletter - Jan. 30, 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.

Healthy Connections Medicaid Annual Reviews Update

Medicaid eligibility annual reviews have been paused since March 2020. This pause was due to the federal COVID-19 public health emergency. The federal government recently took action that will end this pause. Annual reviews will restart for Healthy Connections Medicaid members this year.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services will soon announce the date on which our standard annual review process will resume. All cases will not be up for review at the same time. We will review groups of cases each month. We expect it to take 12 months to complete this process. We will let you know when it is time for your review.

When the process restarts, we will first try to renew members' eligibility with info we already have. If we can confirm eligibility, you will receive a "continuation of benefits" notice. If we cannot prove your continued eligibility this way, we will mail you an annual review form. It will need to be filled out and returned. The return date will be in the mail we send you. We will also send you reminders by text if we have your cell phone number. If the due date has passed, return the form anyway. You may still be covered. If you do not return the form, you may lose your Medicaid coverage.

Once we receive your form, your coverage will continue while your case is reviewed. When we finish, you will receive a notice with a decision.

It is important to update your contact and household info now. If we do not have your correct contact details, you could miss important updates. You can change your address, phone number and email address:

- Online at apply.scdhhs.gov;
- By phone at (888) 549-0820 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; or,
- In person at your local [eligibility office](#).

To change your info, you will need your Medicaid card or Social Security number, date of birth, phone number and new address.

You can learn more at www.scdhhs.gov/annualreviews.

Cervical Health Awareness



January is Cervical Health Awareness Month. This gives us the chance to learn more about the importance of a healthy cervix. The cervix is the lower, narrow part of a female's uterus. It joins the uterus to the vagina and lets fluids flow in and out.

When cancer starts in the cervix, it is called cervical cancer. Anyone with a cervix is at risk for cervical cancer. The main cause of cervical cancer is the long-lasting infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV), a common virus that is passed from one person to another during sex.

Anyone who has had sexual contact with another person could have HPV. It causes almost all cases of cervical cancer. You can help prevent cervical cancer by getting the HPV vaccine and regular cervical cancer screenings. This form of cancer is also treatable if diagnosed early.

You can help your cervical health by limiting your number of sexual partners, using condoms during sex and not smoking – or quitting, if you do smoke.

The HPV vaccine is covered for all Healthy Connections Medicaid members ages nine through 18. It is also important for females to have regular gynecological visits and screening tests as recommended by your doctor.

Learn the signs, risks and more facts about cervical cancer from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

[Learn More About Cervical Cancer](#)

Donating Blood Can Save a Life

The holiday season of giving might be over, but did you know there's one thing we can give any time of year that could save someone's life and costs nothing at all?

According to the American Red Cross, someone needs blood every two seconds in the United States. January is National Blood Donor Month. It's one of the months that is hardest to collect enough blood supply for patients. Seasonal illnesses and harsh weather make it tougher in the winter to get as many donations. The Red Cross needs to get 13,000 pints of blood from across the country every day to meet the needs of patients.

Donations are used for blood transfusions. A blood transfusion is when a patient receives the blood of a healthy donor. There are many different reasons for a transfusion like surgeries, serious injury, childbirth, blood disorders, cancer treatment and more.

By donating blood, you can help your community and even save the lives of up to three people. The process takes about one hour, but the actual blood donation only takes about 10 minutes. Those who are age 17 and older, weigh at least 110 pounds and in general good health may be eligible to donate. Visit the [American Red Cross website](#) to find a blood drive near you.

Getting Active in the New Year

The start of a new year almost always brings resolutions we aim to carry out throughout the year. Most resolutions relate to exercise. If you decide to adopt healthier habits in 2023, try involving your kids too. January is the perfect time to plan some fun – and healthy – activities for you and your children to do together:

- Tag



- Simon says
- Hit the balloon
- Toss and catch
- Playing on a playground
- Hide and seek
- Dancing
- Stretching

Parents can get their children excited about being active. Starting early by encouraging lots of movement and play can help your child build a base for an active lifestyle. Allowing them to try new kinds of activities and sports can also have a positive impact.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has a list of ways parents can help their kids become more active. Read the [full list](#) and other [helpful parenting information](#) for all stages of childhood at www.healthychildren.org.

[Promoting Kids' Physical Activity](#)

Learning About Low Vision



Our vision might not be something we think about every day. But our ability to see is the main sense that allows us to complete many daily tasks. Millions of people in the country are unable to complete those same tasks due to low vision. Having low vision doesn't mean a person is blind, but it does mean they may not be able to do things like read, drive, cook or write. February is Low Vision Awareness Month.

There are four different types of low vision, according to the National Eye Institute:

- Central vision loss – not being able to see things in the center of your vision
- Peripheral vision loss – not being able to see things out of the corners of your eyes
- Night blindness – not being able to see in low light

- Blurry or hazy vision

Adults are not the only ones who can have low vision. About 20% of school-age children have an undiagnosed visual impairment that hurts their learning. Low vision in children and adults can be caused by some of the same conditions:

- **Cataracts:** a clouding of the eye's lens. A cataract can keep light from reaching the retina and can cause light rays to scatter as they pass through the cloudiness. This can cause blurry vision and distort images. Cataracts in children is called [pediatric cataracts](#).
- **Glaucoma:** a group of conditions that damage the optic nerve. Glaucoma can happen at any age but is more common in older adults. Children with [glaucoma](#) could experience blurred vision, nearsightedness that gets worse and/or headaches.
- **Diabetic retinopathy:** a diabetes complication that affects the eyes. It is caused when the blood vessels of the light-sensitive tissue are damaged at the back of the eye. Although it is possible for anyone with type 1 or type 2 diabetes, [diabetic retinopathy](#) most frequently happens to diabetic adults.

If you or your child feels there could be something wrong with your vision, do not ignore it. Healthy Connections Medicaid members younger than 21 are covered for one eye exam and one pair of glasses each year, if medically necessary. Members 21 years old and above are covered for an eye exam when medically necessary. More details about types of low vision are available [here](#).

The Importance of Enough Sleep

When life gets busy, it's easy to push off sleep to focus on finishing things that seem more important. But sleep plays a big part in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Not getting enough sleep over time can raise your risk for chronic health problems. It can also impact how well you think, react, work and learn. March 12-18 is National Sleep Awareness Week. Try adopting a few simple habits for improving your sleep:



- **Stick to a sleep schedule.** Going to bed and getting up at the same time every day reinforces your body's natural sleep-wake cycle. This includes the weekends. The recommended amount of sleep for healthy adults is at least seven hours.

- **Pay attention to what you eat and drink.** Avoid large meals within a couple hours of bedtime. Nicotine, caffeine and alcohol can also interfere with sleep too.
- **Create a restful environment.** Try to keep your room cool, dark and quiet. Also avoid screens from TVs, computers, phones, etc., just before bedtime.
- **Limit your naps.** Taking long naps during the day can interfere with your sleep at night. Try to limit your naps to no more than one hour.
- **Include physical activity into your day.** Regular physical activity can help you sleep better at night. Spending time outside during the day could also help.
- **Manage your worries.** While it's sometimes easier said than done, try to resolve your worries or concerns before bed. Try writing down what's on your mind before you go to sleep and set it aside for tomorrow.

Some people who experience sleep disorders like sleep apnea could require additional assistance. Apnea monitors for babies and Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) and Bi-Level Positive Airway Pressure (BIPAP) devices are covered benefits for qualifying Healthy Connections Medicaid Members. Learn more about how to get healthy sleep from the [Mayo Clinic](#).

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.