

March 20, 2020

SCDHHS Coronavirus Preparation, Response, Resources and Updates

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) is taking proactive steps to protect South Carolina Healthy Connections Medicaid members by ensuring ongoing access to care during the current outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). These steps support important social distancing measures, include new resources for Healthy Connections Medicaid members and give more flexibility to help health care providers safely and effectively treat patients.

Suspension of Annual Reviews

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, signed into law on March 18, 2020, authorizes states to suspend annual redeterminations in order to ensure continuity of care during the nation's COVID-19 response. Accordingly, Healthy Connections Medicaid members enrolled as of March 18, 2020, will retain their eligibility for Medicaid services until the end of the public health emergency, unless the member requests to withdraw from the program.

SCDHHS will issue additional guidance to beneficiaries prior to resuming annual reviews. Healthy Connections members do not need to take any action at this time.

Additional Phone and Virtual Resources for Healthy Connections Medicaid Members

Healthy Connections Medicaid members who are enrolled in a managed care organization (MCO) currently have access to a 24-hour nurse call line where they can ask non-emergency health care-related questions. SCDHHS is also establishing a 24-hour nurse call line as a resource for members who are not currently enrolled in an MCO. SCDHHS expects this new resource to be available by the end of the month and will announce its availability in a future message. MCO nurse call lines are available below:

- First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina
 - (800) 304-5436
- Absolute Total Care
 - (866) 433-6041
- Healthy Blue by BlueChoice of SC
 - (866) 323-0664
- Molina Healthcare of South Carolina
 - (888) 275-8750
- WellCare
 - (800) 919-8807

There are also a number of free resources offered by telehealth virtual care providers. These options are available to anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms in South Carolina. In order to access the free consultation, Healthy Connections Medicaid members should use the promo code COVID19.

- [MUSC Health Virtual Urgent Care](#)
- [McLeod Telehealth](#)
- [Prisma Health Virtual Visit](#)
- [Roper St. Francis Healthcare Virtual Care](#)

Self Regional Healthcare is also offering telephone screening. Call the COVID-19 Screening Line at (864) 725-4200.

Healthy Connections Medicaid members may want to consider using these free resources as a first step if they need access to non-emergency health care. Additionally, to best meet the needs of Healthy Connections Medicaid members, SCDHHS has expanded the availability of the Healthy Connections Medicaid Member Contact Center, which is now open from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturdays, in addition to 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, at 1-888-549-0820.

Practice Social Distancing

In order to maintain access to clinical resources, promote social distancing and help reduce the spread of COVID-19, SCDHHS recommends Healthy Connections Medicaid members access the free phone and virtual resources listed above. Healthy Connections Medicaid members experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, including cough, fever, or shortness of breath, who are unable or unwilling to access the free resources listed above should seek care through their physician.

SCDHHS has also temporarily updated its policies to allow health care providers to perform more services through telehealth, meaning more health care services may be provided over the phone or through a video interaction.

While SCDHHS is providing these new resources and flexibilities, services previously covered by your Medicaid benefits are still covered. If you have concerns about accessing health care services, please have a conversation with your provider before you cancel any planned service.

Tips for Safety and Not Spreading the Virus

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to provide the latest public health information to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the flu and other respiratory viruses. Tips from CDC and DHEC include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a sleeve or tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Remember that we're still in an active flu season, so get your flu shot if you haven't already.

For more public health resources, tips and updates, please regularly check [DHEC](#) and the [CDC's](#) COVID-19 webpages.

Ways to Engage with SCDHHS Online, On the Phone and Through the Mail

SCDHHS has provided several ways to apply for Medicaid, complete an annual review form or ask questions about your coverage or Medicaid status that you can use from home. To promote social distancing and to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the agency has temporarily closed its eligibility offices to walk-in traffic. Healthy Connections Medicaid members and the public can still engage with SCDHHS' dedicated eligibility team members online, over the phone and through the mail to complete any action that would also be completed in an eligibility office.

Where to Go for Help With Your Healthy Connections Medicaid

You can apply for South Carolina Healthy Connections Medicaid, receive assistance with your current Medicaid and find out answers to your Medicaid questions without visiting your local eligibility office. Please see additional options available to assist you below.

1 If you need to apply for Medicaid...

Apply online at apply.scdhhs.gov

2 If you are returning information...

Mail your information to:

SCDHHS – Central Mail

P.O. Box 100101

Columbia, SC 29202-3101

3 If you have questions or need help...

Call the Healthy Connections Medicaid Member Contact Center at **1-888-549-0820** (toll-free)

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Healthy Connections
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