



Healthy NOW

2026 ISSUE 1

www.selecthealthofsc.com



**Ways to stay
healthy as
the seasons
change**

Renew your
Healthy
Connections
(Medicaid)
benefits
See page 2

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 First Choice Member Services
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 **First Choice by Select Health**

Attention: Action Needed!

Yearly Process to Keep Your Medicaid Benefits

MAKE SURE YOU KEEP ELIGIBLE BENEFITS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!



**FIRST CHOICE:
Tried and True,
Time to Renew!**



When you get your annual Medicaid eligibility review form, you have limited time to complete and return it. If you don't return it on time, you and/or your children are at risk of losing Healthy Connections (Medicaid) benefits.

Does Healthy Connections have your current address? It's important that Healthy Connections has your current address and contact information. Please visit the Healthy Connections online portal (<https://tools.apply.scdhhs.gov/quick-tools>) today to update your information to prevent a gap in coverage. For the latest information about annual reviews, please visit Healthy Connections (<https://msp.scdhhs.gov/annualreviews>).

RESPOND QUICKLY TO KEEP YOUR BENEFITS!

Once a year, Healthy Connections will mail you an Annual Review Form. When you get it, please fill it out completely and return it. There are seven ways to submit your completed documents:

1. **Submit** the form online at <https://apply.scdhhs.gov>.
2. **Upload** the documents to the portal at <https://apply.scdhhs.gov>.
3. **Scan** the form and documents. Email them to 8888201204@fax.scdhhs.gov.
4. **Fax** the form and documents to **1-888-820-1204**.
5. **Mail documents to:** SCDHHS — Central Mail
P.O. Box 100101
Columbia, SC 29202-3101
6. **Call SC Healthy Connections at 1-888-549-0820.**
7. **In person:** You can bring your renewal form and documents to a local SC Healthy Connections Eligibility office. You can find an office near you by searching at <https://www.scdhhs.gov/site-page/where-go-help>.



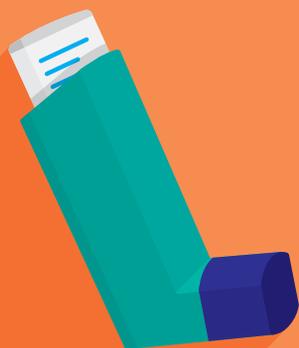
For a list of required documents: <https://www.scdhhs.gov/members/getting-started>

Select Health is here to help, too! Call us at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**.

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ways to stay healthy as the seasons change



1 Take your allergy and asthma medicine. Follow the instructions on the label and from your doctor. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America says it is often best to start allergy treatments before the pollen season begins. That can help prevent symptoms like itchy eyes and a stuffy nose. If you have asthma, it may help prevent asthma attacks. Learn how to manage allergies at <https://aafa.org/allergies>. Click on **Pollen**.

3 Wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds. The CDC says clean running water is not enough. Be sure to get between the fingers and under nails. Handwashing helps protect all of us from germs that cause colds, diarrhea, flu, and other illnesses. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/clean-hands.



2 Get your flu shot. It is not too late. Flu season runs through May. When it is available, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a high-dose vaccine for those who are:

- Younger than age 65 and taking medicines that reduce the strength of the immune system (immunosuppressants).
- Ages 65 and older.

For more helpful vaccine and medicine information, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com.

Are you ready to quit tobacco?

Tobacco use causes serious health problems, including lung cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. When you quit tobacco, you improve your health and lower your risk for early death.

The American Lung Association says your body starts healing soon after you quit smoking:

- After 12 to 24 hours, carbon monoxide levels in your blood go back to normal.
- After 2 weeks to 3 months, your risk for heart attack starts to go down.
- After 1 year, your risk of heart disease is cut in half.

Using tobacco while pregnant can lead to premature birth and other problems, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is best to quit tobacco before getting pregnant, but quitting anytime helps you and your baby stay healthy.

Quitting is hard, but it is possible. The sooner you stop using tobacco, the sooner your body can begin to heal.

Your First Choice: Extra benefits to help you get and stay healthy!

As a First ChoiceSM Medicaid managed care member, you keep your standard Healthy Connections benefits and get certain **extra benefits* at no cost to you!**

Youth sports

- **Youth sports program/YMCA** swim lessons voucher.*
- **Sports physicals for children.** Members who get their sports physical at the same time as their well visit will receive a \$25 gift card.*



Maternity support

- **Electric breast pump** for qualifying members.
- **Prenatal and postpartum doula services** and lactation (breastfeeding) support for qualifying members.
- **Regional baby showers** with choice of car seat, portable crib, or stroller.
- **Meals** for qualifying new moms.
- **Transportation vouchers** for qualifying pregnant members.*
- **Access to online parenting classes** that help with sleep, potty training, and more.
- **Keys to Your Care[®] program** that offers helpful text messages and reminders during and after your pregnancy.

Education support

- **College scholarships and GED vouchers** for selected qualifying members.* (See page 5.)
- **Back-to-school events** with school supplies and haircuts for grades K – 12 (while supplies last).

More to explore!

- **Adult vision care** that includes an eye exam and glasses every 2 years.*
- **Emergency kits** that include road hazard tools, first aid supplies, and a flashlight.**
- **Feminine hygiene kits** for qualifying members ages 10 to 18.
- **Fresh Produce Box** and Meal Program.*
- **Regional member appreciation events.**
- **State-of-the-art community center.**

For full details, scan the QR code or visit www.selecthealthofsc.com/extrabenefits.

Questions? Call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020** (TTY 1-888-765-9586).



Are you a new member?

Get a **\$25 gift card for completing a new member orientation** within 30 days of enrollment with First Choice.**

*Conditions apply; see website.

**Note: For certain benefits, there is a limit of one per household, per lifetime.



Mission GED program

First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina has a program to help you get your high school equivalency diploma. The Mission GED (general educational development) program helps cover the cost of the GED exam (up to \$150 in testing fees) and 1 retake, if needed. There is no cost to members who qualify. You may be eligible to take part if you:

- Are a First Choice member at the time of enrollment into the GED program.
- Are age 19 or older.
- Do not already have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Are not enrolled in high school or college.

For more information, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com/community/ged-reading-internships.

Congratulations, First Choice Scholarship recipients!

Five South Carolina high school students received a First Choice Member Scholarship in 2025:

- **Bryson Tench** from Belton will attend Anderson University.
- **Jayllen Fray** from Irmo will attend Coker College.
- **Joshua Ludovina** from Columbia will attend TriCounty Technical College.
- **Michael Jamison** from Irmo will attend the University of South Carolina – Columbia.
- **Sterling Reese** from Gadsden will attend Morehouse College.

The CAC needs you, our members!

The First Choice Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is made up of our members, as well as our associates, doctors, and members of community-based organizations that represent the culturally diverse communities we serve. We value our members' voices. They help us in our ongoing work to improve processes and add extra benefits and services. The goal is to improve members' health outcomes and overall experience with our plan.

Join the CAC if you would like to:

- Help us decide what extra benefits, such as glasses for adults and swim lessons, are helpful to our members.
- Offer feedback about how we can improve.
- Help us make sure member materials are easy to access and use in the correct way.

Here is how it works:

- To join, you must be a First Choice member and age 18 or older.
- The CAC meets once each quarter.
- You can attend in person or virtually via Zoom.

To learn more or join the CAC:

Call Tina Dailey at **1-803-847-6521** or Eulanda Cameron-Bethea at **1-854-240-2002**.



Doula services support you and your baby

First Choice can help you access doula services and the prenatal care you need through the **Bright Start® program**. A certified doula is trained to provide extra support. They will not replace your doctor or midwife.

First Choice offers doula services to members who qualify.* Covered services include:

- Four prenatal (before birth) visits with your doula.
- Four postpartum (after birth) visits with your doula.
- Live chats with certified doulas.
- A maternity resource library through the Pacify App.

A doula can:

- Help you create a birth plan that states your needs and wishes.
- Encourage you and help you prepare for childbirth.
- Assist you as you heal from childbirth and adjust to having a baby.
- Help you with breastfeeding.
- Offer guidance and support to your loved ones.

Have questions about doula services or want to join the Bright Start program? Call **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**.

**Conditions apply; see website.*

Help us better help you!

First Choice sends out a Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey each year to evaluate services important to you. The survey is mailed to a random sample of members.

Survey results tell us how you feel about your doctors, our plan, and the care you receive. It helps us improve our programs to better support our mission to help people get quality care, stay well, and build healthy communities.

We will mail the next CAHPS survey in early 2026. If you get one, please fill it out and mail it back in the prepaid envelope provided. We look forward to hearing from you!

Scores for 2025 are in!
The 2025 CAHPS received an overall score of 4.5 out of 5 stars in the child survey and 4 stars in the adult survey.

Why you should go to your postpartum visits



It is important to take care of your own health after having a baby. This includes checkups with your doctor. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends:

- A visit with your doctor within 3 weeks (21 days) of giving birth.
- Ongoing care as needed based on your first check-in with your doctor.
- A full checkup (comprehensive visit) within 12 weeks of giving birth.

During your postpartum care, your doctor should:

- Ask questions about your mood as part of a postpartum depression screening.
- Check that you are healing well.

- Help you manage high blood pressure that began during your pregnancy (preeclampsia), if needed.

You and your doctor should also talk about:

- How to eat healthy foods and exercise safely.
- Safe ways to manage lack of sleep and feeling tired.
- Birth control and when it would be safe to get pregnant again.

At home, be sure to follow your doctor's advice. The goal is to have a healthy routine that supports your physical and mental health.

Earn gift cards for having maternity care

It's a win-win situation! With First Choice, eligible members can earn rewards for completing things that help them stay healthy. If you are pregnant, you can earn rewards (gift cards) for completing the following care:

- **Prenatal visit with your doctor.** Earn a \$25 reward when you have this visit in your first trimester (before you are 12 weeks pregnant). If you are new to First Choice, you must see your doctor within 40 days of enrollment.*
- **Postpartum visit.** Earn a \$25 reward for having this visit within 1 to 12 weeks (7 to 84 days) after the delivery of your baby.*

For details on how to earn and use rewards, call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

**Benefit terms and eligibility are subject to change.*

What you should know about continuous glucose monitors



Are you or a loved one thinking about getting a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) to help manage high blood sugar?

Here is helpful information from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases:

Who: A doctor may suggest you use a CGM if you have high blood sugar (diabetes) and take insulin. CGMs are made for both children and adults.

What: A CGM takes blood glucose (sugar) readings every few minutes. It has 3 main parts:

- **A sensor.** This often goes under the skin in your arm or abdomen to detect glucose in the body.
- **A transmitter.** This is attached to the sensor and sends your data to other devices.
- **Software.** This can be on a handheld receiver, a smartphone, or an insulin pump.

Why: A CGM tracks blood sugar levels over time to help you manage your diabetes. Here are just a few examples:

- It can alert you when your blood sugar is getting too high or low. This may help prevent emergencies. Some CGMs will send readings and alerts to a parent, caregiver, or other chosen person.
- It keeps a record of your levels. You can share this with your doctor.

- Readings can help you figure out your insulin dosage or tell an insulin pump how much to give you.

Get help with diabetes care

First Choice members can join the In Control diabetes program to get extra help managing diabetes. Visit www.selecthealthofsc.com/member/benefits/in-control-diabetes-program to learn more.

To join, log in to the member portal or call **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**. Select the options for **Rapid Response/Care Management**.

Find information about your prescription benefits online

Visit www.selecthealthofsc.com for information about:

- How your prescription benefits work.
- First Choice's preferred drug resources, including the South Carolina Statewide Preferred Drug List (PDL).
 - A drug list, also called a PDL, is a list of medicines covered by First Choice.
- How we let you know about drug list changes.
- How often the drug list changes occur.
- Limits and exceptions.
- Prior authorization of medicines.
- Generic substitution and step therapy.
- Copayments.

High blood pressure affects young adults, too

Youth has some advantages.

A healthy blood pressure level is not always one of them. High blood pressure is called hypertension. This condition has become a widespread problem for many people ages 18 to 24. Often, high blood pressure does not cause symptoms you will notice.

Know your risk

Habits that raise your risk for high blood pressure include:

- Not being active.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Eating too much salt.
- Using tobacco.

Healthy changes can help lower your blood pressure.

Get support

Talk with your doctor about your heart health. They can help you take care of your heart.

Do you have high blood pressure? First Choice offers the Heart First Care Management program to help members learn about and manage their conditions. To learn more, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com/member/benefits/heart-first-program.

Source: Meghanad Meher et al, "Risk Factors Associated with Hypertension in Young Adults: A Systematic Review," *Cureus*, Vol. 15, No. 4.



How to care for your eyes

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says you should take the steps below to help protect your eyesight.

Schedule an exam

See an eye care provider for a comprehensive eye exam that can help detect eye diseases at early stages. For First Choice members younger than age 21, benefits include 1 exam each year with an in-network provider. An exam and glasses are covered every 2 years for members ages 21 and older. To learn more, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com/member/benefits. Click on **Medical benefits**.

Find out which eye conditions run in your family

This can help you and your eye care provider know your risk level. Ask your provider how to lower your risk as needed. To learn about eye conditions and how to help prevent them, visit www.cdc.gov/vision-health.

Quit smoking

Talk with your doctor if you need help to quit smoking. For help now, call the South Carolina Tobacco Quitline at **1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)**.



More than just the blues?

Feeling sad from time to time is a part of life. But for people with depression, these feelings last and get in the way of daily living. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) says sadness is

a symptom of depression, but there are many others, such as:

- Not enjoying the things that you used to like.
- Feeling empty, worthless, or helpless.
- Finding it hard to focus or make decisions.
- Feeling tired and sleeping too much or too little.
- Thinking of hurting yourself.

Talk with your doctor if you have symptoms that do not go away. Treatment can help people with depression feel better. The NIMH says this may involve medicine, counseling, or both.

For help in a crisis, call the **988** Suicide and Crisis Line at **988** or chat at **www.988lifeline.org**.

Seasonal sadness

Do you feel depressed when the hours of daylight are shorter? Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that often starts in late fall or early winter. The NIMH says it then eases in the spring or summer. Treatment may include:

- Counseling.
- Light therapy.
- Medicine.
- Vitamin D.

Extreme moods

People with bipolar disorder have extreme changes in mood and energy, says the NIMH. During a low period, they have signs of depression. During an up period (mania), they feel very excited, happy, and full of energy. Treatment may include medicine, counseling, or both.

Support for members

If you need help or have questions about behavioral health, talk to your primary care provider (PCP) or mental health provider.

As a First Choice member, you have access to a wide range of behavioral health services.

To learn more about these plan benefits:

- Visit **www.selecthealthofsc.com/member/staying-healthy/behavioral-health**.
- Call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

Translation and other support services

If you have limited English or vision or hearing impairments, First Choice can help you access your plan information and health care services.

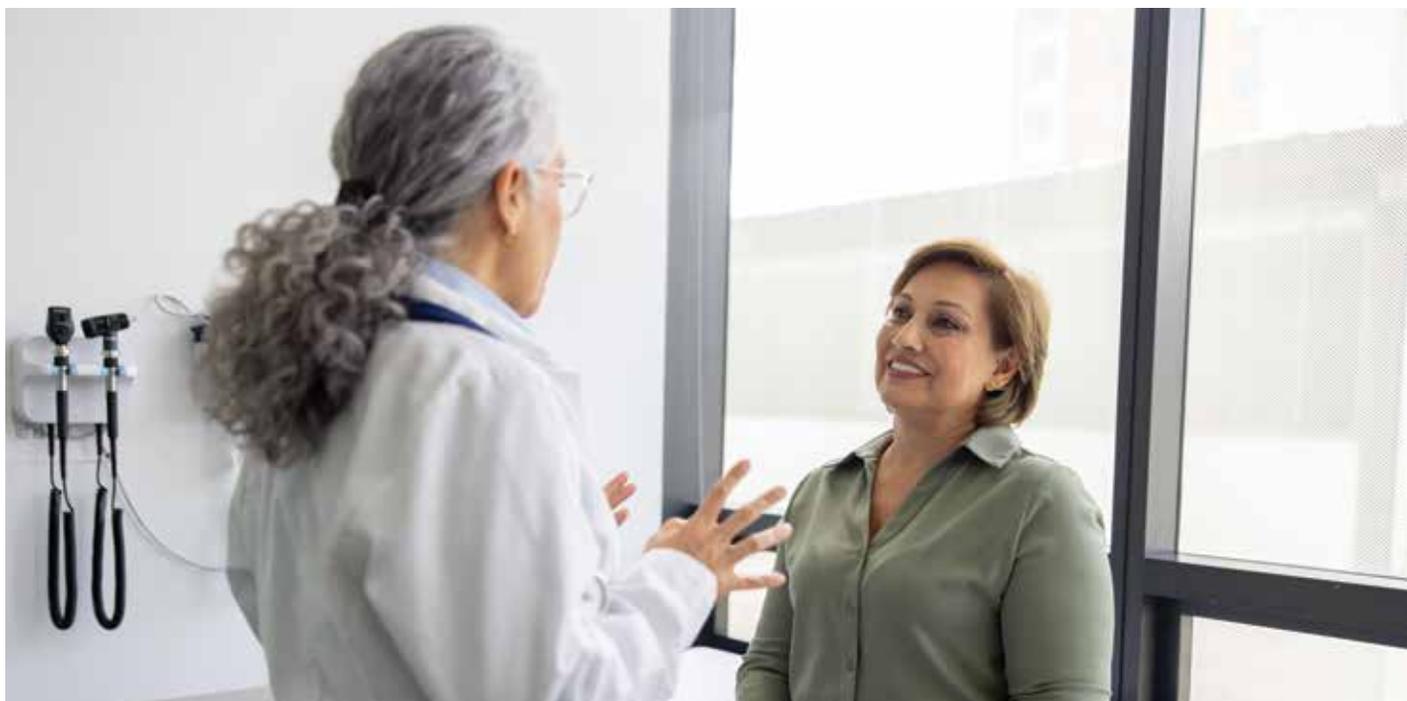
We can translate and interpret key documents at no cost to you. If you:

- Speak Spanish, you can talk with a bilingual team members.
- Speak a language other than English or Spanish, we can connect you with interpreters for **more than 200 languages through the INTERPRETALK program.**
- Have vision or hearing impairments, we can give you First Choice member materials in formats like Braille, large print, or audiotape.

To tell us your preferred language or to reach an interpreter:

- Call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Call Member Services for pharmacy questions Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Call the 24-hour Nurse Call Line after hours on any day at **1-800-304-5436**.
- Call **1-888-765-9586** anytime for TTY service.

Your doctors can also call us to get language services for you. First Choice members can also get in-person translation when phone-based interpretation is not enough.



If your primary language is not English, language services are available to you, free of charge. Call **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**.

Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística.

Llame al **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**.

First Choice is here for you! This newsletter and other materials are translated into Spanish and can be found on our website at www.selecthealthofsc.com. If you need help with translations of other documents, or in other languages, please call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

Disponibilidad de traducción

¡First Choice está aquí para usted! Este boletín informativo y otros materiales están traducidos al español, y se pueden encontrar en nuestro sitio de Internet en www.selecthealthofsc.com. Si necesita ayuda con traducciones de otros documentos, o en otros idiomas, llame a Servicios al Miembro al **1-888-276-2020**.

www.selecthealthofsc.com

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Chicken gumbo

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- ¼ cup flour
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 ½ pounds chicken breast, skinless, boneless, cut into 1-inch strips
- 1 cup (½ pound) cubed white potatoes
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 cup (½ pound) coarsely chopped carrots
- ½ medium carrot, grated
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- 4 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 2 stalks scallion, chopped
- 1 whole bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon thyme
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons hot (or jalapeño) pepper
- 1 cup (½ pound) okra, sliced into ½-inch pieces

Directions

1. Add oil to a large pot and heat over medium heat.

2. Stir in flour. Cook, stirring constantly, until flour begins to turn golden brown.
3. Slowly stir in broth using a wire whisk. Cook for 2 minutes. Broth mixture should not be lumpy.
4. Add rest of ingredients except okra. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and let simmer for 20 to 30 minutes.
5. Add okra and let cook for 15 to 20 more minutes.
6. Remove bay leaf and serve hot in bowl or over rice.

Per serving

Serves 8; serving size is ¾ cup. Each serving contains 165 calories, 4 g total fat (1 g saturated fat), 51 mg cholesterol, 81 mg sodium, 11 g total carbohydrate, 2 g dietary fiber, 349 mg potassium, and 21 g protein.

Source: NHLBI: *Keep the Beat Heart Healthy Recipes*



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