

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

Healthy NOW

WINTER 2023

www.selecthealthofsc.com

Renewing
your Healthy
Connections
(Medicaid)
benefits

Learn more on page 2

Extra benefits
can help you get
or stay healthy

Apply for a
First Choice
Member
Scholarship
See page 5

Attention: Action Needed!

Yearly Process to Keep Your Medicaid Benefits



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

Time is short! 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.

To make sure you get your form, 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>).



Scan with your phone.

RESPOND QUICKLY TO KEEP YOUR BENEFITS!

Your annual Healthy Connections review process: Easy as 1, 2, 3!

1 Once a year, Healthy Connections will mail you an Annual Review form in an envelope that looks like this.

- When you get it, please fill it out completely and go to Step 2.
- If you are unable to locate the form, see the green box on the back for replacement instructions.



2 When returning the completed form, you will need to include the following:

- Social Security numbers (or document numbers for any legal immigrants who need insurance).
- Employer and income information for everyone in your family (for example, paystubs, W-2 forms, or wage and tax statements).
- Policy numbers for any current health insurance, including information about any job-related health insurance available to your family.



3 Return the form and documents to Healthy Connections:

- Submit the form online at <https://apply.scdhhs.gov>.
- Upload the documents to the portal at <https://apply.scdhhs.gov>.
- Scan the form and documents. Email them to 8888201204@fax.scdhhs.gov.
- OR fax the form and documents to 1-888-820-1204.
- In person: You can bring your renewal form and documents to a local South Carolina Healthy Connections Eligibility office. You can find an office near you by checking a list of Healthy Connections offices (<https://www.scdhhs.gov/site-page/where-go-help>).
- Or mail them to: SCDHHS – Central Mail, P.O. Box 100101, Columbia, SC 29202-3101
- Call SC Health Connections at 1-888-549-0820.

Help us better help YOU!

First Choice by Select of South Carolina 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 health care providers, 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 2024. 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 2023 are in! The 2023 CAHPS received an overall score of 4 out of 5 stars in the child survey and 3.5 stars in the adult survey.



Need a replacement Annual Review form?

- Download and print the form from www.scdhhs.gov/sites/default/files/WKR002.pdf.
- Ask for the Annual Review form by secure email at www.selecthealthofsc.com/contact.
- Call First Choice Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**. We can send a form and a postage-paid envelope for sending your completed form to Healthy Connections.
- Call the Healthy Connections Member Contact Center at **1-888-549-0820**.

If you need help filling out the form, call your health plan or Healthy Connections at **1-888-549-0820 (TTY 1-888-842-3620)**.

2 important forms you should know about

Authorization for Disclosure of Health Information Form

This form allows us to share (disclose) your health information with people or organizations you would like us to. This includes friends, family members, and certain state agencies. Examples of information that may be disclosed includes but is not limited to:

- Health care benefits and services.
- Eligibility information.
- Claim information.

Only the information you have listed on this form can be shared with the approved people and organizations. **People and organizations listed on this form CANNOT make changes to your account or make decisions on your behalf.**

Personal Representative Request Form

Personal Representatives include people and organizations who have Health Care Power of Attorney, Guardianships, Health Care Surrogate and/or Custodial Orders in place to assist our members.

This form allows you to appoint an individual (Personal Representative) to act on your behalf and make decisions related to your health. This is important if you become unable to make decisions for yourself (incapacitated). Examples of actions that a personal representative can take include:

- Appeal service denials.
- Request address changes.
- Change primary care provider (PCP).
- Change health care plans.
- Authorize disclosures of the member's protected health information (PHI).
- Request a Designated Record Set.
- Request information regarding claims, eligibility, and more.

These forms can be found at www.selecthealthofsc.com. Click on **Members**. Then, click on **Getting started**. Or, call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)** to ask for the forms.

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

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

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

Rewards for healthy choices

Get gift cards and other rewards for completing qualifying healthy behaviors.

Adult vision care, including an eye exam and glasses every 2 years.**

Maternity support program



- **Regional baby showers** with choice of car seat, portable crib, or stroller. Qualifying members can also get diaper bags and more.
- **NEW! Diaper Days** for children ages 0 – 30 months.
- **Electric breast pump** for new and expectant moms, with a prescription from your OB/GYN.**
- **NEW! Fresh Produce Box and Meal Program** Fresh produce boxes or meal kits home-delivered at no cost for qualifying members.*
- **Newborn circumcision** up to 6 months old.
- **Keys to Your Care[®]** texting with tips and reminders for expectant moms. (Messaging and data fees may apply.)

Educational assistance programs

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

NEW! First Choice Take Flight

Enhanced foster care program for youth who are aging out of foster care.

NEW! Youth Sports Program/ Swim Lessons YMCA Voucher

In collaboration with select YMCA locations, qualified members can get a First Choice voucher for a choice of swim lessons or Youth Sports Program.

State-of-the-art community center

Visitors can have help from our community partners, like Benefit Bank services with certified counselors and tax appointments. (Note: Certain events are for members only.)



**4.5GB
DATA**

Smartphone with SafeLink Wireless[®]

Qualified members get a smartphone (limit one per household). Smartphones have 4.5GB of data, 350 monthly minutes, and unlimited text messages. Smartphone calls to First Choice Member Services that will not count toward the 350 minutes.

- Apply today at www.safelink.com, or call SafeLink at **1-877-631-2550** and use promo code **AmeriHealth**.
- Visit www.selecthealthofsc.com for complete details and restrictions.

Technology resources

- Get access to **texting** and our **mobile app**. (Messaging and data fees may apply.)
- A **searchable website helps you** find no-cost or reduced-cost local services for medical care, food, job training, and other resources. Visit www.selecthealthofsc.com/community.

FirstChoiceSM
by Select Health of South Carolina
Your Hometown Health Plan

Healthy Connections 

*Note: There is a limit of 1 per household, per lifetime.

**Conditions apply, see website.

FC-06142023-M-1

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Congratulations, First Choice Scholarship recipients!

L to R: Eulanda Cameron-Bethea, Select Health Member Engagement Manager; scholarship recipient Lia Bryn Cappello; Will Camp, Select Health Government and External Affairs Director; and Thanlia Jamison, mother of scholarship recipient Brandon Jamison.

Four First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina members received a First Choice Member Scholarship in 2023:

- **Lia Bryn Cappello** from Camden who will attend Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, majoring in psychology.
- **Brandon Jamison** from Irmo who will attend the University of South Carolina – Columbia, majoring in pharmaceutical science.
- **Rebekah Miller** from Elloree who will attend Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, majoring in nursing.
- **Lucas White** from Greenville who will attend Furman University, majoring in music performance.

To share their plans and celebrate their achievements, a special brunch was held for recipients and their families on July 20. “We are so proud of you all,” said Michelle Ehret, Manager of Strategic Community Development, who also encouraged the students to keep in touch as they begin their college careers. “We are thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of our scholarship recipients and wish them well as they embark upon exciting future opportunities!” added Courtney Thompson, Market President.

Dreaming of college or a trade school? Check out the First Choice Member Scholarship

If you are hoping to go to college or continue your education, First Choice has a scholarship program for selected qualifying members that could help make your dream possible.

For more information, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com. Click on **Community** at the top, and then **Member scholarship program**. If you have questions, call **1-803-254-5601**. Applications are due by March 1, 2024.

Plan your pregnancy care

Schedule your prenatal checkups as soon as you find out you are pregnant. The Office of Women's Health says these checkups usually take place:

- Once a month during weeks 4 through 28.
- Twice a month during weeks 28 through 36.
- Each week during weeks 36 until the birth.

If your pregnancy has a higher risk for problems (complications), you may need to see your provider more often.

Here are 5 more things you can do to take care of yourself and your baby:

Track your blood pressure. Blood pressure problems can put you and your baby at risk. Know your numbers: A high blood pressure is higher than 140/90. Take note of your blood pressure at each visit. If you see any changes that concern you, talk about them with your provider.

Get your recommended shots (vaccines). Ask your provider about getting a flu shot and whether you should have a COVID-19 vaccine or other shots.

If you smoke, pick up the phone. Smoking can put you and your baby at risk for problems. The South Carolina Tobacco Quitline offers key support to

help you stop smoking, at no cost to you. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)**.

Notice how you feel every day. Know how your body feels normally and be aware of any changes. Also notice any changes in your emotions. It's normal to worry and feel some fatigue during pregnancy. But if you feel extreme sadness, anxiety, or tiredness, it could be a sign of prenatal depression. You should call your provider or our 24/7 Nurse Call Line at **1-800-304-5436**.

Get ready for delivery. Ask your provider how to prepare for your baby's birth. We are also here for you. If you have questions or need help, call **1-888-276-2020**.

First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina, "Your Guide to an Empowered Pregnancy," www.selecthealthofsc.com/pdf/member/eng/member-your-guide-to-an-empowered-pregnancy.pdf.



Taking care of moms

First Choice has extra benefits to support pregnant and new moms. Visit www.selecthealthofsc.com. Click on **Members, Benefits**, and then **Additional benefits** for more information about:

- Care Managers available through our Bright Start® prenatal program.
- Regional baby showers with car seats, diaper bags, and more.*
- Home-delivered meals for new moms.**
- Electric breast pumps for new and expectant moms.**
- Diaper Days for children ages 0 – 30 months.*

*For qualifying members, while supplies last. **Conditions apply; see website.

More than baby blues?

Postpartum depression can start anytime in the first year after giving birth. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says to watch for these symptoms:

- Feeling sad, hopeless, or overwhelmed.
- Losing interest in things you once enjoyed.
- Being uninterested in your baby.
- Lacking energy and motivation.

Tell a loved one and your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms.

Ask your provider about preventive health care

Preventive health care can help you stay healthier throughout your life.

All First Choice members should see their primary care provider (PCP) for checkups and screenings. These services help your PCP find health problems early, when treatment may be most helpful.

Talk with your PCP about your risk for cancer, diabetes, and other health conditions. Ask what screenings you should have and how often to have them. Find out their risks and benefits. Talk about the following recommendations from First Choice:

- **Blood pressure.** Your provider should check your blood pressure at least once every 1 to 2 years. If you are pregnant, your provider should check your level at each visit.
- **Blood sugar.** You may need to have an HbA1c blood test each year. It can help find or

manage high blood sugar. If you have diabetes, the American Diabetes Association says you should have this test every few months, even if you test your blood sugar daily.

- **Kidney function.** If you have diabetes, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases says you may need to have urine and blood tests to see how your kidneys are working.
- **Colorectal cancer.** Have a colonoscopy at age 50 and then every 5 to 10 years. Some people may need to start at age 45.
- **Cervical cancer.** Have a Pap test every 3 years, starting at age 21 or as directed by your health care provider. Starting at age 30, you may choose to have an HPV test along with the Pap test every 5 years. Both tests can be performed by your provider at the same time.

To learn more about preventive services for adults and children, visit www.selecthealthofsc.com. Click on **Members** and choose **Staying healthy**. Then, click on **Preventive health services**. To schedule a checkup, call your PCP's office. For help, you can also call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**.

First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina and South Carolina Healthy Connections Medicaid, "Adult Preventive Health Guidelines," www.selecthealthofsc.com/pdf/member/eng/health/adult-guidelines.pdf.



Use your benefits in the right way

At First Choice, we work with you and your primary care provider (PCP) to make sure your benefits are used the right and most cost-efficient way. First Choice makes decisions based on the care, services, and your coverage.

We do not give rewards or money to our staff, providers, or anyone else for denying, limiting, or delaying health care coverage or services. Please call Member Services to ask about specific services and benefits that First Choice covers.

Do you have questions about a pending authorization or denial? We are here to help with utilization management concerns during and after normal business hours. We also have no-cost TTY and language services for members. Please call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**.

Benefit updates

Effective July 1, 2023:

- Cologuard for colorectal screening is a covered benefit.
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine coverage now includes members from 19 to 45 years of age. It is still covered for members from ages 9 to 18.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Group treatment services are a covered service.

Do not let SAD darken your mood

Do you crave starchy foods?

Do you notice changes in your mood and energy level? If the shifting seasons seem to affect you this way, then you might have symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD), says the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). SAD is a form of depression.

Symptoms

SAD shares common symptoms with major depression, such as feeling hopeless and having trouble concentrating. However, people with SAD also tend to have other symptoms. NIMH says these may include:

- Overeating.
- Gaining weight.
- Feeling sluggish.
- Oversleeping.

Experts are not sure what causes SAD. NIMH reports that it may be related to less daylight during the fall and winter months. This can affect the body in many ways, such as hormone levels, and could play a role in SAD.

Treatment

If you think you might have SAD, tell your health care provider. Talk about treatment options. NIMH says the following may help:

- Light therapy.
- Talk therapy.
- Medicines.
- Vitamin D supplements.

Self-Care

The NIMH says you can also try these ideas:

- Go outside or soak in some sunlight through windows.
- Be more active. Exercise can help boost your mood.
- Spend time with others.



Stigma: Is it keeping you from seeking treatment?

It can be hard to put aside your worries and ask for help. Shame, embarrassment, and fear of judgment are common reasons people avoid treatment for mental health conditions. But keep in mind that treatment can help you or a loved one feel better. Plus, you are not alone.

Almost half of all American adults will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives, reports Mental Health America. These conditions include:

- Anxiety disorders.
- Substance use disorders.
- Depression.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) says treatment can help most people recover. Treatment is different from person to person. Talk with your health care provider about your needs. NAMI says treatment may include:

- Medicine.
- Talk therapy.
- Self-care.

First Choice members have access to mental health services. For information, visit www.selectthehealthofsc.com. Under **Members**, click on **Benefits**. Then, click on **Mental health services**.



Overcoming opioid use with the right treatment

The United States is experiencing an opioid crisis,

says the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). A ray of hope is the fact that treatments for opioid addiction have come a long way. They can help people stop using opioids once and for all.

What is medication-assisted treatment (MAT)?

Tailored to each person, MAT can help treat opioid addiction and may lead to recovery. SAMHSA says MAT programs should offer:

- Medicines that stop the cravings for opioids.

- Counseling and behavioral therapies to work through related issues.
- Other treatments based on a person's needs.

Some people may need MAT for just a few months, says SAMHSA. Others may need MAT for years or even the rest of their lives.

How do the medicines work?

Medicines that may be used for MAT are buprenorphine, naltrexone, and methadone. These medicines can help reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Some also block the effect of opioids.

How can you find a program?

If you or a loved one needs help, do not wait. Talk with your health care provider. Visit <https://dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/directory.aspx> for an Opioid Treatment Program Directory. To learn about opioids and find resources, you can visit www.selecthealthofsc.com. Under **Members**, click on **Staying healthy**. Then, click on **Opioid Information**.

Did you know?

If you have used up the limits of covered benefits, you can call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020** for help and information about resources to continue care.



Your ER discharge checklist

You went to the emergency room (ER) and received the care you needed. What happens next? The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says 1 of your top goals should be preventing a repeat visit. To help you do this, follow the instructions you received when you left (were discharged) from the ER. Use this checklist to help you recover and get the follow-up care you need:

- Make your next appointment.** You may need to get tests done, visit your PCP, or see a specialist. The National Committee for Quality Assurance says your next appointment should be within 7 days of your discharge date.
- Speak with your providers.** You should let your PCP and any mental health care providers know about your time in the ER, even if your next visit is with a specialist.
- Check your symptoms.** Let your PCP know if you detect any new health issues or if your existing symptoms get worse.
- Fill any new prescriptions.** And always take them as directed. If you have questions, talk with your PCP or ask the pharmacist.
- Make self-care a priority.** Be sure to rest and drink enough fluids. You may need to limit some activities or foods. Check your discharge instructions.



Member Services

Let us help! Call **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**. We are here to answer benefit questions and help you:

- Schedule health care provider visits.
- Get your covered medicines filled. Call before you leave the pharmacy.
- Arrange transportation to and from provider visits or a pharmacy to pick up your covered medicine.

After a visit to a provider, let us know if you wait longer than 45 minutes from your appointment time.

For health-related questions, call the 24/7 Nurse Call Line at **1-800-304-5436**. For complete and detailed information, see your Member Handbook at www.selecthealthofsc.com.



Prescriptions

There is generally no monthly limit to how many prescriptions you can have filled. Certain medicines have limitations. Some medicines need prior authorization (PA). Your health care provider should submit this request. Ask your provider to check the list of preferred drugs on our website to see if a PA is needed.

For medicines that need a prior authorization, you may get a 72-hour temporary supply from your pharmacy while the request is pending.* A decision for drug prior authorization can take up to 24 hours. Learn more at www.selecthealthofsc.com. Under **Members**, click on **Benefits**. Then select **Prescription benefits**.

**A member is permitted 1 temporary supply per prescription number. Inhalers, diabetic test strip and supplies, and creams or lotions are exceptions to the supply limit because of how they are packaged. For those medicines, the member may receive the smallest package size available.*

Medicine updates

Formulary Change:

On November 6, 2023, Humira was removed from the First Choice Drug Formulary. If you receive this medicine, talk with your provider about switching to the alternative biosimilars Hadlima or Adalima.



Be a part of our Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is a group made up of community partners and First Choice members. To help make sure we provide the best care for our members, we created the CAC. It is a way to get your voice heard. With your help, we can better understand our members' needs.

If you join the group, you would take part in CAC meetings. The CAC meets 4 times a year to share feedback about the plan, better understand the member experience, and give ideas about how to improve our benefits and services.

If you would like to share your voice on the CAC, call Michelle at **1-843-460-7850** or Eulanda at **1-843-810-4727**.

Online resources: Notice of Privacy Practices and more

Go to www.selecthealthofsc.com to find resources like the Notice of Privacy Practices, Member Handbook, Copayment Reference Guide, and online Provider Directory for your First Choice plan. If you need printed copies of these items sent to you, call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**. You can also download the Notice of Privacy Practices at www.selecthealthofsc.com/member/english/info-for-you/privacy-practices.aspx.

Need an interpreter?

If your primary language is not English, First Choice has phone interpreters to help you with health care services anywhere, anytime. These interpreters are available for more than 200 languages. You can also use our interpreters when you are at your provider's office. This is offered at no cost to you or your provider. Call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020**. You can also call the First Choice Nurse Call Line at **1-800-304-5436** for health advice, 24 hours a day. They can also connect you to an interpreter.

Spanish: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-888-276-2020 (TTY: 1-888-765-9586)**.

Russian: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните **1-888-276-2020 (TTY: 1-888-765-9586)**.

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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Chocolate peppermint meringue cookies

This holiday cookie packs in a lot of flavor with very little added sugar.

Ingredients

- 2 large egg whites
- ½ teaspoon white vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¼ teaspoon peppermint extract
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon decorative white sugar

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Line 2 large cookie sheets with silicone liner or parchment paper.
2. Use a large glass or metal bowl and electric mixer fitted with a balloon

- whisk attachment. Whisk egg whites, vinegar, and cream of tartar on high speed for about 2 minutes or until soft peaks start to form.
3. Add cocoa powder, continue on high for 1 minute. Then add honey, peppermint extract, and vanilla extract. Continue whisking on high until shiny, hard peaks form. (Hard peaks hold their shape when you turn the mixer attachment upside down.)
4. Scoop egg white mixture into a pastry bag fitted with a star attachment or into a plastic bag in which the corner has been cut off. Hold your hand steady and squeeze mixture onto cookie sheet for 1 or 2 seconds, just enough to create stars the size of quarters.
5. Sprinkle decorative sugar onto stars. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, then let cool for 1 hour.



Nutrition facts

Serves 9 or 10. Each serving of 10 cookies has 19 calories, 0 g total fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 11 mg sodium, 4 g carbohydrates, 0 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 1 g protein.



First Choice Member Services
P.O. Box 40849
Charleston, SC 29423



Member Services:
1-888-276-2020
TTY for the hearing impaired:
1-888-765-9586



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Download **FCSH Mobile** app from Google Play™ or Apple App Store®.

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