

ARE YOU READY FOR FLU SEASON?

It's fall, and that means we all need to get ready for shorter days and colder weather. We also need to take steps to fight the flu.



The easiest and most effective way to guard against the flu is to get a flu shot.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone over age 6 — and especially people over age 65 — should get a flu shot every year. It's your best bet for staying healthy and out of the hospital.

Just contact your primary care provider or care team, and make an appointment. Do it today!

Flu symptoms and treatment

Flu.gov, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' official flu website, lists the most common flu symptoms:

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TAKING CARE OF THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE CARE OF YOU

As a Commonwealth Care Alliance member, you have a care team that helps with your healthcare needs. Your team probably includes a son or daughter, brother or sister, or a friend — people we call “caregivers.”

Caregivers help you with your medications and treatments, take you to appointments, talk to your doctors, and much, much more. But, for them to do a good job for you, they need to take care of themselves. Below are some tips that can help caregivers deal with challenges and stress:

- Ask other family members and friends for help. It's a lot easier when you share responsibilities!
- Don't neglect your own health. Eat well, exercise, get

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THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE MEDICARE QUALITY SURVEY

Earlier this year, many Commonwealth Care Alliance members were asked to take part in the “CAHPS” survey about the quality of our Senior Care Options program. The survey was administered by Medicare, and it asked members to rank their health plan’s performance in areas like customer service, getting needed prescriptions, and overall quality.

The results of the survey are in, and we are pleased to report that Medicare awarded Commonwealth Care Alliance Senior Care Options four out of a possible five stars. That means we are above average in performance and quality of care. We’re pleased with the results, but we know that we have to keep working hard and constantly improve to bring you the care you need and deserve.

If you took the survey, we’d like to thank you for taking part. Your answers will help us make Senior Care Options work better for everyone.

WHEN YOU CALL MEMBER SERVICE ...

Commonwealth Care Alliance has changed some of the “prompts” you hear when you call our Member Service toll-free telephone number: 1-866-610-2273 (TTY: 711). So, when calling, please listen carefully so you choose the correct selection.

The biggest change is a new option for transportation requests. Callers who select this option are routed to the Transportation Department. You can also call the Transportation Department directly, toll-free, at 1-855-204-1410 (TTY: 711). The Transportation Department arranges transportation that has been authorized by your care team. (See the “Need a ride?” article on page 3 for more information.)



NEW ID CARDS ARE ON THE WAY

All Commonwealth Care Alliance members will be getting a new ID card in the mail sometime before January 1, 2016. The new ID card will look a little different from your current card. When you get it, please be sure to use this new card in place of your old one.

TAKING CARE OF THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE CARE OF YOU *continued*



enough sleep, and go to the doctor regularly.

- Take a break from being a caregiver. Ask friends and family to fill in for you once in a while. Use the time off to relax and recover.

Check out the Commonwealth Care Alliance website (www.commonwealthcaresco.org) for more caregiver tips and resources.



NEED A RIDE? HERE'S WHAT TO DO

Getting you to your medical appointments safely and on time is our priority at Commonwealth Care Alliance. With this in mind, our Transportation Department wants to remind you that we require two days’ notice (48 business hours) to schedule a ride that has been authorized by your Care Team. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate changes to your transportation request with less than 24 business hours’ notice, such as a change in drop-off location or an additional stop.

How can we make your transportation experience as successful as possible?

- Do not call transportation vendors directly to schedule rides or ask the vendor if they are available to accommodate your last-minute request. The vendors can only accept rides that are entered through CCA’s transportation system.
 - When making trip-scheduling requests, provide us with all the specific information that will make your trip go smoothly. For example, tell us if you need a companion, have additional passengers, or need assistive or mobility devices.
 - Please know that if you tell us that you will only transport with one vendor, there may be times when we will be unable to accommodate your ride because the vendor may not be able to accept the trip. We suggest that you do not limit your trips to one vendor.
 - Remember the hours of operation for the Transportation Department are: Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm.
- We appreciate your patience as we work to process your trip requests as promptly as possible.

ARE YOU READY FOR FLU SEASON? *continued*



- A 100°F or higher fever or feeling feverish A cough and/or sore throat
- A runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea

If you have any of these symptoms, Flu.gov says you can treat the flu by using medications, or by:

- Getting plenty of rest
- Drinking clear fluids like water, broth, sports drinks, or electrolyte beverages to prevent becoming dehydrated
- Placing a cool, damp washcloth on your forehead, arms, and legs to reduce discomfort associated with a fever
- Putting a humidifier in your room to make breathing easier
- Gargling salt water (1:1 ratio warm water to salt) to soothe a sore throat
- Covering up with a warm blanket to calm chills



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**Your Fall 2015
Newsletter**

TELL A FRIEND OR RELATIVE ABOUT SENIOR CARE OPTIONS

Do you know someone who might want to enroll in the Commonwealth Care Alliance Senior Care Options program and get all the services that come with it? Please have them call our Member Service team for more information at 1-866-610 2273 (TTY 711). We are available 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 7 days a week.

MAIL WATCH

Watch out for mail from Commonwealth Care Alliance. These important member materials will be sent to you soon:

- Annual Notice of Change 2016
- Evidence of Coverage 2016
- Formulary (List of Drugs) 2016
- MassHealth Drug List 2016
- Multi-language insert
- Information about accessing Provider and Pharmacy Directory
- Low Income Subsidy Rider 2016 (for dually eligible members only)

The documents are available and will be mailed in English, Spanish, Russian and Portuguese. Other formats may be available. If you have questions, please contact our Member Service Department at 1-866-610-2273 (TTY: 711), 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 7 days a week.

