



South Carolina

Spring 2024

Medicare Advantage

THE PULSE

Medicare Advantage Member Newsletter

ENHANCED
OTC BENEFITS

MEMBER
SPOTLIGHT

THE HELPER BEES

HELLO SPRING!

SEASONAL RECIPES INSIDE!

www.SCBluesMedAdvantage.com

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March is ...

NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that colorectal cancer is the third-most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States? According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 1 in 23 men and 1 in 25 women will be diagnosed with this cancer.

Colorectal cancer may develop without symptoms, so getting screened can help prevent, detect and treat the disease early.

There are several screening options available, including the at-home fecal immunochemical test (FIT), which is available at no cost to you. We recommend that you contact your doctor to ask which screening option is best for you or call BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Customer Service at 1-855-204-2744 to request a FIT test in the mail.



YOUR PARTICIPATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Be on the lookout for the annual CAHPS Health Plan Survey

Within the next few weeks, you may receive a survey in the mail, an email link or a call asking you to participate in this year’s Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) survey provided by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). If you do, please complete the survey. Your feedback is used help us maintain excellent customer service. Here’s how we used last year’s survey responses:

Here are customer comments and how we used last year’s survey responses:



“I want my over-the-counter (OTC) benefits to cover more items.”

We listened! You can use your benefits for more OTC items. You also can use them for healthy food options. See page 10 to learn more!



“If I need to call Customer Service, I want my question to be answered the first time I call.”

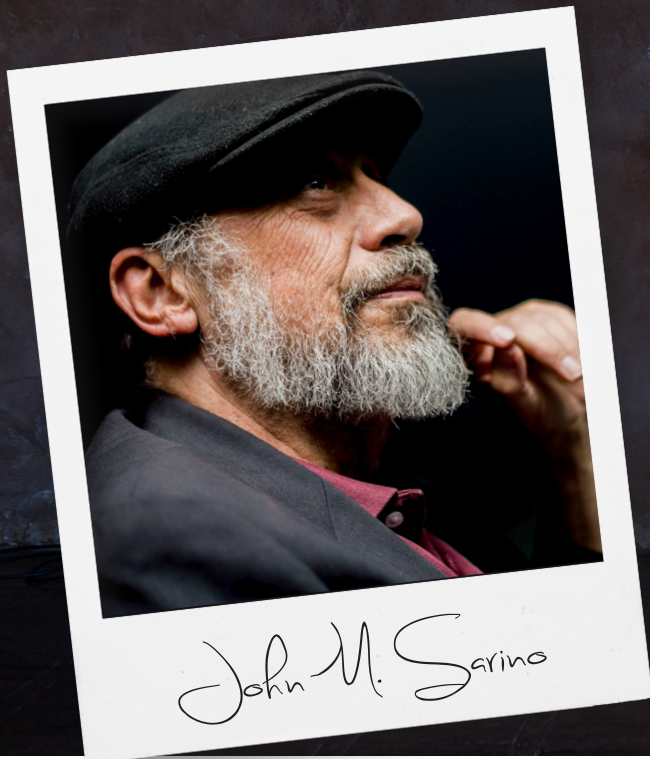
We hired additional staff and implemented a more robust training program to make sure our customer service team can help you the first time you call. We made so much improvement that we won an award for it! We are the proud recipients of the 2022 First Call Resolution Improvement Award from Service Quality Measurement Group (SQM®). We plan to continue to improve!



“I want better access to care. Sometimes I can’t make an appointment with my doctor.”

We understand how important it is for you to see your primary care physician, but sometimes schedules or other obstacles can make that difficult. In addition to making sure you have access to the best care possible, we offer no-cost in-home health assessments through Signify Health® and Doctors Care. These comprehensive health assessments include cognitive, strength and balance testing; bone density scans for females; and diabetic eye exams for members with diabetes. Your results are shared with your primary care physician. To request a no-cost in-home health assessment, please call Customer Service at **1-855-204-2744**.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



“Hi! My name is John M. Starino. I am a BlueCross member and a poet, author and spoken word performer. Also, I have this habit of making people think. I will be at a membership meeting and while waiting in line I will share a short poem or two.

Originally from Connecticut, I have lived in South Carolina for 40 years. In early 2000, I became a caregiver to my parents in 2001.

With my family and my parents, we spent time eating out, sightseeing and making many medical appointments. My folks were well into their eighties by then. My mother had a cardiac condition, while my father required pain management. I am my parents' only child, so it was imperative I take care of them. Each of them crossed the veil at different times in 2004. I have stories — that is poetry — dedicated to them. I hear other caregiver stories, as well. How many of you have heard the urban legend of the bet Ernest Hemingway won by telling a story in just six words? 'For sale: baby shoes, never worn,' was his answer.

We are now in 2024. I will have a book signing event with poet and fiction author Arthur Turfa and poets Catherine Zickengraf and Maria S. Picone on April 7 at 2:30 p.m. at the Cayce-West Columbia branch of the Lexington Library to celebrate National Poetry Month. We will answer questions and hopefully inspire new writers to write more! My email address for more information is jmstar5@aol.com. Here is my six-word story dedicated to my mother: 'Mother's headstone, microphone for chickadee's song, Now tell me, did I make you think?'

Want to be featured in a future newsletter?

Send us an email to Medicare.Stars@bcssc.com with your answer to one (or all!) of the questions below:

- ◆ Tell us about the most memorable concert you have attended (who/what/when).
- ◆ Tell us about an accomplishment you are most proud of achieving.
- ◆ If you made a playlist of 10 songs, what would you include (any genre, any time period)?
- ◆ If a veteran, what branch of the military did you serve in? What was your station/post?
- ◆ What advice would you give your younger self?

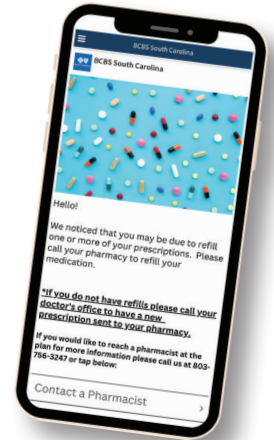


KEEPING IN TOUCH

We try to enhance our member satisfaction by promoting wellness and offering medication tips that can help you stay on track for your health goals. Below are some ways we may try to reach you:

- ◆ Email from **Medicare.Stars@bcssc.com**
- ◆ Phone calls to help you with medication refills and to answer any questions
- ◆ Traditional mail or postcards
- ◆ Text message: 21643 (Save our number so you know it's us!)

If you ever feel the need to verify if a message or call is from BlueCross, please call the number on the back of your ID card to speak to a customer service representative.



As a BlueCross Medicare Advantage member, you should receive the best care possible.

Below are some activities and partner companies that may contact you this year, depending on your individual health needs. All these activities are included in your Medicare Advantage membership. Each activity is sponsored by BlueCross.

A **BLUE CROSS REPRESENTATIVE** may call you to assist in scheduling an annual wellness visit with your primary care physician.

A **HOME TESTING KIT** may arrive in the mail for a colorectal cancer screening, diabetes A1C test or kidney function test. Please complete the test at home and promptly return it by mail at no cost to you.

A **QUALITY NURSE** may call you after you leave the hospital to discuss your medications and answer any questions you may have.

COMMUNITY HEALTH EVENTS will take place in various locations across South Carolina. You may receive an invitation by phone and mail to an event in your area. Please join us for a fun day of bingo, health education and health screenings at no cost to you.

SIGNIFY HEALTH OR DOCTORS CARE may call you to schedule an in-home assessment at no cost to you. The results will be shared with you and your physician. Signify Health and Doctors Care are independent companies that provide in-home health assessments on behalf of BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina.

PHARMACY SYNERGISTICS may call to help you with medication refills and answer questions about diabetes, cholesterol or blood pressure medications. Pharmacy Synergistics Inc. is an independent company that provides pharmaceutical managed care consulting on behalf of BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina.

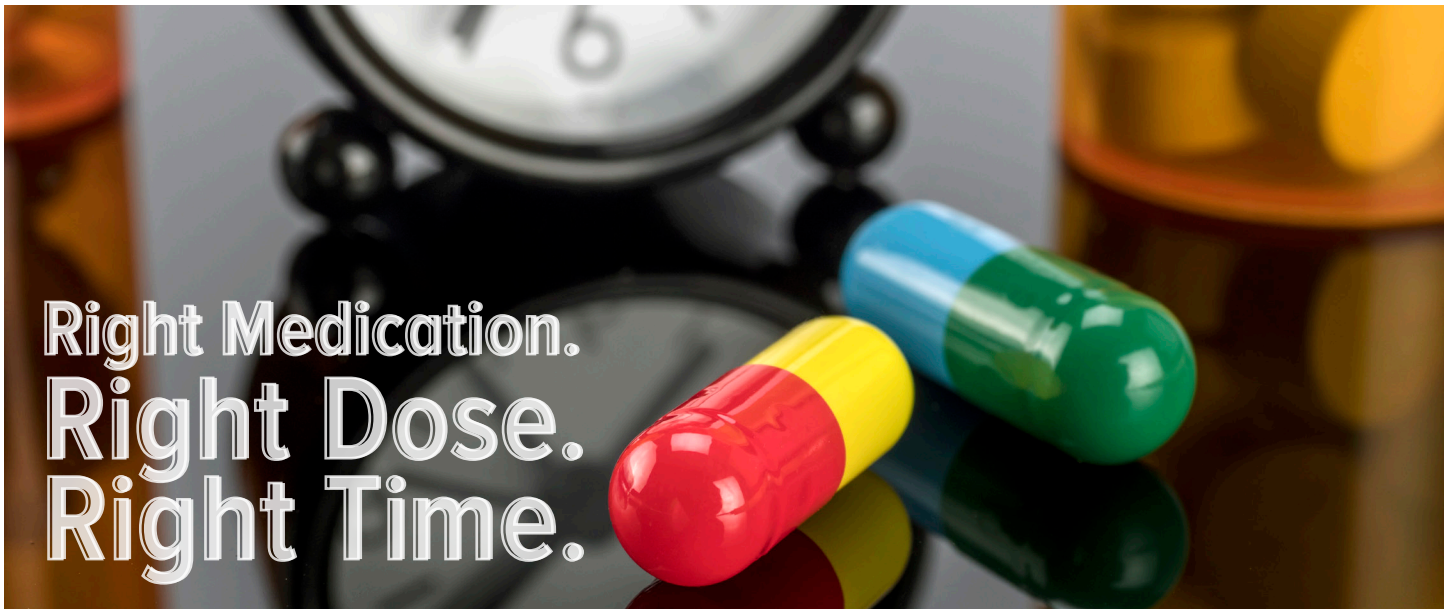


CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY WITH BLUE CROSS!

We are hosting monthly birthday parties at CenterWell locations across the state and would love for you to join us! Visit our website www.SCBluesMedAdvantage.com/Members/Events to find a location near you!



PHARMACY INFORMATION



Reading the medication label is one of the best ways to be safe and compliant when taking your medicine. Reading your prescription label will allow you to:

- ◆ Take the correct medication.
- ◆ Take the correct dose.
- ◆ Take your medication at the correct time.

Set reminders or use a pill organizer to help with your medication schedule if needed. If you do not have refills, contact your doctor to send a new prescription to your pharmacy.

Did you know that vaccines should be part of your medication list at the doctor's office? If you have had your flu shot or any other vaccine, don't forget to let your doctor know at your next visit.

WHAT IS QISHING?

How To Avoid Getting Scammed

Quick response (QR) codes are useful for business, education and many other purposes. Unfortunately, QR codes are also useful to scammers looking to steal your information or install malware on your device. Known as "quishing," QR code phishing attempts are on the rise. The most common form of quishing is a malicious email that appears to come from a trusted organization, such as a bank. Quishing attempts are not easy to recognize. Email filters often fail to catch them. So, what can you do to keep from becoming a victim? Read on for some helpful tips:

- ◆ Verify the QR code source. Never scan a QR code from a stranger!
- ◆ Use a reliable QR code reader. If you use a third-party app, make sure it's from a source you trust.
- ◆ Check the QR code destination. Examine the URL to see where it leads before you open the link. If you can't determine the destination, don't open the link.
- ◆ Use caution when asked to provide information. If you're asked for sensitive information after you open a link, check the URL before you provide information. See if it matches the authentic website you intended to visit.
- ◆ We may use QR codes to make it easy for you to access certain parts of our website or to connect you to health partners. If you ever doubt the authenticity of one of our QR codes, please reach out to our customer service team!



SOUTH CAROLINA WALKING TRAILS

Take time this spring to discover the rewarding benefits of the outdoors.



Spring is a great time to explore nature and enjoy some sunshine. Outdoor activities such as brisk walking or hiking will help you stay active and healthy. Across the state, you can experience hiking trails with great scenic views that vary in mileage and difficulty.

BOARDWALK LOOP TRAIL

Congaree National Park

- ◆ Location: Gadsden
- ◆ Mileage: 2.3-mile loop trail
- ◆ Difficulty: Easy

MOUNTAIN LAKE VIA SULPHUR SPRINGS TRAIL

Paris Mountain State Park

- ◆ Location: Greenville
- ◆ Mileage: 1.1-mile out-and-back trail
- ◆ Difficulty: Easy

OCONEE STATION AND STATION COVE FALLS TRAIL

Oconee State Park

- ◆ Location: Walhalla
- ◆ Mileage: 1.6-mile out-and-back trail
- ◆ Difficulty: Easy

RAINBOW FALLS TRAIL

Jones Gap State Park

- ◆ Location: Cleveland
- ◆ Mileage: 4.4-mile out-and-back trail
- ◆ Difficulty: Moderate

BRISSY RIDGE

Paris Mountain State Park

- ◆ Location: Greenville
- ◆ Mileage: 2.2-mile loop trail
- ◆ Difficulty: Moderate

YELLOW BRANCH FALLS TRAIL

Sumter National Forest

- ◆ Location: Walhalla
- ◆ Mileage: 3.1-mile out-and-back trail
- ◆ Difficulty: Moderate

CONVENIENT CARE WHEN YOU NEED IT



Virtual visits are included in your health plan.

As a BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina member, you have access to reliable health care by phone or video. Our national network of board-certified doctors provides convenient, personalized care. No surprise costs. No hassle.

Using Blue CareOnDemand Powered by MDLIVE is as easy as 1-2-3:

- 1 Log in to **My Health Toolkit®** to get started. From your desktop, visit www.SouthCarolinaBlues.com to log in. Select **Providers & Services**, then **Telehealth**.
From the My Health Toolkit app, select **Find Care**, then **Video Visit**.
- 2 Request an appointment.
- 3 Feel better faster.



Powered by **MDLIVE®**

MDLIVE is an independent company that provides a telehealth platform on behalf of BlueCross.

WELCOME TO THE HELPER BEES!



We are excited to introduce a new partner in your health and wellness journey: The Helper Bees!

The Helper Bees is an independent company that provides an in-home care platform for older adults on behalf of BlueCross. It enables older Americans to age in place and live comfortably.

All PPO and HMO members have access to digital literacy help. We want to make sure that technology is not a burden or a barrier to your health goals, especially with care options such as telehealth. Reach out to the Medicare Advantage customer service team at **1-855-204-2744** TTY: 711 if you need assistance in creating an email, using the internet or getting technical support for digital devices.

The Helper Bees provides additional benefits for each of our Medicare Advantage plans!

PPO Members

- ◆ There is a dedicated support line for PPO members and caregivers to help navigate the challenging world of health care, find community resources, receive answers to questions and other support services. Call **1-888-341-6084** to be connected to The Helper Bees support team.
- ◆ PPO Members have up to 20 hours companionship through phone or video conference, offering personalized conversations, entertainment and interactive games. The Helper Bees team is available 24/7/365 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time.

HMO Members

- ◆ HMO members have 100 credits to use toward certain services. You can earn an additional 50 credits by completing your annual wellness visit this year. Once we receive the claim from your doctor, the additional credits will be added to your digital account. Use credits toward these services:
 - In-home support for homemaker-type help
 - Errands
 - Home and bathroom safety, such as handyman services or pest control
- Visit bcbs-sc.TheHelperBeesPortal.com or call **1-888-341-6084** to schedule services or to learn more.



ENHANCED OTC BENEFITS

Your over-the-counter (OTC) benefits now include healthy food options!

Plan	OTC and Healthy Food Benefit	Annual Wellness Visit/Physical Reward	Total OTC Benefits (Includes All Quarterly Benefits and Annual Wellness Visit/Physical Reward)
BlueCross Total Value SM PPO*	\$30 quarterly	\$40	Up to \$160 for 2024!
BlueCross Blue Basic SM PPO	\$60 quarterly	\$40	Up to \$280 for 2024!
BlueCross Total SM PPO	\$70 quarterly	\$40	Up to \$320 for 2024!
BlueCross Secure SM HMO**	\$150 quarterly	\$40	Up to \$640 for 2024!

*Preferred provider organization

**Health maintenance organization

Use your myFlexCard to buy over-the-counter health care products and healthy food. Get all this and much more:

- ◆ Allergy medication
- ◆ Dental and denture care items
- ◆ First-aid supplies
- ◆ Cough, cold and flu medication
- ◆ Supports and braces
- ◆ Fruits and vegetables

Use the myFlexCard at local participating stores, including Walmart, Walgreens, CVS and Kroger. You can use it in the www.SouthCarolinaMA.com catalog portal, through mail order or by calling **1-800-480-6876**. The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina myFlexCard MasterCard® Prepaid Card is issued by Stride Bank, N.A., Member FDIC, pursuant to license by MasterCard International.



HERB ROASTED CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- ◆ 2 – 3 boneless chicken breasts
- ◆ 1 tablespoon chopped rosemary
- ◆ 1 tablespoon chopped thyme
- ◆ 1 clove of garlic, minced
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 375 F.

In a small bowl, mix the chopped rosemary, thyme, minced garlic, salt and pepper.

Rub the herb mixture all over the chicken, ensuring an even coating.

Place the seasoned chicken on a roasting pan and roast in the preheated oven for about 1½ to 2 hours or until the internal temperature reaches 165 F.

Allow the chicken to rest for 10 minutes before carving. Serve and enjoy!



THYME AND LEMON ROASTED POTATOES

Ingredients:

- ◆ 2 pounds potatoes, cut into wedges
- ◆ 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ◆ 2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
- ◆ Zest of 1 lemon
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 400 F.

In a large bowl, toss the potato wedges with olive oil, fresh thyme, lemon zest, salt and pepper.

Spread the seasoned potatoes on a baking sheet in a single layer.

Roast in the preheated oven for 30 – 40 minutes or until the potatoes are golden brown and crispy.

Remove from the oven and serve as a delightful side dish.



CILANTRO-LIME SHRIMP TACOS

Ingredients:

- ◆ 1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ◆ ½ cup chopped cilantro
- ◆ Juice of 2 limes
- ◆ 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ◆ ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste
- ◆ Corn tortillas
- ◆ Salsa and sliced avocado for topping
- ◆ Lemon or lime wedges for serving



Instructions:

In a bowl, combine the shrimp with chopped cilantro, lime juice, cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper. Let it marinate for at least 15 – 20 minutes.

Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add the marinated shrimp.

Cook the shrimp for 2 – 3 minutes per side or until they are opaque and cooked through.

Warm the corn tortillas and fill them with the cooked shrimp.

Top the tacos with your favorite salsa and sliced avocado.

Serve the cilantro-lime shrimp tacos with lemon or lime wedges on the side. Enjoy!

(Recipe courtesy of Lee Sanford.)



South Carolina

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AX-E05
PO BOX 100186
COLUMBIA SC 29202-3186

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