

Check Up

Summer 2021

CCA Member Magazine



What's Inside

- Learn How to Meal Plan on a Budget
- Get Help Paying for Internet
- Meet CCA Member Charlie
- Try a Tasty Salad That Is Anything but Boring!
- Help Protect Yourself Against the COVID-19 Delta Variant



Member Spotlight: **Charlie**

SCO member Charlie has struggled with hoarding his entire life. He was often embarrassed to receive home visits because they were disruptive, and he felt judged. In the past, home visits also meant that he was being evicted or he had to go to court. When he first joined CCA, Charlie avoided home visits for as long as he could out of fear that something bad would happen.

CCA partnered Charlie with Marybel, a health outreach worker (HOW) who helps him access community resources. Charlie and Marybel got to know each other over the course of several telephone calls, and Charlie realized that Marybel genuinely cared about him.



Photo courtesy of Charlie

“**It wasn't just ticking off the boxes, it was about me.**”

He started to feel better about speaking with Marybel as time went on.

Marybel provided Charlie with individualized attention to help meet his needs. As a HOW, Marybel provides members like Charlie with resources and emotional support, instead of doing the work for them. “We meet members where they are,” she says.

Through working with Marybel, Charlie realized he wanted to give back to his community and become an advocate for older adults. He recently completed courses at a local community college to become a certified community health worker and is currently interning in the field.

Help Protect Yourself Against the **COVID-19 Delta Variant**

According to the CDC, the COVID-19 vaccine is the best protection against the coronavirus and its variants. A variant is when a virus mutates or changes as it spreads to more and more people. The Delta variant has been spreading across Massachusetts, and—according to the American Medical Association—it's more contagious than the original virus.

The CDC recommends that getting the vaccine is the best way to stop the spread and protect yourself and your loved ones. If you need help getting the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your CCA care partner. For more information on COVID-19 vaccine safety, visit commonwealthcarealliance.org/covid-19-vaccine-safety.

Have You Seen Your Primary Care Doctor Lately?

Primary care doctors can help you stay on track with your health and help you detect and prevent serious problems. This is also called preventive care. Your primary care doctor can:

- **Run routine medical tests**
- **Screen for at-risk conditions**
- **Provide self-care instructions**
- **Prescribe medications**
- **Make sense of new symptoms**
- **Refer you to specialists**



Some preventive care services were paused during COVID-19. It's important to check in with your doctor now to make sure you are getting the care you need. Your doctor might suggest different preventive screenings depending on your age, gender, and health, including for:

- Colorectal cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Depression
- Obesity

Do You Need a Primary Care Doctor?

CCA offers a large network of primary care doctors who work in your community. Plus, we offer rides to help you get to your appointments. To find a doctor, visit our directory at commonwealthcarealliance.org/find-a-doctor.



Five Tips to Stay Cool When It's Hot

Heat can make it difficult to enjoy the summertime, especially for people with chronic conditions. These 5 tips can help you stay cool and avoid heat-related health problems:

- 1 Get some shade.** If it gets too hot, find a shady tree where you can take a break.
- 2 Take your time.** Go slowly when doing outdoor activities so you don't get too hot. Put on sunblock before you go out and reapply every two hours.
- 3 Stay hydrated.** Make sure to drink plenty of water when it's hot outside, even if you aren't thirsty.
- 4 Stay cool at home.** It's best to turn ceiling fans counterclockwise so air blows down and creates a breeze on your skin.
- 5 Look for air conditioning.** Air conditioning is the best defense against heat-related illnesses and death. Contact your local health department to find air-conditioned shelters in your area.



Who's Calling Me and How Do I Know Who to Trust?

Scammers may claim to be calling on behalf of CCA to get your personal information. If you're ever unsure if a caller is partnered with CCA, call us at **866-610-2273 (TTY 711)**, 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday, and 8 am to 6 pm, Saturday and Sunday, to verify their name and organization.

Who's Calling from CCA:

- Clinical Support Services (CSS)
- Coordinated Transportation Solutions (CTS)
- Firstsource
- LifePod®
- Matrix
- Signify Health
- NationsOTC
- Symphony Performance Health Analytics (SPH)
- Progressive Healthcare Solutions (PHS)

We also partner with community resources, such as geriatric support and aging services agencies, to deliver the care and services you need. These organizations will call you directly to schedule these services.

Meet Jessica, A Nurse at CCA

Jessica Menard remembers very clearly the moment she decided to become a nurse, and not a lawyer. When she was young, her Babci—the Polish word for “grandmother”—was in and out of the hospital. When the time came for Jessica to say goodbye, she knew what she was meant to do with her life.

“As a child, hospitals terrified me, but that began to change while spending time with my Babci,” Jessica says. “Seeing her ill and slipping away from me while feeling so helpless really changed my perspective and I knew then that healthcare was my true calling.”

After graduating from nursing school and working for some time in urgent care, Jessica joined CCA in September 2020 as a nurse. She says she was blown away by the company's response and approach to care. “Members were being cared for throughout the pandemic, their needs were being met, and staff were adapting to new ways of delivering care, all in such a graceful manner,” she says.



“**CCA has kept the needs of our members at the forefront. During this challenging time, I cannot imagine working in a more special place.**”

Get Help Paying for Internet

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is a temporary program run by the government that can help you pay for internet service and equipment. Eligible households receive:

- Up to \$50 per month on your internet service and equipment
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 to buy a computer or tablet

All CCA members are eligible for the program based on their MassHealth status. For more rules around eligibility, visit [commonwealthcarealliance.org/paying-for-internet](https://www.commonwealthcarealliance.org/paying-for-internet).

The program will end when the funds run out of money, or six months after the U.S. ends the COVID-19 health emergency. Your internet provider should notify you when the program is scheduled to end.





How to Meal Plan on a Budget

Meal planning can be an easy way to make healthy meals without breaking the bank. By planning your meals ahead of time, you can make sure you don't go over your budget or buy foods you won't eat. Here are some tips to meal plan on a budget:

- ✓ Make a list of meals you want to eat during the week; for ideas, visit: myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen
- ✓ Pick meals that you can make in batches and save in the fridge for several days—leftovers can save you time and money
- ✓ Note which meals use many of the ingredients you already have at home—that way you can buy less
- ✓ For healthier, budget-friendly grains, choose whole grain rice and pasta
- ✓ Buy canned foods—they last longer than fresh foods (but be sure to read labels for added fat, sugar, and salt)
- ✓ Check what's "in season" when buying fresh produce—buy only what you can use before it spoils
- ✓ Avoid soda and other sugary drinks; water is more budget-friendly—and healthier!
- ✓ Check flyers for coupons or deals on the ingredients you need
- ✓ Make a grocery list of everything you need *before* you leave your house
- ✓ Eat before you shop. Going to the grocery store on an empty stomach can lead to impulse buying and unhealthy food choices

Make sure you keep it simple! Healthy meals don't have to be complicated, and fewer items means you'll spend less money. **Ready to get started? Get recipe ideas from myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen.**



Don't Forget Your Flu Shot This Year

Flu season is just around the corner, which means it's time to start thinking about getting your annual flu shot. If you think you won't be able to get a flu shot on your own, talk to your CCA care partner.

White Bean & Veggie Salad

This light and tasty salad is loaded with protein for long-lasting energy!

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 0 minutes
Total time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 cups mixed salad greens
- ¾ cup veggies of your choice, such as chopped cucumbers and cherry tomatoes
- ½ cup canned white beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ avocado, diced
- 1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste



Directions

Combine greens, veggies, beans, and avocado in a medium bowl. Drizzle with vinegar and oil and season with salt and pepper. Toss to combine and transfer to a large plate.

Nutrition Facts

Serving size: 4 Cups
Servings: 1

Calories 360

Amount per serving

Total Fat 24.6g	Total Carbohydrate 29.7g
Saturated Fat 3.6g	Dietary Fiber 13.3g
Cholesterol 61.2mg	Sugars 2.9g
Protein 10.1g	Potassium 1291.6mg

Source: EatingWell.com

Commonwealth Care Alliance (CCA) is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and MassHealth (Medicaid) to provide benefits of both programs to enrollees. Enrollment in the plan depends on contract renewal.

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CCA Offers In-Home Urgent Care!

We know how scary and stressful it can be when you start to feel sick—especially if you can't quickly or easily call a doctor. To help, CCA offers our members simple and convenient in-home urgent care services.

In-home urgent care can help members who are experiencing symptoms such as:

- Abdominal pain
- Back pain
- Burns
- Cough
- Fever/chills
- Flu-like illness
- Dehydration
- Migraine headaches
- Shortness of breath
- Sprains and strains
- And much more.

CCA offers its own in-home urgent care program to ensure close collaboration with your CCA care team. For more information, talk to your CCA care partner or call 1-833-946-7833. You can also visit: www.instED.us.

CCA's in-home urgent care program is not available in all areas. Other in-home urgent care providers are available in the CCA network. For any life-threatening conditions or medical issues that need immediate attention, call 911.

