

# Check Up

Winter 2022

## CCA Member Magazine

### What's Inside

- Learn how to beat the winter blues
- Read about CCA member Cynthia's journey to better health
- Stay safe during this year's flu season
- Get warm and cozy with a tasty chicken potpie recipe



### SPECIAL FEATURE

#### **Try something new in 2022!**

Read about fun activities that can benefit your mind, body, and soul



# Welcome to the CCA family



At Commonwealth Care Alliance® (CCA), we're excited about offering our services to the residents of Rhode Island. To our new members from the Ocean State, we extend a warm welcome. We look forward to serving your healthcare needs for many years to come.

You'll find that CCA is not your typical health plan. We offer community-based care that puts your needs first. By supporting your medical, behavioral, and social needs, we make it easier for you to live safely and independently at home. That's what we call *uncommon care*®.

Providing *uncommon care* also means sharing important information that can help you live well and stay healthy. That's what *Check Up* is all about. Every season you'll receive a new issue, packed full of health tips and program updates. You'll also have the chance to read about other CCA members just like you.

From all of us at CCA—thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

For even more health tips and member stories, check out our blog at [ccari.org/living-well-at-home](https://ccari.org/living-well-at-home).

## We're here when you need us

CCA Member Services is your central resource to connect you to what you need. Our team is trained to support a wide range of questions and requests and can direct your calls to the right team.

**Put the Member Services number in your phone!**

833-346-9222 (TTY 711), from 8 am to 8 pm, 7 days a week.

**For more urgent matters...**

We're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the Nurse Advice Line. If you're not feeling well, call Member Services at 833-346-9222 (TTY 711) to speak to a nurse or behavioral health specialist. *If you're experiencing a more serious medical emergency, call 911 right away.*



# Meet Cynthia, a CCA member

When CCA member Cynthia is creating diamond art, she's able to forget about her health issues. It's a hobby that Cynthia enjoys because she can use her hands while sitting down.

Cynthia has COPD and asthma. Just getting around her house is often difficult. While Cynthia has her share of bad days, becoming a CCA member brought some positive changes to her life. "I appreciate everything the CCA team does for me," Cynthia says.

## Learning to better manage her own care

Cynthia participates in the CCA Complex Care Self-Management program, which she says has helped her to take better control of her COPD. She used to panic when she struggled with her breathing.

Now, she says, "I don't panic as much because of everything the CCA team taught me."



Over the years, Cynthia has been hospitalized often for COPD.

In the past, she would be sent home with no follow-up. With the Complex Care Self-Management program, follow-up care is standard practice. Now when Cynthia leaves the hospital, nurses come to her home and explain the steps she should take to manage her condition. For instance, she learned how to use a walker with wheels to sit down and to breathe slowly when she struggles with her COPD. As Cynthia puts it, "CCA's team taught me how to breathe."

“ I tell everybody I know to go to CCA. They do so much for people. No matter what you need help with, CCA is there. ”

## Did you know?

CCA's **Complex Care Self-Management program** is for members with COPD, diabetes, or heart failure. When you join, we help you better manage your condition and stay healthy. To learn more, call Member Services at 833-346-9222 (TTY 711).

# Meet Alex, a CCA pharmacist

“I can see the light bulb go on.”

That’s how Alex describes the moment when his patients understand how their medications can help improve their health and quality of life.

Alex joined CCA in 2020. He plays a key role in the company’s unique approach to care. By talking to members, Alex helps them to better understand the medications they’re prescribed.

“When patients are released from the hospital, we educate them on the medicine they need to take,” he says. “They learn why they should take it, what to look out for, and when to ask for help.” Alex believes this makes members feel more in control over their own health.

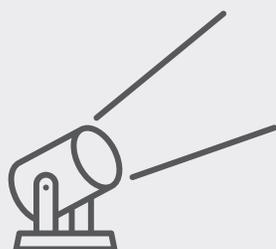
As an example, Alex explains how he would work with a member who has heart failure. He guides the patient on how to reduce extra body fluid through medication and how to manage their weight.

Alex also works with providers to ensure that patients receive the right medication to manage their conditions. This “working-together” approach is an example of how CCA serves its members. Alex believes that CCA looks at patient care from a broader point of view. “We see members after they’ve been discharged from the hospital, and we help them get the follow-up care they need,” he says.

Working together for the good of the patient is what CCA is all about. For Alex, it all comes back to the idea of members having more control.



“It’s rewarding for me to see patients take their health into their own hands.”



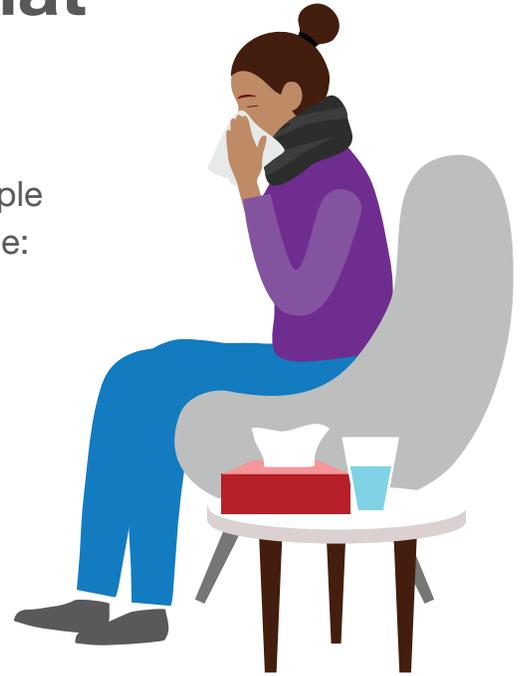
## Do you want us to spotlight someone from CCA?

We want to recognize employees who go above and beyond for our members. Email us at [members@commonwealthcare.org](mailto:members@commonwealthcare.org) to nominate someone on our team, and you might just see them in an upcoming issue!

# It's flu season—here's what you need to know

The flu can be more serious for people over 65 or for people who have medical conditions. Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Aching muscles
- Chills and sweats
- Headache
- Dry, persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Tiredness and weakness
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Eye pain



## What should you do if you have the flu?

Many people who get the flu can treat symptoms on their own without seeing a doctor. If you have the flu, make sure to:

- ✓ Rest
- ✓ Stay warm
- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Use over-the-counter pain relievers to ease discomfort

It's also important not to spread it. If you have symptoms, stay home. Make sure to wash your hands regularly and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

There are some flu symptoms you should not attempt to treat on your own. Talk to your primary care provider or go to urgent care if you have serious signs of infection, such as:



- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Seizures
- Severe muscle pain
- Dizziness
- Disorientation

CCA members can also call the CCA Nurse Advice Line if experiencing serious symptoms. Our nurses will provide guidance on managing symptoms at home and can help you decide when to go to urgent care.

**It's not too late to get your flu shot.** Flu season lasts until May. Getting your shot now can still be beneficial. Flu shots are available at your provider's office and at many pharmacies.

# Don't let the winter blues get you down

Winter is a time when many people suffer from a condition called seasonal affective disorder (SAD). The good news is: there are many ways to fight off the winter blues. Here are four tips:

- 1 Take “comfort” in food.** Eating more protein can enhance your mood and even prevent cravings between meals. Also, foods high in vitamin D—such as fish, milk, orange juice, cereal, and yogurt—can help to boost your spirits.
- 2 Stay active.** Physical activity has the dual benefit of helping you sleep better and relieving anxiety. If you can't go outside for a walk, try some simple indoor exercises, such as chair aerobics and stretching.
- 3 Keep your mind (and hands) busy.** When you're feeling down, turn to your favorite hobby—or try a new one. Activities like crafting, knitting, playing games, listening to music, or reading can do wonders for your mood.
- 4 Talk to someone.** If you're feeling down, talk to family or friends. CCA can also help. Our members can call our Nurse Advice Line at 833-346-9222 (TTY 711) to speak to a behavioral health specialist. We're here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



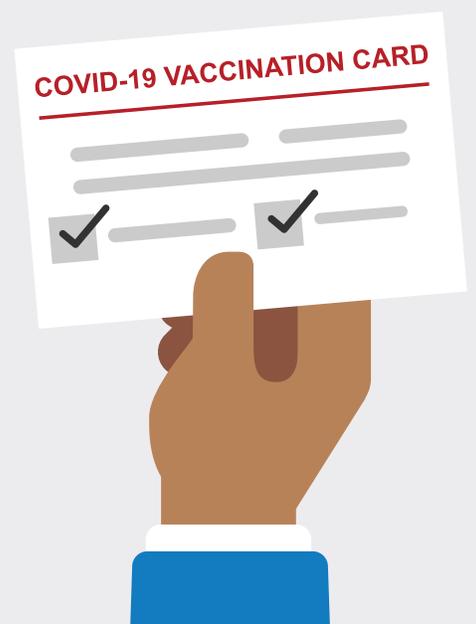
## Should you get a COVID-19 vaccine booster?

The COVID-19 booster shot is another dose of the vaccine. According to the CDC, booster shots can increase the protection you received from the original vaccine. You should get a booster if you're 18 years or older and you received your:

- **Johnson & Johnson** vaccine at least two months ago
- Second **Moderna or Pfizer** dose at least six months ago

**To learn more about COVID-19 booster shots, call Member Services at 833-346-9222 (TTY 711).**

Source: CDC, FDA



# Try something new in 2022!

## Fun activities for your mind, body, and soul

It's a new year! It's time to break away from your everyday routine. Here are some ideas for adding a bit of healthy fun to your life in 2022.



**Write it down.** Did you know that journaling helps reduce stress and anxiety, improves memory, and can slow down dementia? To get started, all you need is a pen and paper. Set aside a few minutes each day to write down your thoughts. If you get stuck, ask yourself some questions. *What did I enjoy most about my day? What am I grateful for?*



**Clear your mind.** Yoga and tai chi are low-impact activities that have both physical and mental benefits. They can help with balance and mobility and help to keep your brain sharp. The focus on breathing helps improve concentration and reduce stress, while stretching helps strengthen muscles. With yoga, you can start simple by doing chair yoga exercises. With tai chi, you can take classes or watch videos online to learn the basics. Before beginning any new physical activities, talk to your primary care provider. They will make sure you are healthy enough to take part.



**Get crafty.** Take up knitting, crocheting, needlepoint, painting, coloring, or even creating diamond art! Studies have shown that arts and crafts can relieve stress, boost your confidence, strengthen your brain, and improve your quality of life.



**Belt it out.** Singing has amazing health benefits! It helps blood circulation by exercising the heart and lungs. This increases oxygen flow to all parts of the body—including the brain. Plus, singing reduces stress hormones and releases happy hormones called endorphins.



*CCA member Judy proudly shows us her diamond art masterpiece!*

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

# Crustless Chicken Potpie with Cauliflower Topping

## Ingredients

- 2 cups shredded, cooked chicken breast
- 1 (10.8 oz) package of frozen garlic baby peas and mushrooms
- 1 (10.75 oz) can of reduced-fat, reduced-sodium condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup corn, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup sliced celery
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 3 tablespoons of chopped fresh parsley, plus more for garnish
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme (or ¾ teaspoon dried)
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper

## Topping

- 1 (10 oz) package frozen riced cauliflower
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour or panko breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted



## Directions

- **Step 1:** Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
- **Step 2:** Combine chicken, frozen peas and mushrooms, mushroom soup, corn, celery, onion, parsley, thyme, lemon zest, and pepper in a large bowl. Transfer to a 9-inch deep-dish pie pan.
- **Step 3:** To prepare topping, combine cauliflower, Parmesan, flour (or breadcrumbs), and melted butter in a medium bowl. Sprinkle the topping over the chicken mixture.
- **Step 4:** Bake the potpie until the filling is heated through and the topping is golden, about 40 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving size: 1 ⅓ cups

**Calories**      **259**  
**per serving**

Amount per serving

**Total Fat 9g**

**Total Carbohydrate 22g**

**Saturated Fat 4g**

Dietary Fiber 4g

**Cholesterol 56mg**

Sugars 7g

**Protein 21g**

**Sodium 627mg**

## The magical benefits of cauliflower

Here are four reasons to add this tasty vegetable to your diet:

- 1 **It's packed with nutrients.** Cauliflower contains nearly every vitamin and mineral you need, including potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, and vitamins C, K, and B6.
- 2 **It's high in fiber.** There are 3 grams of fiber in one cup of cauliflower. That's 10% of your daily requirement. Fiber helps reduce inflammation and promotes digestive health.
- 3 **It contains antioxidants.** Cauliflower is a common source of antioxidants, which protect your cells from inflammation and can even help to slow the growth of cancer.
- 4 **It might help you lose weight.** Cauliflower has only 25 calories per cup. That makes it a healthier side dish option than rice or potatoes.



# Check Up

*CCA Member Magazine*

## Don't risk a fall this winter!

Every year, winter's cold, rain, sleet, and snow make it easier to fall. Follow these tips to lower your risk:

- 1 Use handrails.** Always use a handrail when walking up or down stairs, or along a sloping walkway.
- 2 Wear appropriate footwear.** Wear shoes or boots with rough soles that do not slip. Don't wear loose shoes or shoes with high heels.
- 3 Dress for the weather.** Wearing extra layers of clothing and gloves gives you padding in case you fall.
- 4 Clean your shoes or switch to indoor shoes once you are inside.** Snow and ice can freeze on shoes, making them slippery. Always sit down before cleaning or removing shoes.

