

Check Up

Spring 2022

CCA Member Magazine

What's Inside

- COVID burnout is real:
Learn how to manage it
- How CCA member
Kenny has found a
healthier lifestyle
- Spring is in the air!
Be prepared for
seasonal allergies
- Get cooking: A tasty chili
that's actually good for you



SPECIAL FEATURE

Aging well, at home:
Tips from a CCA nurse





COVID-19 fatigue: How to manage those feelings of exhaustion

A message from Dr. Robert MacArthur, CCA chief medical officer

It's hard to remember a time before the COVID-19 pandemic. The way we live our lives has changed, and many of us are experiencing fear, anxiety, depression, or loneliness. After two long years, you may be tired of social distancing, masking in public, or getting vaccines.

Your feelings are normal. But even as restrictions are lifted, staying vigilant is critical. In my role as chief medical officer at CCA, I've seen the impact of pandemic burnout. By overcoming that fatigue, we may finally have a chance at putting this chapter behind us.

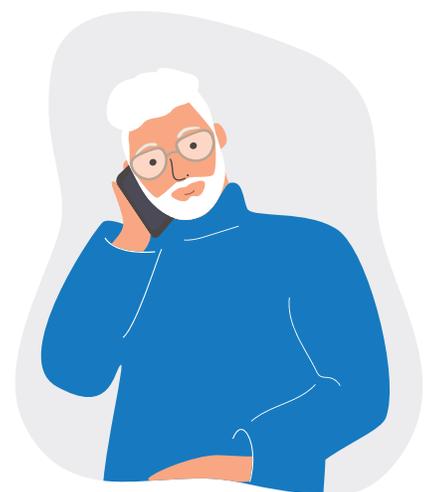
Here are suggestions for staying positive and safe in the weeks and months to come:

- 1 Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** When you're stressed, it's easy to fall back on unhealthy habits. It's important to continue with a healthy diet and exercise if you are able.
- 2 Understand your risks.** Unhealthy behaviors to cope with your feelings, like smoking or drinking alcohol, can turn into addictions. Engage in safe and healthy activities that give you a mental break.
- 3 Establish positive routines.** Sticking to a schedule can support good mental health. Commit to regular meals, getting enough sleep, and time for relaxation.
- 4 Find ways to remain social.** If you are still apprehensive about gatherings, phone calls are a great way to hear the voices you love most—children, grandchildren, siblings, and friends.

Count on CCA to provide *uncommon care*[®]

CCA is here for you. Our members can call our Nurse Advice Line at 866-610-2273 (TTY 711) for help with challenges they face. We are all going through this together—and we will get through it together. Thank you for placing your trust in CCA.

➔ To read more tips on fighting COVID-19 burnout, visit:
commonwealthcarealliance.org/covid-19-burnout



Aging well, at home:

Tips from a CCA nurse



Debbie Sylvester is a doctor of nursing practice and a nurse practitioner. As director of geriatrics at CCA, she helps members live well at home as they age. Her guiding principle is that aging is highly individual. “People have different stories and experiences. The key is finding out what matters most to them,” she says.

Debbie encourages members to ask a lot of questions about their health. “Don’t accept feeling unwell, in pain, or tired as a normal part of aging. It’s not,” Debbie advises. Aging doesn’t have to bring poor health, with no room for improvement.

“You can improve your health at any time and any age. It’s never too late to start exercising, or to quit drinking or smoking.”

To age at home, Debbie advises preparation. Making changes ahead of time is a good way to manage needs. Access to your community is also important. “Emotional support can come from family, friends, neighbors, churches, and other community organizations,” Debbie says.



Caregivers provide essential services and emotional support. But whether they are professionals, family members, or friends, caregivers need breaks to avoid burnout. “It’s important to recognize that your caregivers are working hard,” she says.

As a CCA member, you can contact Member Services to discuss how we can assist you with aging well at home.

➔ To read a longer version of this article, visit: commonwealthcarealliance.org/aging-well-at-home



Want more tips for Living Well at Home?

To see us in action, visit the **Living Well at Home** section of the website. You’ll find health news, member stories, and more at commonwealthcarealliance.org/living-well-at-home.

Meet Kenny, a CCA member

CCA member Kenny was a plumber, but his health issues keep him from working. He now has foot drop, a condition that prevents him from walking long distances. He has also faced heart problems and has trouble breathing.

Before Kenny connected with CCA, coordinating his own care was a challenge. Scheduling multiple appointments left him stressed. Now, with his CCA care team, Kenny feels better equipped to manage his health needs.

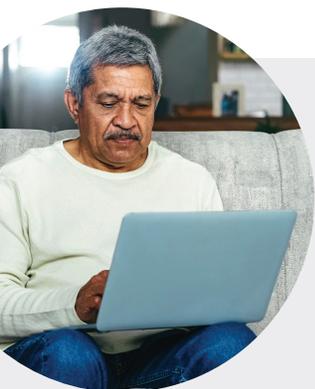


“ CCA offers a very different experience than any other health plan. Anywhere else, you’re just a number. I like the personal care that I get. ”

Kenny says he is grateful that his CCA care partner, Autumn, will call just to check in if they haven’t spoken in a while. He is also grateful for Matt, his CCA behavioral health clinician. No matter how Kenny is feeling during their visits, Matt always makes him feel supported.

CCA also connected Kenny with a service that prepackages his medications. The complicated process of sorting his pills for the week ahead is solved. Kenny says this has been lifechanging. “I was really bad at taking my medications when I was supposed to, but now it’s much easier,” Kenny says.

Overall, the most important thing to Kenny is the familiarity that comes with being part of CCA. “It really makes you feel like you’re part of a family,” he says.



CCA launches online health library

CCA members now have access to an online library of articles, videos, self-management tools, and other information to help you better manage your health. You can learn about many different conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and more.

To get started, visit commonwealthcarealliance.org/living-well-at-home and click on the Health Library link.

Meet Gina, a CCA nurse

What does it take to serve CCA members well? According to Gina, a CCA Primary Care triage nurse, it requires “building a trusting relationship and following through on the member’s needs.”

Before joining the CCA Primary Care triage team, Gina served as a CCA care partner, working with members to manage their medical needs. “I would check in on members to see how they’re doing,” says Gina. “Are they feeling well? Are they taking their medications? Are they seeing their doctor regularly?”

Gina also identified members’ challenges and developed personalized care plans. She is always happy to see a patient making progress. “Achieving goals that we’ve set together gives me a lot of satisfaction,” says Gina.

At CCA Primary Care, Gina now brings her services to patients of the CCA Primary Care clinics. She is able to use her clinical knowledge and expertise in case management to provide high-quality primary care.

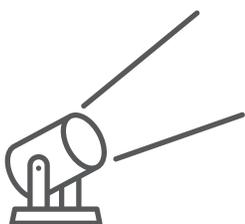
Because of her dedication and compassion, Gina is earning praise. One member had this to say about her:

“Gina is an asset to CCA. She truly listens and follows through on any issues that may arise. She always returns my calls and is very patient.”

Gina acknowledges that nurses don’t always have the immediate satisfaction of knowing when they’ve made a difference. “When you think you’re doing a good job, it’s always nice to hear that from the people you’re helping.”



Gina was nominated to be featured in Check Up by a CCA member!



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

Spring is in the air! Be prepared for seasonal allergies

Spring brings a welcome change to the weather. But for many people, spring also brings sneezing and sniffing. Seasonal allergies can put a damper on outdoor activities. If the spring season is rainy, mold can make symptoms last all summer.

Environmental allergens, like pollen, can also cause asthma symptoms. That's why people living with asthma may be at greater risk during allergy season.

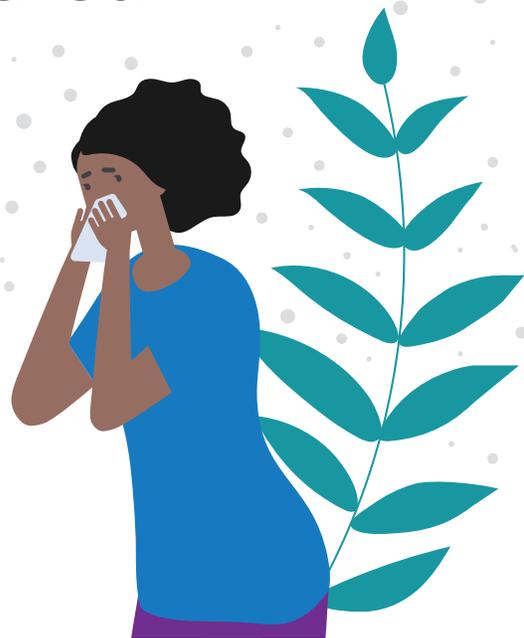
Warning signs of asthma include:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness or pain
- Wheezing
- Trouble sleeping due to difficulty breathing

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, these tips can help:

- Keep windows and doors shut
- Take a shower and change your clothes after spending time outdoors
- Regularly vacuum and dust your home
- Don't hang laundry outside
- Try over-the-counter allergy medicine

Asthma is often treated with medications and the use of a rescue inhaler. With allergies or asthma, talk to your primary care provider to find the best treatment option for you.



In-home urgent care can help with asthma symptoms

Coping with asthma can be a struggle, especially with serious symptoms. If it's hard for you to leave your home, CCA can bring urgent care to you. In a matter of minutes, you can request an urgent care visit, and within a few short hours, a highly trained paramedic will provide you with the care you need in the comfort of your own home.

To request an in-home urgent care visit, call the CCA Nurse Advice Line at 866-610-2273 (TTY 711). *For life-threatening medical issues that need immediate attention, call 911.*



CCA Complex Care Self-Management

You're in charge of your health

About half of adults in the U.S. have one or more chronic diseases. If you are one of them, CCA offers services and tools that can help you better manage your condition. Our Complex Care Self-Management program may help you if you have one or more of these conditions:

- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Diabetes
- Heart failure

Services include:

- Skilled providers who work with your primary care provider to help you control your condition
- In-home and video visits
- Evaluations to get the services you need
- Tools to better understand and manage your symptoms
- Coaching for healthy eating and living



Complex Care Self-Management receives high ratings from members like you!

In a recent survey, program participants rated it **4.6 out of 5 stars**

What CCA members say about Complex Care Self-Management:

“

Knowing that I had someone supporting me and following up with me gave me more confidence.”

“

Being able to understand my condition, the symptoms, and actions to take helped me feel capable of managing [the condition] better. I now feel in control.”

“

Afterward, I understood my condition, and [staff] supported me all the way.”

To find out more about the Complex Care Self-Management program and whether it is right for you, talk to your care partner or call Member Services at 866-610-2273 (TTY 711).

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.

Easy Vegetarian Chili

Total time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely chopped white onion
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped red bell pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 (15-ounce) cans low-sodium black beans, rinsed
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheese, such as cheddar or pepper jack

Equipment

- Large saucepan



**Turn over for
recipe directions**



Directions

- **Step 1:** Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat
- **Step 2:** Add onion, bell pepper, and garlic and cook until tender, about 8 minutes
- **Step 3:** Stir in chili powder, cumin, oregano, and coriander. Cook, stirring, for 30 seconds
- **Step 4:** Add beans, tomatoes (with their juice), and water and simmer for 5 minutes
- **Step 5:** Serve the chili sprinkled with cheese

Nutrition Facts		Amount per serving	
Serving size: 1 cup		Total Fat 11.1g	Total Carbohydrate 38.6g
<hr/>		Saturated Fat 3.2g	Dietary Fiber 13.7g
Calories	311	Cholesterol 14.4mg	Sugars 4.4g
per serving		Protein 16.3g	Sodium 433.9mg

Four reasons to eat meatless meals

Vegetarian and plant-based diets are more popular than ever. Going meatless—even if it's only once a week—can have a lot of benefits, including:

- 1 It's good for you.** Studies have found that people who stick to a vegetarian diet may be less likely to be overweight or develop heart disease and certain cancers. Plant-based diets can also help manage diabetes.
- 2 It can help you save money.** Between 2020 and 2021, the price of meat increased the most out of all foods tracked by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The price of fresh fruits and vegetables increased the least.
- 3 It's environmentally friendly.** Compared with livestock animals, plants grown for food require fewer resources and cause less pollution.
- 4 You might like it!** Shaking up your routine might lead you to prepare more creative meals and discover your new favorite foods.



Check Up

CCA Member Magazine

Did you know spring cleaning can be healthy?

Now that spring is here, it's time to spring into action...and start cleaning! Spring cleaning can be good for your physical and mental well-being. Here are a few of the benefits:

Relieve allergy symptoms. Dust, mildew, pet dander, and pollen can accumulate on surfaces in your home. The more you vacuum and dust, the less you'll sniffle and sneeze.

Sleep better. A clean, organized, and de-cluttered house can ease anxiety. Combine that with fresh, comfortable bed sheets, and you'll find it easier to catch your nightly Zs.

Relieve stress. Cleaning is the kind of repetitive task that can take your mind off everyday issues. Put on some music, start scrubbing, and feel the stress ease away.

