



LONG TERM CARE CONNECTION

Fall/Winter 2025

Stay safe this flu season

The flu is a virus that spreads easily and can make you feel very sick. It can be very serious for older adults and people with a chronic condition like asthma, diabetes or heart disease. For them, the flu can lead to a hospital stay — or worse.

A flu shot is the best way to protect yourself. It helps your body build up immunity to the flu virus. That means you're less likely to catch the flu, or

less likely to get really sick if you do catch it. It also means you're less likely to spread the flu to others.

Each year, the flu shot is custom-made to protect against that year's strain of the virus. That's why it's so important to get a flu shot every year. For the best protection, get your shot early in the fall, before flu season starts.

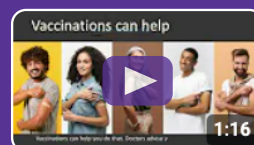
Besides getting your flu shot, here are other simple

things you can do to stay healthy this flu season:

- Stay away from people who are sick
- Wear a mask when you're in crowded places, especially if you are sick
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Keep your body strong by eating healthy, getting enough sleep and staying active
- Clean things you touch often, like phones and doorknobs

WATCH:

What vaccines should adults get?



What vaccines should children get?





- Taking medication to regulate blood sugar.
- Regularly testing blood sugar levels using devices. Mercy Care covers the cost for members to receive a blood sugar testing device.

Managing diabetes

Diabetes is a condition that affects tens of millions of people in the U.S. People with diabetes cannot regulate blood glucose, a simple sugar the body uses for the energy it needs.

There are two main types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children. It's a lifelong condition where the body doesn't produce enough insulin. (Insulin is the hormone that helps your body use blood glucose). People with type 1 diabetes may need to take insulin daily.

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition where the body may have enough insulin, but isn't able to use it as well.

The good news is people with diabetes can manage it through healthy habits. Some ways to manage diabetes are:

- Eating healthy foods including vegetables, whole grains and

lean proteins while avoiding high-sugar foods. Mercy Care covers the cost of a nutritionist who can create a diabetes-friendly meal plan.

- Exercising regularly helps the body use insulin more effectively.
- Keeping a healthy weight can improve overall health.

We have special programs that may help you successfully manage diabetes or other health needs. Contact **Mercy Care Member Services** to find out about Care Management and other wellness programs. Or go to mercycares.org/ltc/care-management.html for more info. You can also decline or leave a special program by calling Member Services or your care manager.

Smartphones at no cost to you

You may be able to get cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you through Assurance Wireless. Go to mercyar.es/lifeline to apply.

If you don't have access to the internet, or if you need help filling out the form, you can call Member Services to help you.

You will have to show proof of eligibility to enroll into the Assurance Wireless phone program.

Assurance Wireless service includes:

- Data each month
- Voice minutes each month
- Unlimited text messages
- Android smartphone

For more information, call Mercy Care Member Services at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879** (TTY: **711**). Members with a SMI designation can call Member Services at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465** (TTY: **711**).

Need to renew your coverage?

You must renew your Medicaid coverage every year. Look for your renewal notice in the mail. Go to healthearizonaplus.gov to learn more.

How do I talk to someone about suicide?

Sometimes when a loved one is struggling in their life, they may be considering suicide. It's important to know the warning signs and to seek help.

They may say they want to die or talk about feeling hopeless, having no purpose or being a burden to others. Listen to them carefully. Let them know you are there for them. Get them connected to resources.

Other times a loved one is thinking about suicide but doesn't tell anyone. Look for warning signs such as:

- Being withdrawn
- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Increasing drug or alcohol use



- Being anxious, agitated or reckless

Ask them if they are considering suicide. Let them know that suicide is a serious matter. Connect them to resources.

The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a no-cost, national service. Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They offer support in English and

Spanish. Call or text the lifeline at **988** or visit **988lifeline.org** to chat.

More resources:

- [save.org](https://www.save.org)
- 988lifeline.org/help-someone-else
- bethethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence
- mercycares.org/crisis-services

Trualta for caregivers

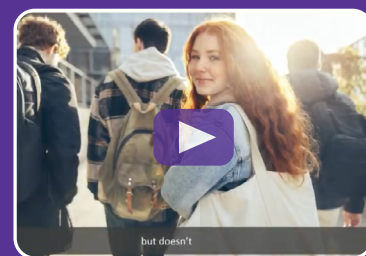
Do you care for an aging family member, child or person with disabilities at home? Get no-cost training and resources to help build caregiving skills at home.

Improve confidence, reduce stress and prevent burnout by learning care skills. Create an online account to read articles and watch webinars and videos about caring for your loved one.

Register at mercycare.trualta.com.

WATCH:

How do I talk to someone about suicide?



Why therapy is good for everyone

In both good times and bad, seeing a therapist can lead to a happier, healthier life. Here's how.

✔ It can improve your relationships

We have all sorts of relationships — with our partner, children, parents and coworkers. Misunderstandings and rough patches are a normal part of all of them. A therapist can help you find ways to understand other's emotions and communicate better.

✔ It can help you manage health issues

Depression and anxiety are common in people with chronic conditions. And, poor mental health can make it harder to manage your illness. Talking to a therapist can help you:

- Stay on track with treatment
- Ask for help
- Focus on self-care
- Stay away from unhealthy coping habits like smoking, alcohol or emotional eating

✔ It can help you reach your goals

We all have dreams and goals. If you're feeling stuck, a therapist can help you break old patterns and habits that are holding you back. They can help you create a plan for going after your goals. And they can share tips for staying motivated. That's something we all need at different times in life.

Help for a behavioral health crisis

Mercy Care members can call the **Arizona Behavioral Health Crisis Line** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **1-844-534-HOPE (4673)** or text HOPE to **4HOPE (44673)**. Chat support is available at crisis.solari-inc.org/start-a-chat.

The Crisis Line staff can help:

- Provide crisis support over the phone
- Dispatch a crisis mobile team to support you
- Arrange transportation to take you somewhere safe
- Help you arrange counseling or a connection to your outpatient provider
- Provide options for dealing with urgent situations
- If you feel unsafe at home

Tribal crisis lines:

- San Carlos Apache Reservation: **1-866-495-6735**
- Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities: **1-800-259-3449**
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: **480-850-9230**
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: **480-461-8888**
- San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation: **480-461-8888**
- Tohono O'odham Nation: **1-844-423-8759**
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe: Tucson **520-591-7206**; Guadalupe **480-736-4943**
- White Mountain Apache Tribe: **928-338-4811**
- Navajo Nation: **928-551-0508**

Veterans Crisis Line: 988, press 1

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988

National crisis text line: Text HOME to **741741**. Chat support is available at crisistextline.org/text-us.

Teen Lifeline: Call or text **602-248-TEEN (8336)**

If you need someone to talk to, call the Warm Line at **602-347-1100**. Get 24/7 support from trained Peer Support Specialists.

*Always call **911** in life-threatening situations.*



Health equity in focus

Mercy Care's mission is to help our members live a healthier life and achieve their fullest potential. One way we do that is by focusing on health equity which ensures the care you receive is just and person-centered to fit your needs.

There are life factors that play a big part in your well-being too. Those factors may include access to healthy food, housing, education and work opportunities. These are some health and wellness resources you can reach out to for support:

2-1-1 Arizona

You can find information about employment and family services, food, clothing and shelter, and how to get help if you're experiencing domestic violence.

Go to **211arizona.org/mercycrg** or call **211**.

Substance abuse and mental health

You can locate sites for mental health and substance use treatment.

Go to **findtreatment.gov** or call **1-877-726-4727**.

Health-e-Arizona

You can renew your AHCCCS benefits, check coverage and update your information.

Go to **healthearizonaplus.gov**

Get access to physical and mental health services when and where you need it.

Find a provider at **mercycareaz.org/find-a-provider**

More resources are available at **mercycareaz.org/community-resource-guide**

Measuring cultural competency

We're committed to our members and their care. It's very important to us. That's why we spend a lot of time and effort making sure cultural competency is part of everything we do. This means being respectful to your beliefs and your culture. It also means understanding your language needs.

We require our providers to support members with culturally sensitive services. They use the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards as a guide. These standards make sure that services are respectful to your culture and language needs.

We have two departments at Mercy Care that keep an eye on how providers are doing. They are Cultural Competency and Quality Management. These departments offer support to providers. They make sure members are getting services in the right way. And that helps to make sure we are always improving services that are sensitive to your culture and way of life.



Grant-funded programs to aid in recovery and mental health

Did you know that Mercy Care helps manage recovery and mental health grant funding to behavioral health and substance use treatment providers? The funding is made possible by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Even if your AHCCCS benefits don't cover some of these services, you may still be able to get treatment through these grant-funded programs. These programs also help people who are uninsured or underinsured.

Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)

The MHBG provides mental health treatment services to:

- Adults with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) designation
- Children identified with Serious Emotional Disturbance
- People aged 16–25 experiencing a First Episode of Psychosis (FEP)

For information on MHBG funding,

visit mercycareaz.org/mental-health-block-grant.html

Substance Use Block Grant (SUBG)

The SUBG provides substance use treatment services to adults and youth who are uninsured or underinsured. For information on SUBG funding, visit mercycareaz.org/substance-use-block-grant.html

State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant

The SOR grant helps give access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), integrated care and opioid and stimulant use addiction recovery services. For information about treating an opioid addiction, visit mercycareaz.org/opioids-substance-use.html

Call Member Services Monday through Friday between 7 AM and 6 PM at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879** (TTY **711**) to get connected to care. ACC-RBHA members with a SMI designation can call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465** (TTY **711**) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



What are opioids and how can you get help

Opioids are strong drugs that help with pain. Some are given by doctors, like oxycodone, morphine or fentanyl. Others, like heroin, are illegal. Common medicines like Vicodin and Percocet are also opioids.

Using opioids for a long time can lead to addiction. This means your body feels like it needs the drug to feel okay.

This can happen to anyone—young or old, no matter where they live or what they do. Millions of Americans are living with opioid use disorder (OUD). Learning about opioids can help break the stigma and make it easier for people to ask for help.

What Is MAT/MOUD?

MAT means Medication Assisted Treatment. MOUD means Medication for Opioid Use Disorder. It's a way to treat opioid addiction using medicine and counseling.

Sometimes MAT/MOUD gets a bad rap. People may think MAT/MOUD is just about trading one drug for another. But that's not true.

When someone stops using opioids, they might feel sick. This is called withdrawal. Symptoms can include:

- Upset stomach
- Throwing up
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling very tired or craving the drug

MAT/MOUD helps reduce withdrawal symptoms to make it easier to quit.

Some of the medicines doctors use during MAT/MOUD include:

- **Methadone:** Helps with cravings and withdrawal. It's taken as a liquid or pill.
- **Buprenorphine:** Lowers cravings. It comes as a pill, film, or shot.

Stay safe

- Don't share needles.
- Don't mix drugs.
- Get help if you feel sick or sad.

What to do if someone overdoses

- 1 Call 911 right away.
- 2 Check for signs:
 - Can't wake up
 - Slow or no breathing
 - Blue lips or nails
 - Tiny pupils (a pupil is the black dot in the middle of the eye)
- 3 Help them breathe if you can. If oxygen isn't available, use rescue breathing (mouth-to-mouth).
- 4 Stay with them until help comes.
- 5 Give Naloxone (NARCAN) if you have it. It can stop an overdose. You can get it at a pharmacy or clinic.

- **Naltrexone:** Blocks the "high" from opioids. It's a pill or monthly shot.

These medicines work best when used with counseling.

Where to get help

Mercy Care has places called 24/7 Access Points where you can get help anytime.

To learn more:

- **Mercy Care Opioid Help**
- **AHCCCS Service Locator**



Improving your care

Mercy Care has a Quality Improvement (QI) program that sets goals to improve your health and the quality of your care. Mercy Care uses data to see if we have met the goals.

It's important to us that members can access care easily. If you're having trouble with your health care, please call and let us know. We want to make sure you get the highest quality health care possible!

2024 Strengths:

- Helping members who have diabetes with their blood sugar levels
- Helping members who have high blood pressure to keep it in the right range
- Getting children a well visit at least once a year
- Making sure that members are satisfied with Mercy Care
- Making sure that adolescents have all required vaccines before their thirteenth birthday

2025 Opportunities:

- Making sure that children have all required vaccines before their second birthday
- Helping female members have well-woman exams, including PAP tests and mammograms
- Making sure that members who delivered a baby complete postpartum care

You can call the phone number on the back of your ID card to learn more. We can also help you get a copy of this information in writing.

Log in to Mercy Care Health Assistant at mercyar.es/healthasst to help manage your care and complete healthy activities.

LTC CONNECTION is published for the members of Mercy Care.

4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150, Phoenix, AZ 85040.

This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

Mercy Care is administered by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC, an Aetna company.

Call for Mercy Care Member Services Monday to Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM, or the 24-hour nurse line: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY 711)**.

For ACC-RBHA members with an SMI designation, call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY 711)**.

MercyCareAZ.org

Member Handbook

You can get this year's Member Handbook from Mercy Care Member Services at no cost to you. They can also send you the Provider Directory at no cost to you.

Or go to **MercyCareAZ.org** to view both resources. Just select your plan and click on "Forms and Materials."

Nondiscrimination Notice

Mercy Care complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Mercy Care does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Mercy Care:

- Provides no-cost aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
 - Qualified sign language interpreters
 - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides no-cost language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - Qualified interpreters
 - Information written in other languages

If you need a qualified interpreter, written information in other formats, translation or other services, call the number on your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY:711)**.

If you believe that Mercy Care has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with our Civil Rights Coordinator at:

Address: Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator
4570 S. 44th Place, Ste. 150
Phoenix, AZ 85040
Telephone: **1-888-234-7358 (TTY 711)**
Email: MedicaidCRCoordinator@MercyCareAZ.org

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD).

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>

Multi-language Interpreter Services

ENGLISH: ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call the number on the back of your ID card or **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

SPANISH: ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número que aparece en el reverso de su tarjeta de identificación o al **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Navajo: Díí baa akó nínízin: Díí saad bee yáníłti'go Diné Bizaad, saad bee áka'ánída'áwo'déé', t'áá jiik'eh, éí ná hólq, kojį' hódíłnih **1-800-385-4104 (TTY 711)**.

CHINESE: 注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電您的 ID 卡背面的電話號碼或 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**。

VIETNAMESE: CHÚ Ý: nếu bạn nói tiếng việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Hãy gọi số có ở mặt sau thẻ id của bạn hoặc **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

ARABIC: ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث باللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل على الرقم الموجود خلف بطاقتك الشخصية أو على 1-800-385-4104 (للصم والبكم: 711).

TAGALOG: PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng wikang Tagalog, mayroon kang magagamit na mga libreng serbisyo para sa tulong sa wika. Tumawag sa numero na nasa likod ng iyong ID card o sa **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

KOREAN: 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 귀하의 ID 카드 뒷면에 있는 번호로나 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** 번으로 연락해 주십시오.

FRENCH: ATTENTION: si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le numéro indiqué au verso de votre carte d'identité ou le **1-800-385-4104** (ATS: **711**).

GERMAN: ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie deutschen sprechen, können Sie unseren kostenlosen Sprachservice nutzen. Rufen Sie die Nummer auf der Rückseite Ihrer ID-Karte oder **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**) an.

RUSSIAN: ВНИМАНИЕ: если вы говорите на русском языке, вам могут предоставить бесплатные услуги перевода. Позвоните по номеру, указанному на обратной стороне вашей идентификационной карточки, или по номеру **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

JAPANESE: 注意事項:日本語をお話になる方は、無料で言語サポートのサービスをご利用いただけます。IDカード裏面の電話番号、または**1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**までご連絡ください。

PERSIAN: اگر به زبان فارسی صحبت می کنید، به صورت رایگان می توانید به خدمات کمک زبانی دسترسی داشته باشید. با شماره 1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711) تماس بگیرید.

[illegible]

SERBO-CROATIAN: OBAVEŠTENJE: Ako govorite srpski, usluge jezičke pomoći dostupne su vam besplatno. Pozovite broj na poledini vaše identifikacione kartice ili broj **1-800-385-4104** (TTY – telefon za osobe sa oštećenim govorom ili sluhom: **711**).

SOMALI: FEEJIGNAAN: Haddii af-Soomaali aad ku hadasho, adeegyada gargaarka luqadda, oo bilaash ah, ayaad heli kartaa. Wac lambarka ku qoran dhabarka dambe ee kaarkaaga aqoonsiga ama **1-800-385-4104** (Kuwa Maqalka ku Adag **711**).

THAI: ข้อควรระวัง: หากคุณพูดภาษาไทย คุณสามารถใช้บริการช่วยเหลือทางภาษาได้ฟรี
โทรติดต่อหมายเลขที่อยู่อันหลังบัตร ID ของคุณ หรือหมายเลข **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**