



Living Healthy

A newsletter for the members of
Central California Alliance for Health



September 2021 | VOLUME 27, ISSUE 3

September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month



One in five children in the United States is obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

The good news is that childhood obesity can be prevented. In honor of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, the Alliance encourages your family to make healthy changes together.

■ **Get active outside.** Walk around the neighborhood, go on a bike ride or

play basketball at the park.

■ **Encourage breaks with screen time.**

The COVID-19 pandemic highly impacted children and screen time. Encourage breaks in between times if children have to be online for school, and keep additional screen time (time spent playing video games or watching TV) to two hours a day or less.

■ **Make healthy meals.** Buy and serve more vegetables, fruits and whole-grain foods.

Source: cdc.gov/nccdp/hp/dnpao/features/childhood-obesity/index.html

Taking small steps as a family can help your child stay at a healthy weight

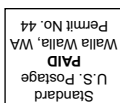
The Alliance offers the *Healthy Weight for Life* Program. This program is for children and teens ages 2 to 18 who want to reach a healthy weight. The *Healthy Weight for Life* Program can help your child learn how to eat healthy and be more active. You can also learn tools to support your child with lifestyle changes. Talk to your child's doctor about this program. The doctor must refer your child to the program if he or she thinks your child needs it. You can call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580** for more information.

 Follow us on
Facebook!

Stay up-to-date with:

- Tips and services for Medi-Cal members.
- Local community information.
- COVID-19 updates.

Find us at [facebook.com/
TheAllianceForHealth](https://www.facebook.com/TheAllianceForHealth)



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Long-term effects of COVID-19

Most people who become infected with the coronavirus feel better in 2 to 6 weeks, but some do not. Health problems that last longer than 4 weeks after a person is infected are called “post-COVID conditions” by the CDC. You may hear terms like “long COVID” or “long-hauler” to describe this experience.

These health troubles can last for weeks or months and may be very different than how you felt when you were originally sick. Other people say they were feeling better for a while, then started feeling worse. And others say they just do not feel like themselves.

Feeling these symptoms for such a long time may feel scary. You may

wonder, “Why am I still out of breath? Why am I still tired and coughing after months? Am I ever going to get better?” If you had COVID-19 and are having any of these problems, tell your doctor. Make sure the doctor knows you had COVID-19. There are ways to help manage or treat your symptoms, and support is available.

Experts are working hard to understand why and how long COVID happens. One common theory is that some people have a small amount of the virus that stays in their body for a long time. It is also possible that even after the infection has passed, the body is still reacting very, very strongly.

The best way to avoid these long-term complications is to prevent infection with the coronavirus. Even if you had COVID-19 in the past, doctors recommend getting the COVID-19 vaccine for you and your loved ones to stay protected.

Long COVID can happen to anyone who had the coronavirus. Your illness may have been mild. Or maybe you originally had no effects at all. Long COVID symptoms can be different for everyone and show up in different combinations. The most common long-lasting problems that may continue for 4 or more weeks are:

- Feeling very tired.
- Depression or anxiety.
- Painful joints or muscles.
- Trouble breathing.
- Dizziness when standing up.
- Fever that comes and goes.
- Cough.
- Problems with smell or taste.
- Diarrhea.
- Chest pain.
- Fast or pounding heartbeat.
- Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities.
- Headache.
- Problems with sleep.
- Trouble thinking clearly, focusing or remembering.

Make a plan to prevent flu and COVID-19

Last year, the safety measures we took to fight COVID-19 may also have contributed to a very mild flu season. That was a welcome dose of good news.

But now that masks are coming off and many people are meeting up again, it’s vital for you and your family to get your flu shots this year.

The flu and you

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu shots for almost everyone 6 months and older, especially those at high risk of getting very sick, including:

- People 65 and older.
- People with certain chronic conditions, such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease.
- Pregnant women.
- Young children, especially those under 2 years.
- People from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- People with disabilities, especially those that affect muscle or lung

function or that make it difficult to cough or swallow.

Most people should get their flu shot in September or October, CDC says. Children 6 months to 8 years old who have not had a flu shot before need two doses given at least four weeks apart. They should get an early start so they can get the second dose by the end of October.

Get your COVID-19 shots too

If you’ve yet to get a COVID-19 vaccine, plan to get one too. The vaccines are safe and very good at protecting people from COVID-19. Plus, once you’re fully vaccinated, you can start doing more, like getting together with friends and dropping your mask at times.

CDC recommends that most people 12 and older be vaccinated against COVID-19. And it’s now OK to get other shots at the same time. So ask your provider about getting up-to-date on all the shots your family needs.



What you need to know about other health coverage

» You may have other health coverage (OHC) if:

- You have health insurance through your job, spouse or partner, Covered California, or if you bought insurance on your own.
- You became eligible because of a new life event — getting married, for example.

Your OHC may have ended if:

- Your health coverage switched from Covered California to Medi-Cal.
- Your job ended or you were laid off.
- You canceled your insurance or stopped paying your premiums.

How do I update my OHC

information? If you have Medi-Cal, call your county’s Medi-Cal office or go to the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) website. They will verify that your OHC has ended before they update your case.

To update your information by phone:

- Merced County, **209-385-3000**
- Monterey County, **877-410-8823**
- Santa Cruz County, **888-421-8080**

To update your information on the California DHCS website: www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/TPLRD_OCU_cont.aspx. You should also call our Member Services team at **800-700-3874** to update your information.

Why is it important that I update my OHC?

- To avoid problems with being seen at your doctor’s office or getting prescriptions at the pharmacy.
- So you will not get a bill from your doctor’s office.

Now you can access your health information online!

Sign up today!

Alliance members can now access their health information online, using their computer, tablet or smartphone!

What are the benefits to accessing my health information online?

By accessing your health information online, you can see your medical history as an Alliance member and track your health. You can review your health information at any time. You will be able to see information like your:

- Past doctor visits.

- Prescribed medications.
- Lab tests and results.
- Immunizations.
- Care team and more!

You can also share your online health information with your doctors. This can help them provide you with better care.

What do I have to do?

You do not have automatic access to your health information online. You have to follow a sign-up process first. Signing up allows you to access your health information through an application, or “app,” that you choose

to use. You will need to:

- Visit the Alliance website to view our approved app list.
- Choose the health app you would like to use from our approved list.
- Download the health app to your computer, tablet or smartphone.
- Register for an Alliance user account.
- Give your permission for the health app to access your health information.

Will my health information be secure on an app?

To help keep your information secure, we only certify apps that pass a basic security assessment. We recommend choosing a trusted app from our approved list. Each app has its own policies and is not under control of the Alliance.

What if I want to stop sharing my information with an app?

If you want to remove an app’s permission to access your information, you can choose to “revoke consent” at any time. You can opt out through the app or through the Alliance.

Where can I get more information? How do I sign up?

For more details, visit our website page: www.thealliance.health/for-members/member-services/access-your-health-information/. We answer common questions and explain how to sign up to access your health information.



Does your doctor speak your language?

It is important that you can talk with your doctor clearly. If you and your doctor are not able to understand each other all the time, it could affect your health care. The Alliance has doctors in our network who speak a language other than English. You can find these doctors in your Provider Directory or by calling Member Services.

If you have trouble talking with your doctor, we can help. You do not have to use family or friends. You have the right to a trained interpreter, and the Alliance pays for this service. Your doctor can call a special phone line to get an interpreter who speaks your language. Then you and your doctor will talk through the interpreter.

If you would like an interpreter, let your doctor’s office know which language you need when you call to make an appointment. Ask them to call the Alliance’s telephone interpreter service when you arrive.

As an Alliance member, you have the right to these free services:

- **Interpreter services** in your language to help you talk with your:

- Doctor.
- Other health care provider.
- Health plan.

In most cases, telephonic interpreters are used, but a face-to-face interpreter may be used for complex cases. The Alliance must approve face-to-face cases ahead of time.

- **Written letters and notices** that affect your health care coverage are also offered in your language. We can also help you read these documents if you speak a language other than English.

For help with getting an interpreter or reading documents you receive, please call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**. If you need language assistance, we have a special telephone line to get an interpreter who speaks your language at no cost to you. For the Hearing or Speech Assistance Line, call **800-735-2929** (TTY: Dial 7-1-1).

Protecting your privacy



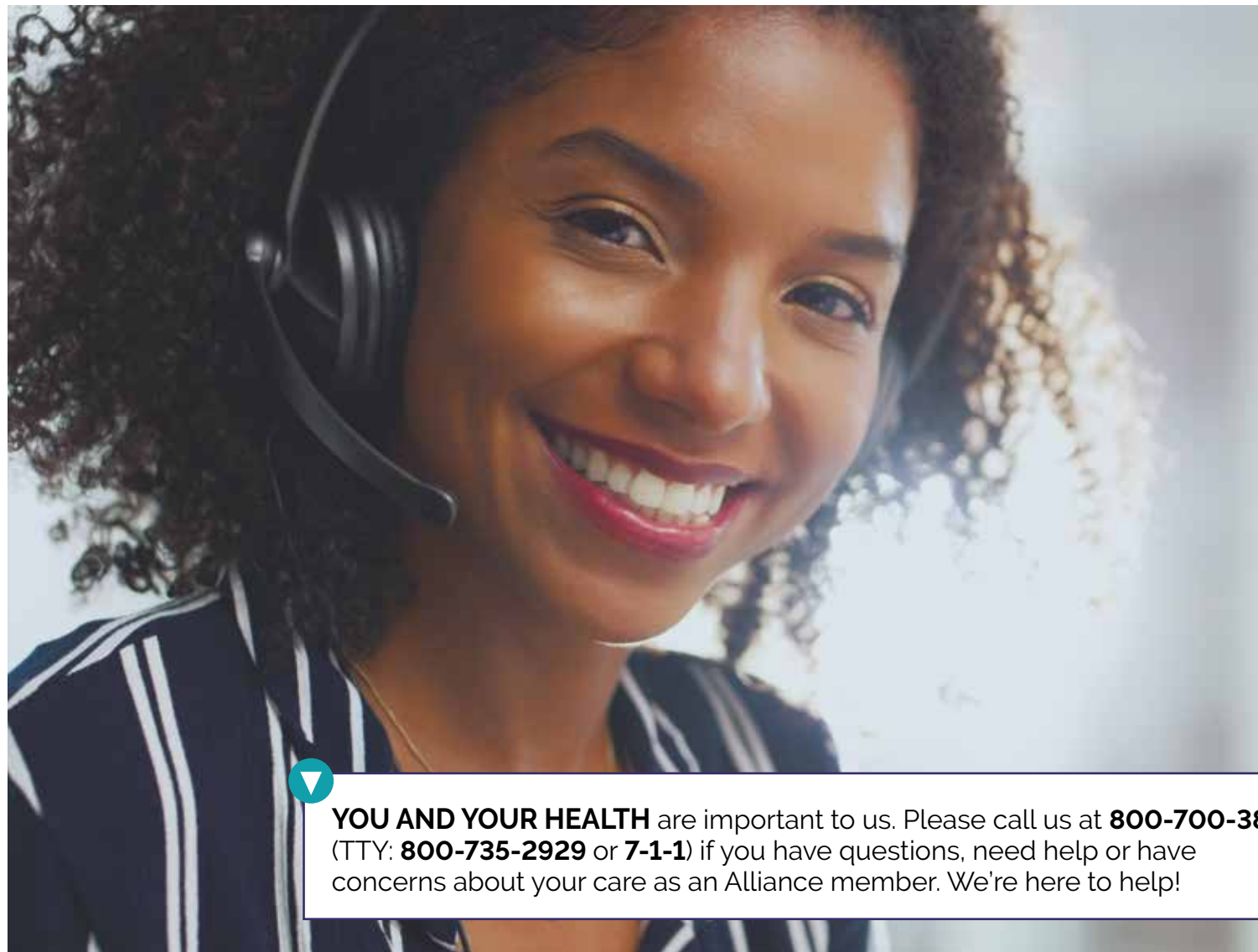
Details about your health care are personal. You deserve to have them kept that way. That is why we do all we can to protect your privacy.

We may disclose your information for treatment, payment and health care operations without having to ask your permission. An example would be to tell a provider you were eligible as an Alliance member so he or she could treat you. There are other situations in which we may also disclose information without your permission. These are determined by law.

If other people ask us for your information, outside of what is allowed by law, you must say it is OK before we can give it to them. We often review the way we keep your information safe. And we will continue to do so. We want you to have good care and peace of mind.

For more information about our privacy practices, see the Notice of Privacy Practices at the back of your Member Handbook/Evidence of Coverage. It is also available on our website, www.thealliance.health.





YOU AND YOUR HEALTH are important to us. Please call us at **800-700-3874** (TTY: **800-735-2929** or **7-1-1**) if you have questions, need help or have concerns about your care as an Alliance member. We're here to help!

The Alliance website has a new look and is easy to use!

The Alliance website has a new look! We are excited to share that now our website has better features that make it easier for you to use. Now you can:

- Easily view information on your phone!
- Use our search tool to find the exact information you are looking for.
- Use our online self-service features to replace an Alliance Member ID card, update your personal information, request a new primary doctor and more!
- Make the size of the words on the page larger.

- Switch the language of our website from English to Spanish or Hmong.
- Find out about any recent changes in benefits and other news from the Alliance.
- Always see the contact numbers for Member Services and links to important resources.

Are you new to the Alliance? The best place to start is the **Get Started** section that is under the **For Members** section in the menu bar. In this section, you can find information about how to use your Alliance Member ID card, how to find a doctor,

Service with a smile!

Have you ever wondered who is on the other end of the phone when you call Member Services?

Our representatives are caring, dedicated professionals. They are here to answer your calls Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Our representatives are ready to:

- Help you understand how your health plan works.
- Answer questions about your benefits.
- Explain how you can get medical care and services.
- Let you know which doctors and clinics you can go to.
- Help you choose or change your primary care provider.
- Offer interpreter services if you do not speak English.
- Help arrange transportation if you do not have ways to get to your doctor appointment.
- Send you a new Alliance Member ID card if you lose yours.
- Assist you with concerns or complaints.

We have representatives in Merced, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. They live and work in the communities we serve. What they have in common is that they care about our members and are here to help.

Alliance drug formulary changes 2nd quarter 2021

Effective June 1, 2021

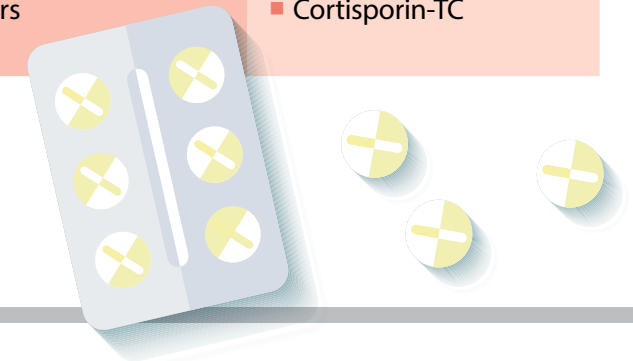
Additions to formulary

Diabetes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ozempic ■ Victoza ■ Byetta ■ Bydureon ■ Adlyxin ■ Rybelsus
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Weight loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Phentermine ■ Alli
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Removed from formulary

Ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cortisporin-TC
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learn more about your health plan and read through common member questions.

See our **Get Care** section, where we have made it easy to find the information many Alliance members need, such as how to get:

- The Nurse Advice Line (NAL) phone number so that you know how to reach a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Transportation services.
- Language assistance.
- Primary and urgent care.
- Prescriptions.

Come visit us at www.thealliance.health and see the difference today!



We are planning for office re-opening

The Alliance is planning for office re-openings in Merced, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties no sooner than February 2022. The Alliance will continue to follow public health guidelines to inform the timing of re-opening our offices; slow the spread of COVID-19; and ensure the health and safety of our members, staff and visitors. For the most up-to-date information about our offices re-opening, please visit our website at www.thealliance.health.

Once offices are open, you can visit us in person at the following locations:

Merced County Office

530 W. 16th St., Suite B,
Merced, CA 95340
Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monterey County Office

950 E. Blanco Road, Suite 101,
Salinas, CA 93901
Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Santa Cruz County Main Office

1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101,
Scotts Valley, CA 95066
Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can also go to the Alliance website at www.thealliance.health for common tasks. Below are just a few of the things you can do online:

- Replace your Alliance Member ID.
- Update your personal information.



- Request a new doctor.

If you have questions, please call Member Services at **800-700-3874**, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. If you need language assistance, we have a special telephone line to get an interpreter who speaks your language, available to you at no cost to you. For the Hearing or Speech Assistance Line, call **800-735-2929** (TTY: Dial 7-1-1).

Let your voice be heard!

We have many ways for you to let us know how we are doing and how we can improve. One of them is through our Member Services Advisory Group (MSAG).

Through MSAG, we are able to hear from our members and people who serve our members. We use this information to help us better understand what our members think, want and need. This group is made up of Alliance members and representatives of county and community agencies.

MSAG's goal is to help support friendly, effective and high-quality medical care for members of the Alliance.

MSAG members fill many roles, including:

- Advising the Commission on issues and concerns of members and the community as they relate to the Alliance.

- Speaking on behalf of Alliance members and bringing their concerns and ideas to MSAG meetings for discussion and possible action.

- Being a place to hear and collect the voices of Alliance members who might not be heard otherwise.

Meetings are held four times per year, and Alliance members or parents of an Alliance member can get \$50 for attending each meeting.



FOR MORE INFORMATION about the Advisory Group, please email MSAG@ccah-alliance.org, call the Alliance at **800-700-3874** or visit us at www.thealliance.health.



LIVING HEALTHY is published for the members and community partners of CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, 1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101, Scotts Valley, CA 95066, telephone 831-430-5500 or 800-700-3874, ext. 5505, website www.thealliance.health.

Information in LIVING HEALTHY comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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