

Stay Connected this Winter

Keeping the Heat & Lights On

Did you know that low-income households or homes where all adults are aged 65 years or over are protected from electric or gas shutoff?

This winter, Commonwealth Care Alliance will also help you apply for discounted gas and electric rates, financial aid with heating bills, and help make your home more energy efficient!

Free SafeLink Cell Phone

If you need a telephone service Commonwealth Care Alliance can help you apply for SafeLink Wireless Service, a free cell phone with 80 minutes per month! SafeLink does not cost anything — there are no contracts, no recurring fees and no monthly charges.

If you need help applying for the SafeLink cell phone, our Member Services team can submit the application for you. Please call them at 1-866-610-2273.

If you'd like to apply by yourself, please follow these directions:

1. Log on to this internet address:
www.safelinkwireless.com
2. Fill in the online application form.
3. Keep a copy of the application for your records.



4. Write down your Enrollment ID so you can check on the status of your application. ♦



Do I Need an H1N1 Vaccine?

People aged 65 years or over are not one of the groups recommended to get the first doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine because Seniors are least likely to get sick with this virus.

There has been very little H1N1 illness in Seniors since the 2009 H1N1 virus emerged.

Will people aged 65 years or over be able to get the H1N1 vaccine this season?

Yes. Seniors can get the H1N1 flu vaccine as soon as the high risk groups have had the chance to be vaccinated. You can get the seasonal flu vaccine now.

Should I Get the Seasonal Flu Shot?

Yes. Seniors have a high risk for complications from seasonal influenza and are recommended for annual seasonal flu shots. This year is no exception — **you should get a seasonal flu shot now.**



Questions? Talk with your doctor, your nurse or care manager, or call our Member Services team at 1-866-610-2273. ♦

Source: www.CDC.gov

ARTS & crafts



Vase Centerpieces

Things you'll need:

- Clear glass vase
- Any colorful fruit or vegetable (for example, apples, lemons, limes, cranberries, tomatoes)

Vases aren't just for flowers. In fact, clear glass vases can quickly be turned into a pretty centerpiece by using everyday ingredients. Here's how to create an unusual, edible centerpiece.

Use a tall glass vase in any shape or size. Fill up the vase with any kind of fruit to add color to your kitchen table or to any corner of your house.

Certain vegetables can also be used. Fill a tall thin glass vase with grape tomatoes and use it as a centerpiece.

Artificial fruit can be used for a longer lasting effect.

If you want to get even more creative, flip the vase upside down and place a candle on the top to create beautiful colorful candle holders. Remember to blow out the candles when you are finished.



Don't be afraid to mix and match different fruit for an extra splash of color!



Free Tax Help

If you need assistance with your taxes, do not worry — there are people that can help!

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) and AARP are two organizations that offer assistance to low-income older adults who need help filing their taxes.

How can you get free tax help?

- ABCD is part of a Boston coalition that has over 26 tax sites across the city offering free tax assistance programs such as Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE). **Call ABCD at 617-348-6000** to find your nearest tax site
- AARP offers the Tax-Aide counseling program at more than 7,000 sites nationwide during the filing season! **Call AARP toll free at 1-866-448-3621**

What items will you need for tax counseling?

- Proof of identification
- Social Security Cards for you, your spouse, and dependents and/or a Social Security Number verification letter issued by the Social Security Administration
- Birth dates for you, your spouse, and dependents
- Current year's tax package if you received one
- Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- A copy of last year's Federal and State returns if you have it
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit
- To file taxes electronically on a married filing joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms

Questions? Call our Member Services team at 1-866-610-2273. ♦

Source: ABCD; AARP.

Avoid the Winter Blues

Winter can be tough for some people, as decreasing temperatures and shorter daylight hours can bring about the “winter blues”. This is especially true for many senior adults as they often choose to stay inside because the weather is bad.

You can begin to cope with your “winter blues” by accepting your negative feelings instead of hiding them from others. These feelings are part of the normal ups and downs that everyone feels from time to time. Try to manage your “winter blues” by following these tips:

Tips to Help You Cope with the Winter Blues

- Stay in contact with others by visiting or calling friends or family regularly.
- Exercise regularly. Not only is it good for your health, it also releases endorphins into your body which can put you in a better mood.
- Do something nice for yourself. This can be as simple as enjoying a cup of tea or coffee, relaxing while reading the newspaper, or treating yourself to some ice cream.
- Open up the shades, blinds and curtains in your house to allow natural light to come in.
- Dress warmly and sit outside for a short time when the sun is shining.
- Listen to your favorite music or watch a funny movie or TV program.
- Think positively. Nothing lasts forever, including winter. Soon sunny spring will be here.
- Talk to your doctor, nurse or care manager if your “winter blues” don’t go away.

Questions? Talk with your doctor, your nurse or care manager, or call our Member Services team at 1-866-610-2273. ♦

Source: Modern Senior Living Magazine; The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, Stanford University.



Local Member Meetings are held in your communities.

Look for your invitation in the near future. Families and caregivers welcome!

Questions? Call Rosa at 1-866-610-2273 ext. 226



Caregiver Thanks

In our last newsletter, we invited members to nominate their caregivers for public acknowledgment. Here are two of the nominations:

*"I receive PCA services from **Mrs. Rosa Nova** and would like to publicly thank her.*

Mrs. Nova is a very responsible person; affectionate and sweet. She does all her duties quickly and correctly and she has also shown interest in my health and other problems that might affect me.

Mrs. Nova is never in a hurry, even if she has more errands to run, she is always on time, and provides me with emotional support.

*Sincerely, **Norma Barbosa.**"*

*"I feel that life has changed a lot since I've been in the program and I am very happy and grateful, especially with the services of my PCAs, **Mercedez Martinez** and **Marta Santiago.**" — via telephone **Manuel Guzman Rios.***

We will be sending these caregivers a certificate of appreciation.

Visit the Commonwealth Care Alliance web site for the latest in member information

www.commonwealthcare.org



Call our Member Services Team, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

1-866-610-2273

To share your own recipes or stories, or if you have an idea for the newsletter, contact Nerissa J. Fry at 1-866-610-2273 ext. 244 or e-mail nfry@commonwealthcare.org



30 Winter Street
Boston, MA 02108

1-866-610-2273 Toll free
1-866-322-7357 TTY
www.commonwealthcare.org

**Health or Wellness or
Prevention Information**