

# Connection



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# Referrals for Specialist Visits

Members in Peoples Health HMO-POS plans need a referral from their primary care provider (PCP) before seeing certain types of specialists. This helps coordinate care effectively, so you get the right care, at the right time, from the right provider. It also ensures that your PCP has a clear picture of your overall health.

### Maximize your time with your PCP. Use these quick tips for easy referrals:

- Write a list of your specialists.
- When you call your PCP's office to schedule a visit, such as your annual wellness visit, take a few extra minutes to tell your PCP about the specialists you see—or need to see. Ask your PCP to set up those referrals in advance.
- You may not need to schedule a visit with your PCP just to ask for a referral—call to find out.
- If your PCP submits your referrals during a visit, confirm that everything is set up before you leave the office.

Planning ahead means avoiding interruptions in your specialist care.



## Your Questions Answered

### Q: Help! I had a hospital stay. What do I do now?

A: The most important thing to do is see your PCP within 7 days after the date you leave a hospital stay. Your doctor will want to review your medications, including those you take regularly and any new ones you were prescribed at the hospital. This is to make sure the medications work together for you and that you need to continue taking them. Your doctor can also explain your discharge instructions and set up additional care if needed.



**The Peoples Health Transitions of Care team of nurses and social workers can also help. These care coordinators might call you after a hospital stay or visit to the emergency department to offer support and make sure you have everything you need. They can schedule your PCP appointment, provide educational resources and more.**

### Q: Why did I get a call from a Peoples Health care coordinator when I didn't have a hospital stay?

A: Our care coordinator nurses and social workers, along with other Peoples Health representatives, may call to support you in getting any preventive care you may need or provide resources and educational materials you may have requested. We have a complex case management program, too, that offers one-on-one education, guidance and follow-up for members with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart failure and cancer. We encourage you to take advantage of the resources our team offers for your overall health and well-being.

## Set Goals Now: Start the Year With a Strong Health Foundation

In a nutshell—planning early ensures you get the preventive care you need when you need it, avoid unexpected costs and stay on top of where you want to be with your health.

### ► Step 1: Start With an Annual Wellness Visit

Your first step each year should be to see your primary care provider (PCP) for an annual wellness visit. This covered service helps you and your PCP create or update your personalized prevention plan. The visit is not a physical exam, but it includes:

- Reviewing your medical and family history
- Reviewing a list of your current medications and providers
- Checking your blood pressure, height, weight and other routine measurements
- Completing a cognitive assessment
- Getting health advice and referrals for preventive services



**Smart Tip:** Along with your annual wellness visit, your plan also covers a \$0 physical exam once per year. Schedule both during the same visit.

### ► Step 2: Know the Preventive Care You Need

Your personalized prevention plan is how you know which services you need. Preventive care helps detect health issues early and keep you healthy. The services right for you are based on your age, sex and health history. See the back cover for where to download our preventive care checklist of recommended screenings and tests. Your PCP will let you know which to schedule.

### ► Step 3: Schedule Care Strategically

Avoid delays:

- **Book routine appointments early**, at the beginning of the year when schedules fill quickly.
- **Call your PCP's office to request a referral** if needed before scheduling a specialist visit. (See the quick tips on the previous page.)
- **Also call your doctor's office** to explain your symptoms if you need a sick visit. This helps your PCP prioritize visits.



**Smart Tip:** Keep a calendar of your appointments and recommended screenings to stay organized.

## Let's Talk Medications



Your annual wellness visit isn't just about getting your vitals checked—it's your chance to make sure your medications are doing their job. Are they helping you feel your best and working well together? If not, now's the time to speak up.

### Why do this?

Your health changes over time, and so can your medication needs. Reviewing your medications with your doctor helps prevent side effects, avoid drug interactions and keep your treatment plan on track.

- **Ask the big questions.** Are these medications still right for me? Are there better options?
- **Share what you notice.** Side effects or changes? Your doctor needs to know.
- **Make refills easy with fewer pharmacy trips.** Ask about a 100-day or 90-day supply instead of a 30-day supply.
- **Set it and forget it.** Sign up for auto-refills. Or get home delivery.

If your Peoples Health plan has Part D coverage, set up home delivery through Optum Rx Mail-Order Pharmacy. See your member website, or call:

- **Peoples Health Group Medicare plans:** 1-888-279-1828
- **All other plans:** 1-877-889-6358

## Take Care of Your Mental Well-Being

Life changes, like retirement, health issues and living alone, can affect how we feel emotionally. It helps to know what harms mental health—and where to find support when you need it.

### Common Conditions

**Depression** is more than feeling “blue” or grieving after a loss. It’s a medical condition that affects mood, energy and interest in daily life. Symptoms include:

- Decreased energy
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Eating more or less than usual
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Ignoring responsibilities
- Increased substance use
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Persistent feeling of “emptiness”
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Unintended weight gain or loss

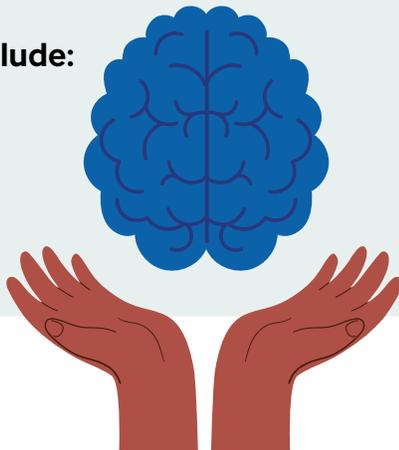
**Anxiety** and depression often occur together. Untreated anxiety can affect your thinking and brain health and lead to a lower quality of life. It may also cause both physical and mental concerns.

### Physical symptoms may include:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Dry mouth
- Irregular heartbeat
- Nausea
- Numbness or tingling in hands or feet
- Shortness of breath
- Tight muscles

### Emotional symptoms may include:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Fear or dread
- Irritability
- Obsessive thoughts
- Panic



### What might affect mental health?

- Loss of a loved one
- Moving away from family
- Chronic pain
- Mobility issues
- Hearing or vision loss
- Being less active
- Loss of social connections



Some people might turn to alcohol or drug use to cope with big life changes. But as we age, our bodies process these substances differently, and the effects might be stronger and more harmful. **Substance use disorder** is a diagnosable condition. Symptoms include:

- Loss of control over use
- Significant impairment
- Relationship problems
- Risky behavior
- Higher tolerance for or greater need of the substance

It’s common for people to have a substance use disorder and a mental health condition at the same time.

### UnitedHealthcare® App For Peoples Health Members

- ✓ Get plan documents
- ✓ View claims and coverage
- ✓ Find medications and providers
- ✓ Change your PCP
- ✓ Send us a message
- ✓ Update personal information

Try the app:



## How to Get Help – 3 Steps

### 1. Talk to a mental health professional

A licensed counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist can help you manage stress, anxiety and depression. Find a provider through your member website. Many offer virtual visits, so you get care from the comfort of your home.

### 2. Review medications with your provider

Your provider may recommend medication to manage mental health conditions. Often, combining medication with therapy is most effective. Also talk to your provider about any concerns with alcohol or medication use.

### 3. Address hearing and vision loss

Hearing and vision problems can lead to isolation and anxiety. Getting the right support—like hearing aids or vision care—can improve your physical and emotional health.

### Who to talk to?

If you're not sure, start with your primary care provider for guidance on next steps.

## Emergency Hotlines for 24/7 Support

**Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** – Call or text 988 for free, confidential support

**Substance Use Helpline** – Call 1-855-780-5955 (TTY 711) for support with alcohol or drug concerns

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** – Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or text “START” to 88788 for confidential help

**Emergency Services** – Call 911 for immediate medical, fire or safety emergencies

## Healthy Habits

Building healthy habits is the best investment in your long-term well-being. Consider these:

### Get Quality Sleep

More than rest, sleep is essential for healing your body and clearing your mind. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night. Create a calming bedtime routine: limit screen time before bed and keep your sleep environment cool and dark. Poor sleep leads to fatigue, weakened immunity and even chronic health issues, so make sleep a priority.

### Protect Your Vision

Vision changes may happen gradually, so schedule regular eye exams, even if you don't wear glasses. Eye health is linked to overall health; conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure can affect eyesight. Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses outdoors, reducing screen glare and taking breaks during long periods of computer use.

### Stay on Top of Lab Tests

Regular lab tests help monitor blood sugar, kidney function, cholesterol and other vital markers. These tests can detect problems before symptoms appear. Talk with your doctor about which tests you need based on your age, family history, health factors and lifestyle.

# Stay in Touch

## Email, Chat or Call

Log in to your member website and send us a secure message or choose the live chat feature.

Need to speak with Customer Service? Choose the phone number for your plan. TTY users call 711. We have free language interpreter services available for non-English speakers.

Plan	Customer Service Number
Peoples Health Choices 65 (HMO-POS) Peoples Health Choices Gold (HMO-POS) Peoples Health Medicare Advantage Giveback LA-4 (HMO-POS) Peoples Health Medicare Advantage Patriot No Rx LA (HMO-POS) Peoples Health Complete Care LA-5, 6 and 7 (HMO-POS C-SNP) Peoples Health Choices (PPO) Peoples Health Patriot (PPO)	1-877-369-1907

**Member Website:** [mypeopleshealthplan.com](http://mypeopleshealthplan.com)

**Customer Service Hours:** 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. | 7 days per week October to March  
Monday through Friday April to September

Peoples Health Dual Complete LA-S5 (HMO-POS D-SNP) Peoples Health Secure Complete (HMO-POS D-SNP) Peoples Health Secure Health (HMO-POS D-SNP)	1-877-367-1803
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**Member Website:** [mypeopleshealthplan.com](http://mypeopleshealthplan.com)

**Customer Service Hours:** 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. | 7 days per week October to March  
Monday through Friday April to September

Group Plan	Customer Service Number
Peoples Health Group Medicare (HMO-POS)	1-866-556-8167
Peoples Health Group Medicare (HMO-POS) Office of Group Benefits	1-866-877-5403

**Member Website:** [peopleshealthretiree.com](http://peopleshealthretiree.com)

**Customer Service Hours:** 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. | Monday through Friday  
To reach us on a weekend October through March, call 1-866-616-8308.

## Visit

Visit us at the following location, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Peoples Health Medicare Center**  
3017 Veterans Memorial Blvd.  
Metairie, LA 70002

## Write

Send **written correspondence** to:

Attn: Customer Service  
Peoples Health  
Three Lakeway Center  
3838 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 2500  
Metairie, LA 70002

Main office phone: 504-849-4500 (save to your cellphone contacts; on occasion we might call you from the office, but always call your plan's Customer Service number when you need help).

## Compliance & Ethics HelpCenter

To report potential violations of the law, call our toll-free hotline at **1-800-455-4521**. You may choose to remain anonymous. We have a nonretaliation policy for all callers.



## Managing Chronic Pain: A Daily Challenge

Chronic pain can cause people to feel isolated, and it affects millions in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This type of pain is defined as lasting longer than three months, and in some cases it lasts for years. While mild aches and stiffness are common as the body changes over time, chronic pain is not a normal sign of aging.

Chronic pain might happen because of a medical condition, like cancer, or a past injury, and sometimes it remains even after you've recovered. It can affect you emotionally, as well as physically, and get in the way of daily routines or even lead to depression and anxiety.

### What to do if this is you?

Talk with your doctor about the treatments available to manage your pain. These might include prescription medications and holistic or non-drug therapies. Some prescription medications to treat pain are very strong and should be used properly and with caution. Be sure to talk with your doctor regularly about all the medications you're taking, including for pain, depression or other conditions, to make sure they don't negatively interact. Always bring up any medication side effects.

### Some strategies that may help

- **Get mental health support.** If you think you might have depression or anxiety, talk with your doctor. Treatment options may include medication and talk therapy.
- **Try relaxation techniques**, including meditation, mindfulness and progressive muscle relaxation.
  - **Mindfulness** is paying close attention to the things you do as you do them, such as eating. This might help change habitual patterns of thinking, feeling and acting.
  - **Progressive muscle relaxation** is when you concentrate on slowly tensing and relaxing each muscle group. It makes you focus on the physical sensation.
- **Do physical activity.** Staying active when you're in pain can be a challenge, but regular exercise may lessen chronic pain symptoms, including stiffness and inflammation. Exercise can also improve strength, range of motion and balance. Low-impact options include aquatic exercise, tai chi, qigong, yoga and Pilates.

Source: [uhc.com/news-articles/healthy-living/chronic-pain-management-and-tips](https://www.uhc.com/news-articles/healthy-living/chronic-pain-management-and-tips)



### Do You Know?

You get free access to the Calm Health app. Learn more in your member website under **Health & Wellness**.

Three Lakeway Center  
3838 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 2500  
Metairie, LA 70002

### IMPORTANT PLAN INFORMATION

This is the newsletter for Peoples Health plan members.

   **Connect with us on social media.**

Keep your health on track—download the [preventive care checklist](#) from our blog at [peopleshealthconnection.com](#).

Then read more on the blog. Use the Search tool to find these articles:

- [“Make Time for Regular Checkups, Including for Mental Health”](#)
- [“Growing Older: What Does It Mean for Your Physical and Mental Health?”](#)

Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies. For Medicare Advantage Plans: A Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract. For Dual Special Needs Plans: A Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract and a contract with the State Medicaid Program. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan’s contract renewal with Medicare. The healthy food and utilities benefit is a special supplemental benefit only available to chronically ill enrollees with a qualifying condition, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, chronic heart failure, chronic high blood pressure and/or chronic high cholesterol, and who also meet all applicable plan coverage criteria. There may be other qualified chronic conditions not listed. Y0066\_MAR2026NEWS\_C



#### **Notice for Members in a Peoples Health Dual-Eligible Special Needs Plan:**

You may have received a letter from us about your eligibility to use your credit benefit to pay for healthy food and utility bills. Please read it!

You must have a qualifying chronic condition that we can verify through your health records. If you did not receive a letter or you have a qualifying condition not yet verified, call the number on the back of your member ID card and let us know.

**Were you a member of your Peoples Health plan in 2025?** This new process is because Medicare ended the program used for the 2025 benefit. Medicare requires us to offer your 2026 healthy food and utility bills benefit in a different way.

**The Connection —  
a newsletter for you. Open now!**