



Get Care, Stay Well

Is your family ready for extreme weather?

Being ready for severe weather before it hits can mean the difference between staying safe and falling victim. This starts with making a family plan so that you all know what to do if a tornado, hurricane, ice storm, or other disaster strikes.

Think ahead

Here are things your family plan should include:

- Where you'll shelter and what evacuation routes you'll take, if needed.
- Meeting places, both near home and outside of the neighborhood.
- Contact numbers for one another, plus an out-of-town friend.

- How you'll help a family member with special needs.
- A plan for your pets.

You should also know the disaster plan used at work, school, and other places your family spends time.

Make a disaster kit

Store supplies in an airtight plastic box that's easy to get to. Include a few days of water, shelf-stable food, and medications you may need. A flashlight, batteries, first-aid kit, radio, whistle, and

personal care items are other things to put in your box.

In addition, have copies of your birth certificates, health information, bank account numbers, and other important information. Put these where you can easily grab them, if you need to leave your home.

Be ready for anything

For a full list of what to have in your family plan and disaster-supply kit, plus tips on dealing with specific disasters, visit www.ready.gov.

See page 5 for an important message for all members using medications.

The information provided in this newsletter does not take the place of your primary care provider (PCP). If you have questions, or if you think you need to see your PCP because of something you have read here, please contact your PCP. Never stop or wait to get medical attention because of something you have read in this material. All images are used under license for illustrative purposes only. Any individual depicted is a model.

Take control: Get help for drug or alcohol addiction

Do you or someone you know have an alcohol or drug problem? It's not always easy to tell. But if you think there may be an issue, it shouldn't be ignored. Misuse of drugs or alcohol can lead to a substance use disorder, a mental illness better known as addiction.

You could be addicted to drugs or alcohol if you have:

- **Cravings.** You have a strong urge to use a substance.
- **Lack of control.** You can't stop using a substance even if you want to.
- **Dependence.** You have withdrawal symptoms such as an upset stomach, depression, muscle aches, or anxiety when you stop.
- **Tolerance.** It takes more and more of a substance to make you feel the same way.

The toll it takes

Here's a closer look at some ways drug or alcohol addiction may be hurting your life.

You notice that drugs or alcohol take up a lot of your time, energy, and thoughts. Most of your

days are spent using a substance, thinking about it, planning how you're going to get more, and recovering from its effects. Your school, work, or relationships with others are suffering.

People who misuse drugs or alcohol may also show signs such as:

- Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts.
- Not taking care of oneself (e.g., not changing clothes or showering).
- Bloodshot eyes and oddly sized pupils.
- Loss of interest in activities that used to be important.
- Continued use despite negative results.

What you can do

It can be hard to admit you have a problem, but help is available if you are ready to begin the road to recovery. To learn about treatment options, call your health care provider, or call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline. This free, confidential, 24/7 service is available at **1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**.

"The Science of Drug Abuse and Addiction: The Basics," National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, www.drugabuse.gov/publications/media-guide/science-drug-abuse-addiction-basics.



Here to support you with the flexible recovery benefit

AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina offers a flexible recovery benefit when you successfully complete a nonhospital substance use disorder (SUD) treatment stay. This benefit can be used for services such as transportation to and from support group meetings like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

Smokers: Quitting earlier in life could benefit your health

If you smoke, you likely know it increases your risk for many diseases, including cancer. But there may be good news for those who kick the habit, especially earlier in life.

The sooner the better

A recent study found that those who quit before age 45 cut their extra risk of dying of cancer by 89%. Those who stopped smoking before age 35 had no extra cancer risk.

In fact, the study found quitters of all ages reduced their cancer risk. Those who quit before age 55 cut their higher risk by 78%. Those who quit before age 65 cut their risk by 56%.

The bottom line: If you smoke, quit as soon as you can to lower your risk for cancer.

Build a quit strategy

Quitting isn't easy, but you can stop smoking. Here's how:

- **Pick a date.** Mark it on your calendar and then start making your plan to quit.
- **Know your reasons.** Whether it's better health, saving money, or setting a good example for your kids, write down what matters most to you. Post this list in a place you'll see every day.
- **Plan for cravings.** Nicotine is addictive; that's why quitting is so hard. If you have ideas for things you can do when a craving hits, other than smoking, it will help. You might take a walk, chew gum, or call a friend.
- **Try nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).** Using NRT can double your chances for success. Choices include gums, patches, lozenges, and inhalers. Talk with your health care provider about what might work best for you.
- **Get extra help.** Quitting is easier with support. Ask family for help, join an online support group, try an app, or talk with a counselor.



Get the help you need to quit smoking

AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina can connect you to the Quit For Life® program to help you stop smoking or using other tobacco products. Quit For Life can provide:

- A quit plan created by you and a quit coach.
- A guide to help you during your journey.
- Smoking-cessation medicines.
- A web portal, mobile app, and text message support.

To join, contact QuitlineNC at www.quitlinenc.com or **1-800-784-8669 (TTY 1-877-777-6543)**. You'll get services at no cost. Call AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina Member Services at **1-855-375-8811 (TTY 1-866-209-6421)** for more details.

Blake Thomson et al., "Association of Smoking Initiation and Cessation Across the Life Course and Cancer Mortality: Prospective Study of 410,000 U.S. Adults," *JAMA Oncol.*, Vol. 7, No. 12, 2021, pp. 1901 – 1903.

"Prepare to Quit," Smokefree.gov, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://smokefree.gov/quit-smoking/getting-started/prepare-to-quit>.

Try these back-to-school lunch tips

A tasty, healthy school lunch is more than just another meal. It helps kids' brains stay focused and primed to learn, and it helps their bodies grow and maintain a healthy weight. Gaining too much weight raises the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, according to the CDC.

Here are some quick, affordable tips for making sure the kids in your life have an A+ lunch at school.

Check what the cafeteria is serving. Today's cafeteria food is more nutritious and kid-friendly than what you might remember. Select students are eligible for free or low-cost school meals.









Become a pro at lunchbox packing. If your kids bring lunch from home, get everything ready the night before. Include a lean protein food, fruits and veggies, and a whole grain. Below are some sample menus with a healthy variety of foods to help ward off diabetes.

Keep perishable foods cold and safe. Put a couple of freezer packs in the lunchbox, or use a frozen water bottle or juice box instead. It will thaw and be ready to drink just in time for lunch.



We can show you how to PREPARE HEALTHIER MEALS

The AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina Wellness & Opportunity Centers offer nutrition classes on healthy eating. Learn to prepare meals that are both delicious and satisfying, with recipes designed to help you get and stay healthy. Healthy meals are meals that are high in fiber and vitamins and low in calories and fats. Classes are taught by nutrition experts and offered at no cost to members. For more information on courses near you, contact the Wellness & Opportunity Center in your area.

Lean protein	Fruit or veggie	Healthy treat
Tuna with low-fat mayo and lettuce on a whole-grain roll 	Orange slices 	Part-skim string cheese 
Squares of lower-sodium deli turkey on whole-grain crackers 	Grape tomatoes 	Low-fat yogurt with berries stirred in 
Hummus sandwiched between cucumber slices 	Carrot sticks 	Mix of Chocolate Cheerios, almonds, and raisins

"Childhood Obesity Causes and Consequences," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/causes.html.

Wellness & Opportunity Centers: Programs and services, just for you

Visit AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina in person! Our locations across the state are ready to serve members with a long list of resources and support. This includes nutrition, physical activity, and financial literacy classes; job search help; and more. Learn more at www.amerihhealthcaritasnc.com or stop by.

- Region 1 — 216 Asheland Ave., Asheville
- Region 2 — 3018 West Gate City Blvd., Greensboro
- Region 3 — 3120 Wilkinson Blvd., Charlotte
- Region 4 — Coming soon
- Region 5 — 4101 Raeford Road, Fayetteville
- Region 6 — 1876 West Arlington Blvd., Greenville



Our Wellness & Opportunity Centers host monthly healthy cooking demonstrations, available to ACNC members and to the community at no charge. These feature local chefs like April Perton, owner of Cooking4Fitness.



Fayetteville Wellness & Opportunity Center administrator Shadonna Headon (center) welcomed ACNC members Serenity Lewis and her mom Shamanike to a Back to School event in August.



Thanks to our partners at Cumberland County Health Department for being part of our Region 5 Back to School event!

An important message for all members using medications

Members will be notified when medications are no longer included on the AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina/North Carolina Division of Health Benefits Medication Preferred Drug List or if there has been a change in coverage. If you receive a notice, call Member Services at **1-855-375-8811 (TTY 1-866-209-6421)** for information about options. You may also use the AmeriHealth Caritas Medication Look Up Tool at www.amerihhealthcaritasnc.com/member/eng/benefits/medicine-lookup-tool.aspx. Written notice will be given at least 30 days prior to the change taking effect.



The North Carolina Tailored Plan

Beginning December 1, North Carolina will launch a new phase of managed care called the Behavioral Health-Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (BH I/DDs) Tailored Plan. Most Medicaid beneficiaries are served by one managed care plan that provides physical health, behavioral health, traumatic brain injury support, long-term care, and pharmacy services.

The Tailored Plan comes under the managed care model and will guide physical and behavioral health services for North Carolina Medicaid enrollees with more severe and long-term behavioral health conditions, substance use disorders, I/DDs, and traumatic brain injuries.

Most AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina members who have behavioral health or substance



use care needs will continue to be served by ACNC through providers in your community. If you are an AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina member who requires Tailored Plan services, you will transition to one of the Tailored Plans.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: City of Greenville Recreation and Parks



AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina has been a proud supporter of youth basketball leagues in the city of Greenville, including this summer's Jr. NBA program. Nearly 160 youth participated in the program, which tipped off with a Draft Day in June for league players. The season ended with a tournament event and health fair in August, cosponsored by the AmeriHealth Caritas Partnership's Healthy Hoops® program.



Wellness & Opportunity Center administrator Amanda Sparling (pictured second from the right) joined ACNC Care Crew volunteers at the Jr. NBA event in Greenville.