



*Welcome to another edition of Whole You, a newsletter from PA Health & Wellness (PHW).*

We hope this newsletter finds you well. We really hope you enjoy the helpful tips in this edition and that it helps you take better care of the whole you.

## The end of fall is here.

### The shortened daylight hours of winter are just around the corner.

This is a good time to talk about the link between sunlight and mental health. Reduced sunlight exposure can affect our mood, sleep patterns, and overall mental well-being.

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)** is a type of depression that occurs most often during fall and winter months when daylight hours are shorter. The symptoms of SAD include sadness, fatigue, difficulty with concentrating, appetite changes, and sometimes withdrawing from family and social activities.

There are ways to improve your mental well-being during shortened daylight hours. They include:

- 1 Seek sunlight whenever possible. Try to spend time outdoors during daylight hours.
- 2 Stay active – regular physical activity has been shown to improve mood.
- 3 Eat a balanced diet, drink plenty of water, and get enough sleep.
- 4 Reach out for support if needed. Talk to a mental health professional if you find yourself struggling with symptoms of depression.

Pennsylvania offers resources for those struggling with mental health issues. There is a hotline (988) that is a direct link for suicide prevention and crisis support. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is there for you or a loved one, at no cost. You can call, text or chat for help 24/7 just by dialing “988.” This private three-digit code is for anyone having a mental health crisis. For emergency medical help, overdose, or fear of your safety, call or text “911” to dispatch police.

Call **988** for:

- Thoughts of suicide
- Ongoing anxiety or depression
- Concerns about alcohol or drug use
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or others

Call **911** for:

- Someone’s life is in danger
- Overdose
- Emergency medical help
- Fear for your safety or someone else’s



It's that time of year again when we talk about the flu and how to keep ourselves feeling great. One way to do that is by getting a flu vaccine.

## What's the Flu Vaccine?

The flu is a contagious virus that spreads when people who have the flu cough, sneeze, or even talk. The flu vaccine is like a superhero shield that helps protect the body from the flu. It is a special shot that can teach your body how to fight against the flu.

## Why Get the Flu Vaccine?

Getting the flu is no fun. It can cause fever, chills, muscle aches, cough, congestion, runny nose, headaches, and fatigue. But guess what? The flu vaccine can help prevent that! When we get the vaccine, our bodies learn how to fight off the flu germs if they ever come knocking.

## Knowing the Difference between the Flu and COVID-19

The flu and COVID-19 are caused by different viruses but have some of the same signs and symptoms. Most times, a person with the flu will experience symptoms one to four days after infection. Someone with COVID-19 will experience symptoms two to five days and up to 14 days after infection. COVID-19 can cause more severe illness in people when compared with the flu. The only way to know for sure is to get a test from your doctor that can detect both the flu and COVID-19.

## How Do You Get the Flu Vaccine?



Getting the flu vaccine is pretty easy and quick. You might go to a doctor's office, a clinic, or even your local pharmacy. Scan the QR code to find a vaccine location near you or visit:

<https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines/>

## Remember to Get It!

Now, here's the important part. To stay healthy and strong during flu season (that's when the flu is more likely to spread), it's a good idea to get the flu vaccine. For most people, doctors recommend getting the flu vaccine in September or October, but it's not too late to get it today!

## Stay Awesome and Healthy!

By getting the flu vaccine, you're doing something beneficial for your body. You're helping it build its own shield to fight off the flu and stay strong. So, keep rocking your awesome self and make sure to get that flu vaccine. **Your future self will thank you!**

Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/index.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm#:~:text=COVID%2D19%20symp-toms,-,How%20Flu%20Spreads,of%20people%20who%20are%20nearby.>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>



# When Appointments Take Time

## Why Seeing a Specialist Might Have Delays

Have you ever needed to see a doctor who specializes in a certain area? Maybe you needed to see a heart doctor, a skin expert, or someone who knows all about your eyes. These special doctors are called specialists, and they're really good at helping with specific health problems. But sometimes, getting an appointment with them can take longer than we want. Let's find out why that happens!

## What's a Specialist?

First off, let's understand what a specialist is. Think of them as superheroes for certain health problems. Just like Spider-Man saves the day with his web-slinging skills, specialists use their super knowledge to help with specific issues. So, if you have an upset stomach, you'd go to a regular doctor, but if you have digestion issues, a specialist might be needed.



## Why the Wait?

So, why does it sometimes take a while to see a specialist? Well, there can be a few reasons for that. First, there might not be many of these specialists around. They have a lot of training and expertise, which means there aren't as many of them as regular doctors. That can make it tough to get an appointment.

Also, a lot of people might want to see the same specialist. Imagine if everyone at the store wanted to talk to the manager at the same time. It'd be pretty crowded, right? That's sort of like what happens with specialist doctors. Since they're really good at their jobs, lots of people want their help.

## Referrals and Waiting Lists

Here's another thing to know: sometimes, you need a ticket to see a specialist. This ticket is called a referral, and it's like a recommendation from your regular doctor. They say, "Hey, you need to see this specialist because they know how to help you." But getting this referral can take some time, especially if your regular doctor is busy.

Once you have the referral, you might end up on a waiting list. Imagine if you wanted a slice of the most delicious cake at a party. You'd have to wait your turn, right? Well, specialist appointments can be a bit like that. You might have to wait for a bit until it's your turn to see the specialist.

## What Can You Do?

If you're waiting to see a specialist, don't worry. There are things you can do to make the wait easier. First, stay in touch with your regular doctor. They can keep you updated and let you know when your specialist appointment is ready.

You can also ask your regular doctor if there's anything you can do to feel better while you wait. They might have tips or treatments to help you stay comfortable.

**Remember, seeing a specialist might take time, but it's because they're really good at what they do. So, stay patient and take care of yourself while you wait. You'll get the help you need!**



# ADVANCING ACCESS & EQUITY

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Celebrating 50 years of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973



## Let us celebrate YOU!

**October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).**

Observed each October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities past and present and showcases inclusive employment policies and practices that benefit employers and employees.

**Are you working? Seeking work? Are you curious about work? Help us celebrate YOU!**

### Email the below information to our employment and vocational specialists:

- Your Name
- Where you're working (*or interests if you aren't working yet*)
- County You Live In
- Your Service Coordinator's name
- Anything else you'd like to share! Your job, what you love about working, recent accomplishments, education and work goals.
- Retired? Let us know where you worked and for how many years!
- Currently in school or vocational training? We'd love to learn what you're interested in!

Email: [Information@PAHealthWellness.com](mailto:Information@PAHealthWellness.com)



Prefer to give us a call? Call Participant Services at **1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711)**. We look forward to celebrating you and supporting you in your career!



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## REMEMBER:

- You have employment rights as an individual with a disability.
- You can request a reasonable accommodation at any time, from application to years on the job.
- You can choose to disclose a disability at any time. You choose the level of disclosure, as well as to whom.
- Supports and services are available to help you navigate your employment journey and help when you have a job.

This can include benefits counseling, on-site and off-site support, from helping explore reasonable accommodation possibilities to organization on the job and more! Contact a Service Coordinator or Participant Services to learn more.

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Have questions about working or would like support? Want to connect with a certified benefits counselor regarding your benefits and work?

Contact your Service Coordinator or call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY: 711) to chat more about how we can help connect YOU to resources and services to explore, obtain, maintain, and advance in the workforce.

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## Resources:

### **Ticket to Work Helpline:**

Contact 1-866-968-7842  
(TTY: 1-866-833-2967);  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

*Let your Service Coordinator know you called and if the representative referred you to a WIPA (Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program).*

### **PA CareerLink®**

<https://www.PaCareerLink.Pa.Gov/JpOnline/>

### **Retirement Planning & Savings**

<https://www.DOL.Gov/Agencies/Ebsa/Secure-Your-Financial-Future/Retiring-From-A-Job/Publications>

### **FREE On Demand Trainings**

<https://ChooseWork.Ssa.Gov/Webinars-Tutorials/Webinar-Archives/>

*Gain information you can use on your path to financial independence through work.*

### **Job Accommodation Network**

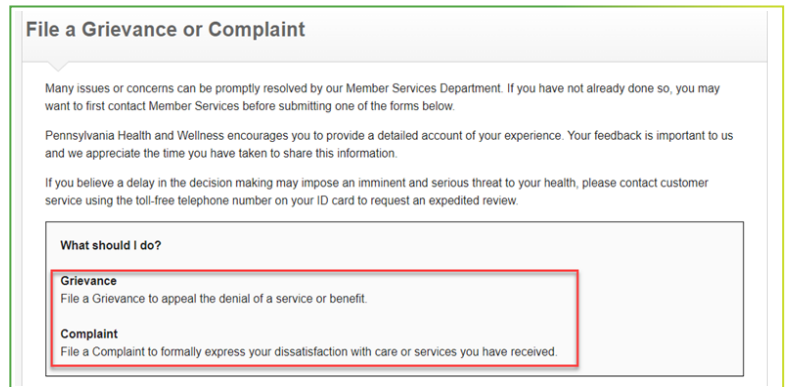
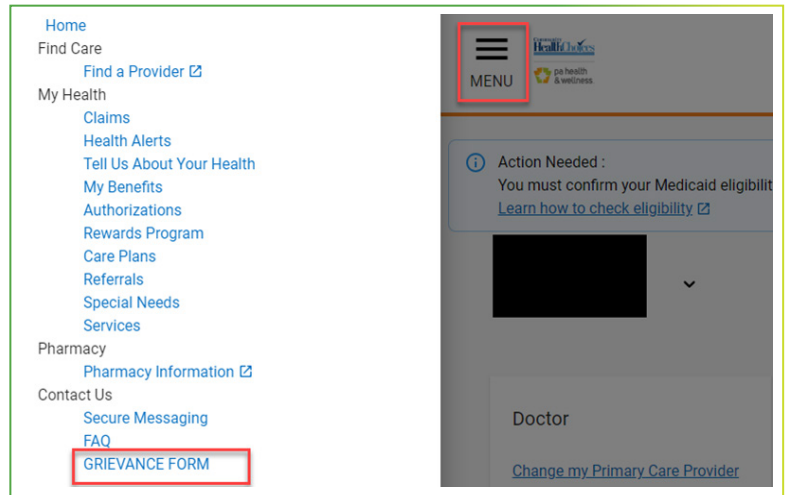
<https://AskJan.Org/>

# Did you know?

## PA Health & Wellness participants and their representatives can now file a Complaint or Grievance using our Online Portal.

Simply click on the menu and click “**GRIEVANCE FORM**” and follow the prompts to have your Complaint or Grievance submitted directly to our Complaints and Grievances team.

You may want to contact our Member Service Central Department prior to submitting one of the forms (right). Many issues or concerns can be promptly resolved by calling our Member Service Department at 1-844-626-6813.



# Earn and Use Rewards with My Health Pays<sup>®</sup>

Your health insurance gives you important benefits. But did you know you can also earn rewards?

With the My Health Pays<sup>®</sup> rewards program, earning rewards is easy. You just complete healthy activities such as your yearly wellness exam, getting a flu shot or other annual screenings to protect your health.

### When you complete a healthy activity, you'll earn a dollar reward. You can use them on things like:

- Utilities
- Education
- Transportation
- Rent
- Telecommunications
- Everyday items at Walmart<sup>®</sup>
- Childcare services

### Here are ways to earn My Health Pays<sup>®</sup> rewards:

- \$25** – Annual Breast Cancer Screening. Age 50-74.\*
  - \$25** – Annual Colorectal Cancer Screening. Age 45-75.\*
  - \$25** – Annual Cervical Cancer Screening. Age 21-64.\*
  - \$30** – Diabetic Eye Exam. Age 18-75.\*
  - \$30** – Diabetic hbA1c Test. Age 18-75.\*
- \*One per calendar year*

Your My Health Pays reward dollars are added to your rewards card after we process the claim for each activity you complete. If you are earning your first reward, your My Health Pays<sup>®</sup> Visa<sup>®</sup> Prepaid Card will be mailed to you.

This My Health Pays Rewards Visa Prepaid card is issued by the Bancorp Bank pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. The Bancorp Bank; Member FDIC. Card cannot be used everywhere Visa debit cards are accepted.



If you have any questions or need more information, visit <https://www.PAHealthWellness.com/members/ltss/benefits-services/healthy-rewards-program.html> or call Member Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY 711).

For people age 65 and older who are eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, Wellcare by Allwell is our Dual Special Needs Program. Our Wellcare by Allwell plans include comprehensive healthcare coverage with support you can count on.



To learn more, call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY 711).

Visit the PA Health & Wellness website <https://www.pahealthwellness.com/community/community-connect.html> or talk with your PHW Service Coordinator to find more information about community events, employment aid, SNAP benefits, and rides to medical appointments.

## Participant Advisory Committee

You can help PA Health & Wellness with the way our health plan works. We have a Participant Advisory Committee that gives Participants like you a chance to share your thoughts and ideas with PA Health & Wellness. The group meets every 3 months. This gives you a chance to talk about your concerns with a variety of people. You also have a chance to tell us how we are doing. You may ask questions or share any concerns that you have about the delivery of services. Call Participant Services at 1-844-626-6813 (TTY/TDD 711) if you would like to attend.

## Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse

If you suspect fraud, waste, or abuse in the healthcare system, you should report it to someone who can investigate it. Your actions may help to improve the healthcare system and reduce costs for our participants, customers, and business partners. You can report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse in one of these ways:

**PA Health & Wellness anonymous and confidential hotline**  
1-866-685-8664

**Pennsylvania Office of Inspector General at**  
1-855-FRAUD-PA (1-855-372-8372)

**Pennsylvania Bureau of Program Integrity at**  
1-866-379-8477

**Pennsylvania Department of Human Services**  
1-844-DHS-TIPS (1-844-347-8477)

**Mail: Office of Inspector General**, 555 Walnut Street, 7th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101

**Mail: Department of Human Services**, Office of Administration, Bureau of Program Integrity, P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675.

You may remain anonymous if you prefer. All information received or discovered by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) will be treated as confidential, and the results of investigations will be discussed only with persons having a legitimate reason to receive the information (e.g., state and federal authorities, corporate law department, market medical directors or senior management).





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**you**

