

WHOLE you



2022 Winter Bulletin

Social Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation is the lack of social contact or friendships, both physical and emotional. Loneliness is the personal feeling of being alone. Both can have a major impact on your mental and physical health.

The impact of social isolation and loneliness

Social isolation can boost loneliness in individuals. Long times of loneliness during COVID-19 has increased death rates by 26%. It is also increasing the risk of mental decline and dementia. This can effect older adults in at-risk communities such as assisted living facilities. Also, people are at more risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, and a weakened immune system. The impact of loneliness is the same as risk factors of other health concerns, like obesity and smoking.

Know the risk factors

It is valuable to watch for risk factors related to feeling socially isolated or lonely. These can include:

- Limited or no interaction with family and friends
- Less medical support and preventative care
- Changes in normal social activities (church, clubs, dining out, etc.)
- Decline in physical or mental health
- Lack of access to resources

Finding ways to make useful social connections is the key to fighting feelings of loneliness and isolation. Your primary care doctor can help you find your emotions and your options. Nebraska Total Care also has many resources and programs available to help you safely reconnect with people. Contact us at 1-844-385-2192 (Relay 711).



Crisis Text Line

The volunteer Crisis Text Line serves anyone in any crisis. They provide access to free, 24/7 support. Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor.

Sources:

healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20200622.253235/full/
nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks (2019)

What is the Emergency Broadband Benefit?



The Emergency Broadband Benefit gives a discount on broadband internet. This is for eligible families. Families can get discounts up to \$50 per month for broadband services. Families on tribal land can get discounts up to \$75 per month. Each family can get a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet. The benefit is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.

The program will keep going until all funds are used or six months after the DHHS declares the pandemic over.

Are you eligible for Emergency Broadband Benefits? Families need to meet one of the following to qualify:

- Qualify for SNAP, Medicaid, or the Lifeline program;
- Get the free and reduced-price school lunch or breakfast program;
- Had a Federal Pell Grant this year;
- Had a big loss of income since Feb. 29, 2020, and the family had income under \$99,000 (single) or \$198,000 (joint) 2020; or
- Qualify for an existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

How do you apply? You can apply a few different ways:

- Call your local broadband provider. See if they are participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit. Ask if you might be eligible.
- Go to [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org) to apply online.
- Call 833-511-0311 for a mail-in application.



Weight Watchers

Nebraska Total Care provides eligible members vouchers for online Weight Watchers participation. To be eligible, members need to be:

- For children, ages 12-16 have a BMI of 25 or higher
- For members, age 17 and older have a BMI of 30 or higher



To get the Weight Watchers vouchers, your doctor needs to confirm your BMI. They need to have checked you within the last month. The doctor's office can call or fax us with your information.

Extensions can be approved if you decrease your BMI by 1 point. Go to your doctor and get a note showing the decrease in your BMI. You will also have to be involved with our Care Management team. The number is 1-844-385-2192 (TTY 711). Choose the option to talk to Care Management.

Are you a new member?

Do you have questions about your current plan and benefits? Visit [NebraskaTotalCare.com](https://www.NebraskaTotalCare.com) to locate the member handbook. It has many details about your health plan.

Studying new treatments & tests

Your health is important to us. Nebraska Total Care watches for the latest in medical care. This may be new medicine, tests or surgeries. We want to make sure new treatments are safe and effective. Nebraska Total Care has a team of doctors that reviews new medical care. The team checks information from other doctors and scientific groups. The new medical care is then shared with our doctors. This allows Nebraska Total Care doctors to give you the most fitting and current types of care.



WHOLE you

Protected Health Information (PHI)

There are times we need to use your medical information to help you get care. Nebraska Total Care has to follow the law about your privacy. Information we have about you is called Protected Health Information (PHI). We have to keep your PHI private.

Treatment - We may use or talk about your PHI with your doctor or other health care provider you are working with. This will help us coordinate your treatment with providers. It will help us decide about prior authorization related to your benefits.

Payment - We may use and share your PHI to pay your providers for the services they gave you. We may share your PHI with another health plan or with a health care provider. These are also covered entities and have to follow the same federal Privacy Rules for their payment.

Emergency Situations – We may share your PHI in an emergency situation if you are not able to respond. We may share with a family member, close personal friend, or someone else you chose. We may share with a professional authorized to help in a disaster. We will use professional judgment to decide if sharing your PHI is best to keep you safe. We will only share the PHI the person helping you needs.

We can help you translate or understand the **notice of privacy practices**. For help please call Member Services. The phone number is 1-844-385-2192 (TTY 711). Interpreter services are available to you for free.



Make Informed Choices

Hospital Compare was made by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS joined organizations representing patients, hospitals, doctors, employers, and other agencies. It gives advice about the quality of care at hospitals across the country.

Physician Compare helps you make good choices. It will give you the address, specialty, board certification, hospital connection, gender, medical school, and residency info for doctors.

Healthgrades has reports about doctors, hospitals, and health care providers. It covers ratings based on clinical and quality scores.



Find a Provider Quick and Easy!

Did you know that you can search for providers 24/7 from the comfort of your home? The Find a Provider tool allows you to find in-network providers whenever, and from wherever. Start by entering your zip code. If you have a provider in mind, you can search for them by name. Or, you can enter the name of a hospital. If you do not have a specific provider or clinic in mind, you can choose a specialty and search for that. The list of results will show providers in our network, and it will tell you if they are seeing new patients, what their hours are, and how you can contact them.

Protect Yourself From the Flu

Flu season is upon us here in Nebraska. You have likely heard the coughing and sneezing in the classroom, grocery store, and other public places. These sounds can also be an important reminder. Have you received your flu vaccine this year?

The flu is a seasonal illness. For some people, the flu is not very serious. For others, it can lead to hospitalization and even death. A flu vaccine is one way you can protect yourself from the flu.

The flu vaccine will not give you the flu. The flu virus changes every year. So every year, a new vaccine is needed. Everyone older than six months should get a flu vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you have an allergy to eggs or any of the ingredients in the vaccine.

Many people get a flu vaccine by the end of October, but there is still value in getting your flu vaccine in December or January, as flu season can extend into March or April. The **flu vaccine is available at no cost** to members.

How do you know if someone has the flu? The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat



- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue or tiredness
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea. This is more common in children than adults.



Get rewarded for focusing on your health!
\$10 - Annual flu vaccine (September - April)



Visit Our Website & Secure Member Portal

Visit [NebraskaTotalCare.com](https://www.NebraskaTotalCare.com) to create a member portal account. You can use it to:

- Complete your Health Risk Screening
- Complete your Notice of Pregnancy form (NOP)
- Change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Update your personal information
- Print a temporary member ID card
- Find pharmacy benefit information
- Send Nebraska Total Care a message
- See claims and authorization approvals
- Check rewards card balance and more!

Call Member Services

Call **1-844-385-2192 (Relay 711)**. We can help you:

- Find a doctor or change your primary care provider (PCP)
- Get a new Nebraska Total Care ID card
- Understand your benefits
- Change your address and phone number
- Get translation help for medical appointments
- Get transportation to your appointments
- Get a paper copy of anything on our website

You can see authorization approvals on our [Secure Member Portal](#).

