



April 2024
Issue 10



Alaska Medicaid Newsletter

Important information for you as an Alaska Medicaid Participant

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Grief and Loss: Helping Others Cope with Grief

Death is a universal experience, and grief is a natural reaction to loss. But it can still leave us shocked, confused, and emotional. When someone we know is processing through grief, it may feel like there's nothing you can do, but that's not true. There are many ways to be there for someone struggling with loss.

As you accompany a person through their grief journey, know that it's not a direct path. Each week, each day, and even each hour can contain a multitude of emotions and reactions. Your friend might cycle between moments where it's easier to accept the loss and moments of anger, sadness, relief, guilt, denial, and other emotions. This is very normal. Try to meet them where they are in that moment using nonjudgmental statements and actions. Often, it's simply your presence that provides support. And if you have experience with your own grief, draw on that. Don't put a time-limit on your friend's feelings.

Helpful Tips

Action. While your words might briefly help, being consistently present is far more effective.

Practical tasks. Grief often steals someone's energy. Assist with day-to-day needs, such as meals, housecleaning, and lawncare.

Support. Encourage the grieving person to make wise choices and help them process through decisions and issues that arise.

Participate. Offer to participate in rituals or traditions or help them to establish new ones.

Listen. Actively listen and encourage them to talk as much as they need to.

Share. Share your own memories of the person who's died. Avoiding talk about the deceased will not help the grieving person.

Article courtesy of Optum partners at UnitedHealthcare; both companies are part of UnitedHealth Group



Ways to avoid loneliness and maintain mental health when you live alone

If you're an older adult, there are many reasons why you might be living alone: Perhaps your family lives far away or you've recently downsized, or you're emotionally attached to your home and want to stay there.

While an independent lifestyle can be enjoyable, there's a potential downside to living alone: if you're not engaging with others on a regular basis, it may lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The good news is that there are many ways to balance out those potential downsides.

Strategies for staying engaged

1. Say "hi" when you're out and about
2. Try a hobby at home
3. Head back to school
4. Hit the dance floor
5. Learn pickleball
6. Try an online exercise class
7. Find a volunteer group
8. Join a support group
9. Head to a worship service
10. Tweak your routine



Caregiver support and self-care

It's natural to feel the burden of caregiving at times. It's a role that requires a lot of responsibility and that can bring on stress. Taking care of your health as a caregiver is just as important as all your caregiving tasks — maybe even more. Caregiver support services are available to help you learn how to balance the demands of your caregiver role, while being sure to take time for yourself.

As you explore the following caregiver resources, information, and support, you may feel:

More ready for the future.

Able to take care of yourself.

Aware of how to navigate the practical and emotional path of caregiving.

Leaning on this support may help you manage caregiver strain and feel more confident and able to keep up with caregiving.

Our Care Organizer

The Care Organizer is a "one-stop-shop" for the important things a caregiver could need while supporting family, friends, or loved ones. It can help support you and keep your information organized and in one place.

[Download the Care Organizer \(pdf\)](#)

Article courtesy of Optum partners at UnitedHealthcare; both companies are part of UnitedHealth Group

If you're a participant or a participant advocate and have questions about Medicaid coverage, please call 800-225-8764, toll-free statewide Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Alaska Time. Free language assistance services are available to you.



PEER SUPPORT CORNER

It is estimated that [two-thirds of the US population will need help with day-to-day tasks](#) at some point in their lives. This, along with the ever-growing population, show a greater need for Caregivers. Caregiving, while identified as an essential service, is not without its difficulties.

[Caregiver Stress](#) occurs when a Caregiver experiences burnout and strain from performing their job. Some signs of stress can include:

- Weight gain and problems that come with it
- Mood Changes
- Headaches or Body Pain
- Worry from financial concern
- Heart Disease and/or Stroke

These problems come from a habit for Caregivers to forget their own needs for the sake of others. Thankfully there are ways Caregivers can manage these problems. A few things available are:

- Getting enough sleep
- Eat enough healthy foods
- Spend time with loved ones and supports
- Journal
- Set boundaries around providing care

In addition to these tips and ones provided in this newsletter, please check out [more discussion about Caregiver support](#).

Mental Health Awareness Month

Below are some resources that may interest you and your family. Supporting a loved one with a mental and/or substance use disorder can be key to getting them the treatment they need. Click on the link for tips on how to start talking with your friend or family.

[SAMHSA Families Conversation Guide](#)

[Click here for NAMI calendar of local support groups.](#)

For more information about on-line programs and support groups with the National Alliance on Mental Illness or NAMI see: [NAMI Alaska: Mental Health Support, Education & Resources](#) or contact Alaskanami@gmail.com

For information on in-person support groups and programs you can explore the local websites.

Anchorage: [NAMI Anchorage: Mental Health Support, Education & Resources](#)

Juneau: [NAMI Juneau: Mental Health Education in Juneau](#)

Fairbanks: [Home - NAMI Fairbanks](#)

More Alaska support and meeting information:

Remote area medical (RAM) Pop up clinic:

[Anchorage, April 20 & 21 Clinic doors typically open at 6 am, first come first served Begich Middle School](#)

[Fairbanks, April 27 & 28 Clinic doors typically open at 6 am, first come first served Ryan Middle School](#)



MAKE A CONNECTION

Find a provider:

Participant Access Line: 800-225-8764 TDD/TTY dial 711 or visit alaska.optum.com and click Find a Provider on left side of the page.

Get Transportation:

For Medicaid travel benefits call the Medicaid Participant Helpline at 800-770-5650, Option 2.

Live & Work Well:

You can find information about maintaining your

Hotlines

National Suicide Prevention Line

9-8-8 988.alaska.gov

Veterans Crisis Line

800-273-8255 text 838255

Careline

877-266-4357 (HELP) or text 4help to 839863

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233

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