

Social Care Networks (SCN)

Key messages for health plan member services staff

Context for this document

On January 1, 2025, New York State launched a new program to expand access to social care services for Medicaid Members to support their health. Social Care Networks (SCN) will help identify Medicaid Members' unmet health-related social needs (HRSN) and connect them to social care services. Starting December 1, 2024, health plans were mandated to issue Member notices of benefit changes, and began to receive Member questions about the SCN program. This document is intended to guide Member-facing staff in responding to these questions. It is focused on inquiries that may come up throughout implementation of the program.

This guide is not a comprehensive list of questions MCOs can expect from Members, and it does not include detailed guidance on screening or navigation to services. For more information about the program, visit the [NYSDOH SCN webpage](#).

Key terms

- **Social Care Network (SCN):** A regional network comprised of social care service providers, Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs), health care providers, and other organizations that support Medicaid Members.
- **Health-related social needs (HRSNs):** Social and economic needs that can impact a person's health and well-being. Examples include lack of stable or affordable housing, lack of access to healthy food, lack of access to transportation, financial strain and/or unemployment, and personal safety.
- **Unmet social care need:** Unmet adverse social conditions such as inadequate nutrition, unstable housing, unemployment, limited education, lack of transportation, and interpersonal safety. These factors not only contribute to health disparities but also drive increased healthcare spending and negatively affect health outcomes.
- **Social Care Navigator:** Connects members to resources to meet their unmet needs.
- **Navigation:** Assistance in identifying and accessing existing social care services to help Medicaid Members with their unmet need.
- **Enhanced social care services:** One-time or temporary social services related to nutrition and housing that may be delivered through Social Care Networks to eligible Medicaid Members with specific health conditions and living situations. These will be in addition to what Members receive today through their plan. Availability of services may vary by region.
- **Existing social care services:** Established federal, state, and local resources that any Member can be referred to for support. Examples of these include SNAP and WIC, local non-profits that provide housing, employment, and nutrition supports.
- **Social care service providers:** Organizations that provide services such as food, housing, and transportation. These can include community-based organizations, government entities, health care providers, and others (e.g., food banks).

Background

About the SCN program

Social Care Networks (SCNs) are a new initiative of New York State to expand access to social care services for Medicaid Members to support their health. The SCN program launched on January 1, 2025. Regional Social Care Networks will facilitate screening of Members for unmet social needs and navigate them to local social care service providers, including community-based organizations (CBOs). Members will be able to receive navigation to existing federal, state, and local services to help with their unmet social care needs. Eligible members who have an identified unmet social care need with specific health conditions may qualify for one-time or temporary enhanced Medicaid service(s) that include enhanced social care navigation, food and nutrition, housing, and transportation, that are additional to what they receive today through their health plan and other state and federal benefits (e.g., SNAP). Services are contingent based on screening results for an identified unmet social care need, meeting eligibility requirements of the service, and availability of those services in the region.

Eligible lines of business

Eligible lines of business for Enhanced HRSN Services are:

- **Mainstream MMC**
- **HIV Special Needs Plans (HIV-SNPS)**
- **Health and Recovery Plans (HARP)**

Some Medicaid Managed Care lines of business are NOT eligible for some Enhanced HRSN Services:

- **MLTCP and MAP:** MLTCP and MAP Members are NOT eligible for Nutrition services. They may be eligible to receive other Enhanced HRSN Services (i.e. housing). The SCN Lead Entity should coordinate with plans prior to providing Enhanced HRSN Services.

Key messages for health plan members

Explain what a Social Care Network is

- “Social Care Networks are local organizations that will help connect eligible New York Medicaid Members to social care services such as nutrition, housing, and transportation.”
- “There will be a Social Care Network in your Region, that services your community.”
- “This is a new program as of 2025.”

Reassure Members this program does not change their existing plan benefits

- “This program does not involve changes to your existing health plan benefits, nor will it interrupt any services you are currently getting.”
- “However, depending on your health conditions and other needs, you may receive additional services through this program.”
- “If you are receiving any of these services already, you may not be able to receive these services through the Social Care Network.”

Connect Members with existing benefits and services, as you would normally

- “I can connect you with existing health plan benefits and services.”
- “You can also receive a referral to one of our local community partners, and/or to an existing public program (e.g., SNAP, WIC) based on your needs” – *note: only connect with Members with community/public programs if this is an established procedure for the member services team.*

Share where Members can learn more

- “I am happy to share the name and contact information of the Social Care Network in your community.
- “You can learn more about the program by calling the Social Care Network in your community [insert name and phone number] or by visiting their website [insert website] or you may also visit the New York State Dept. of Health website <https://health.ny.gov/SocialCareNetworks>.”

Share where/how Members can be screened and navigated

- “The SCN will conduct screening and an eligibility assessment prior to connecting you to the services for which you qualify.” OR
- When the MCO is designated by the SCN to conduct screening and/or an eligibility assessment, “I am happy to connect you to a Social Care Navigator within the MCO to assist with screening and/or an eligibility assessment prior to connecting you to the services for which you qualify.”

Additional Q&A

Program overview

Q. What is the SCN program? What are Social Care Networks?

A. Social Care Networks are a new initiative to help eligible New York Medicaid Members with health and social needs access housing support, food and nutrition assistance, and transportation. A Social Care Network is a group of organizations that help meet Medicaid Members’ needs in their community.

Q. When does it start?

A. The program launched in January 2025.

Q. How can I access new benefits?

A. The first step is connecting with your Social Care Network and going through a screening to identify any HRSNs. Members with unmet HRSNs will then work with a Social Care Navigator to determine what specific services they qualify for, including existing resources. You should contact your SCN directly for screening.

Q. How is this different from what my plan already offers?

A. This program helps Members find social services that they may be eligible for. Members with specific health conditions and social care needs may qualify based on screening results and meeting eligibility requirements to access enhanced temporary

services that are complementary to existing health plan benefits. These enhanced services will not impact services you are currently receiving through your health plan. You can also continue to receive state or federal services, such as SNAP or WIC, if you qualify. Should you not be eligible for enhanced services, you can be referred to local, state, and federal programs for assistance, should you choose.

Q. What is my doctor's role in this program?

A. Your doctor's role in taking care of your health will not change. Some providers may be able to help with screening to help you find existing social services or to see if you qualify for one-time or temporary enhanced social care services.

Benefits and services covered

Q. What new benefits will be available to me?

A. Social Care Networks will help you find social services in your area. Additional one-time or temporary enhanced services related to food / nutrition, housing, and transportation may be available based on specific health conditions and needs for housing support, food and nutrition assistance, transportation, etc. For example, some Members may qualify to receive temporary meals or help finding housing. Not all Medicaid Members will qualify for all enhanced services and not all services may be available in your area.

Q. How long will I have access to services?

A. The SCN program is designed to offer help finding social services and to provide temporary services to Members who qualify for them, ranging from short-term (one time or 1-2 weeks) to longer-term (approximately 6 months) depending on your personal needs and meeting eligibility requirements.

Access, eligibility, and cost

Q. How do I access services?

A. To help connect you to services in your community, you may be asked to answer some questions about your social needs. This process includes screening for social care needs, conducting eligibility assessments, consents, service navigation, and connection. There are several ways you may be able to get screened and connected to services, including through your local Social Care Network, clinic, or doctor's office.

Q. Will I have to pay for navigation or services?

A. SCN services will be provided at no cost to you.

Q. Can I choose my social care benefits / services or where I receive them?

- A. Social Care Navigators will help you find available services in your area that are through federal, state, and local programming. If you qualify for the temporary enhanced services, you will work with a Navigator to get connected to services. The Navigator will refer you to a local service provider that can assist you. However, the temporary enhanced services do have specific health conditions that are required to receive the service. Not all services are available in every region.

More information

Q. Where do I get more information?

- A. Social Care Networks are active as of January 2025:
- I can help you identify which organization will coordinate services in your community (see table below).
 - You can visit the state website at (<https://www.health.ny.gov/SocialCare>).
 - In addition, I can connect you with existing health plan benefits available to you.

SCN	SCN Website	SCN phone # for Members	Counties
Care Compass Collaborative	https://care-compass.org/	607-352-5264	Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, Tompkins
Forward Leading IPA	https://www.forwardleadingipa.org/	315-264-9991	Allegany, Cayuga, Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
Health Equity Alliance of Long Island	https://hwcli.com/	516-505-4434	Nassau, Suffolk
Healthy Alliance Foundation Inc.	https://www.healthyalliance.org/	518-520-3211	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Montgomery, Saratoga,

SCN	SCN Website	SCN phone # for Members	Counties
			Schenectady, Schoharie
		315-505-2290	Cortland, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego
		518-656-8312	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Warren, Washington
Hudson Valley Care Coalition, Inc.	https://hudsonvalleycare.org/	800-768-5080	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
Public Health Solutions	https://www.wholeyou.nyc/	888-755-5045	Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn
Staten Island Performing Provider System	https://statenislandpps.org/	917-830-1140	Richmond
Somos Healthcare Providers, Inc.	https://somoscommunitycare.org/	833-SOMOSNY (833-766-6769)	Bronx
Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative Inc.	https://www.wnyicc.org/	716-431-5100	Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara