



# MedStar Family Choice

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Enrollee Newsletter

Winter 2025



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# A message from Dr. Karyn Wills



Dr. Karyn Wills

Happy New Year MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia enrollees! We are so happy to have all of you with us. If you are new to our plan, welcome!

As we move into 2025, it's a great time to set goals to improve your health. This year, MedStar Family Choice DC will focus on improving health outcomes, enhancing enrollee engagement, and addressing health disparities. We know focusing on these goals will directly help the well-being of our enrollees. It will also ensure everyone receives the quality of care they deserve.

Here are some health goals you can focus on to impact your well-being. By focusing on preventive care, chronic disease management, and follow-up care, health improvements can be made in key areas such as:

**Annual Wellness Visits:** Going to checkups can help find health problems early

**Cancer Screenings:** Tests can detect cervical, breast, and colorectal cancer early, so it can be treated quicker, and provide better outcomes

**Maternity Care:** Timely visits for pregnant individuals improve the chances of a safe pregnancy

**Diabetes Care:** Testing, eye exams, and blood pressure management for diabetics can help keep the disease in control

Our team is always here to answer your questions, assist you with appointments, and support your healthcare needs. If you need help, call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549** or stop by our new Community Wellness Center located at 3924 Minnesota Avenue NE in Ward 7. You can also visit our website at **[MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com)**. We want to hear from you and value your ideas and feedback.

Stay Safe and Well,

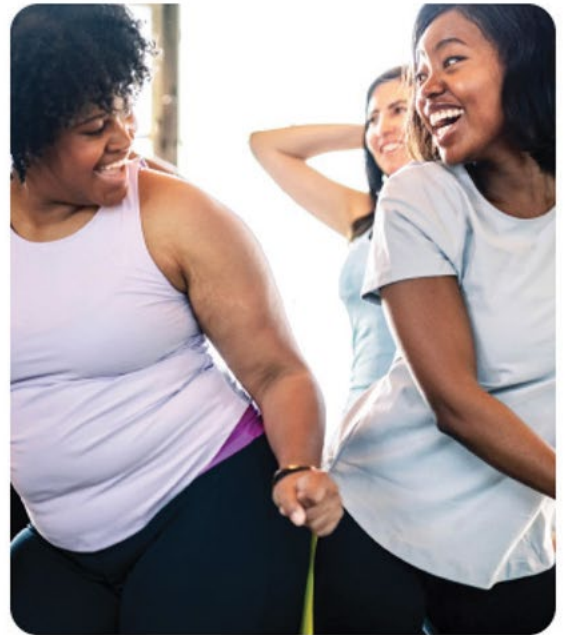
Karyn Wills, MD, Chief Medical Officer  
MedStar Family Choice

# Our Community Wellness Center is open!

The new Community Wellness Center provides a welcoming space for enrollees to participate in wellness events, classes, and activities. It is also a place to connect with MedStar Family Choice DC staff, including outreach coordinators, case managers, and social workers, to address needs and share resources. To learn more, stop by or visit our website at [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits/Community-Wellness-Center](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits/Community-Wellness-Center).

## New Community Wellness Center now open!

We're excited to announce the opening of our new Community Wellness Center, located at **3924 Minnesota Avenue NE in Ward 7.**



## Let's Talk Behavioral Health

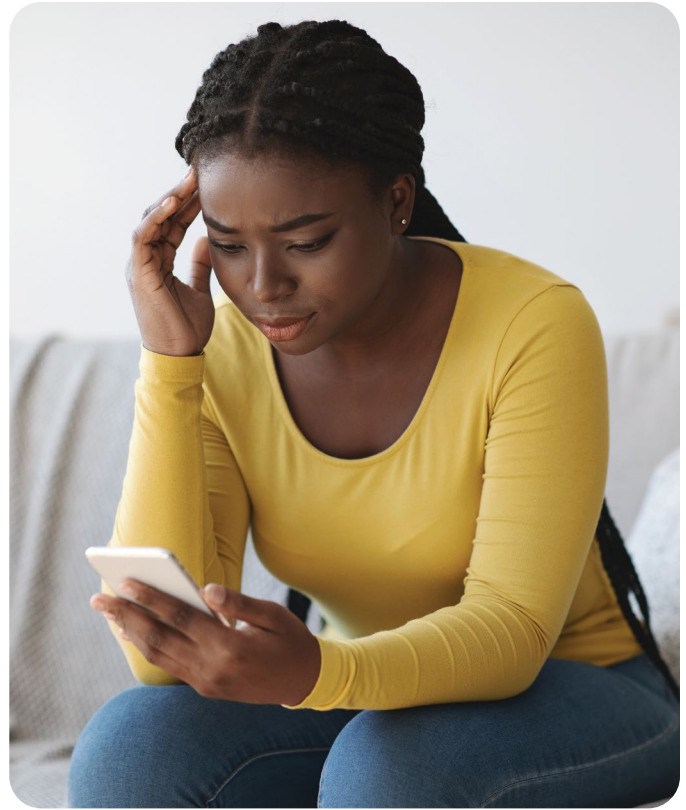
### Topic: Social media and mental health

Social media has changed the way people interact, share, and receive information. Social media can help people connect, express themselves, and get access to resources and support. But when used too much or in unhelpful ways, it can contribute to poor mental health. This is particularly true for teenagers who are at a stage in their development when they are more sensitive to social media's effects.

Social media sites are designed to encourage use, which can lead to too much screen time. Studies have shown that high amounts of screen time are linked to increased rates of anxiety and depression. In addition to too much screen time, social media can encourage social comparison, when one person compares themselves to an image they see online of another. Particularly for teens who are sensitive to the opinions of their peers, comparing themselves to the "perfect" lives of others can drive feelings of jealousy or low self-worth. Social media can also negatively impact body image, as viewers see edited photos that set unrealistic standards. In this way, social media has been linked to lower self-confidence and higher rates of unhealthy eating habits including eating disorders.

Despite these risks, social media can also have a positive impact on mental health. It provides a space for self-expression, a way to connect with supportive communities, and a place for people to feel less alone and more understood. Social media can be a tool for raising awareness, providing resources, and offering real-time support in times of crisis. When thinking about social media use, in particular that of teens, there are several ways to decrease its risk of harm.

- Limit screen time, set boundaries for the amount of time it can be used and where.
- Encourage open conversation about what is being viewed, to help build awareness of unrealistic or harmful content. Talk about any negative effects it may be having on mental health.
- Support engagement with accounts or profiles that build positive community and self-worth. Talk about what content feels good, and why.
- Promote in-person activities and off-line time. Emphasize hobbies and time with friends and family away from screens.
- Model healthy social media use and limited screen time, particularly in front of children and teens.
- Use the platforms' built in safety features, which can support reduction in screen time and blocking of harmful or age-inappropriate content.



Individuals, families, and friends can work together to have open conversations about social media use to ensure it is balanced, safe, and helpful. If you have concerns about your social media use or its impact on your mental health, speak to your medical provider who can refer you for further assessment and support.

If you are looking for support with your mental health in general, help is available. Please call the MedStar Family Choice DC Nurse Helpline at **855-798-3540** or the DC Department of Behavioral Health Access Hotline at **888-793-4357**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you believe you are in immediate danger of hurting yourself or others, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.




# Our Health and Wellness Portal offers a path to greater wellbeing


Enjoy resources like videos, articles, and other tools to support you in each area of wellbeing including financial, physical, mental, and emotional health. For more information and to set up an account, visit [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits). Begin the path to greater wellbeing today.




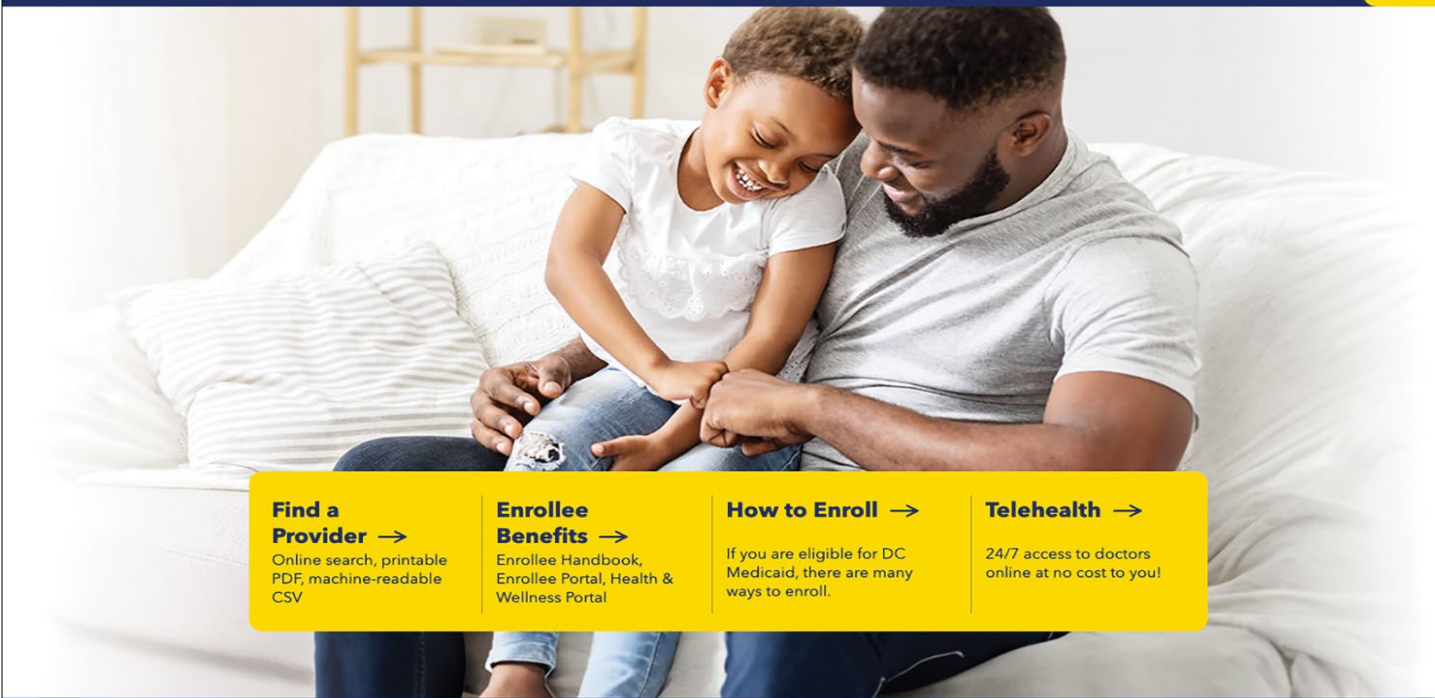
## Visit our website for helpful information

**MedStar Family Choice**  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[For Enrollees](#) [For Providers](#)

Language | [Engl](#) 

  
menu




**Find a Provider** →  
Online search, printable PDF, machine-readable CSV

**Enrollee Benefits** →  
Enrollee Handbook, Enrollee Portal, Health & Wellness Portal

**How to Enroll** →  
If you are eligible for DC Medicaid, there are many ways to enroll.

**Telehealth** →  
24/7 access to doctors online at no cost to you!



### Community Wellness Center

The Community Wellness Center is open to Enrollees from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. No appointment is required.

[Learn More](#) [Need Assistance? 888-404-3549](#) [Find a Provider](#)

## Website Features

We update our website regularly, and have made it easier for you to find and use the information most important to you. Visit [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com) for the below items, some of these topics can be found in the Enrollee Handbook and the Covered Prescription Medications guide, which are posted on the website:

- Appeals Process
- Behavioral Health Services
- Benefits
- Billed for a covered service
- Care Coordination and Case Management
- Contacts
- Copays
- Covered Services
- Enrollee Handbook
- Enrollee Newsletter
- Enrollee Portal (change doctor, request ID card, view claims and authorizations)
- Enrollee Rights and Responsibilities
- Find a Provider (searchable provider directory)
- Fraud, Waste, and Abuse
- Health and Wellness Portal
- Health education class schedule
- Hours of operation and after-hours instructions
- Interpreter and translation services
- Medication list (formulary)
- MedStar eVisit - Telehealth
- New technology policies
- Notice of privacy practices
- Out-of-service area coverage
- Outreach program
- Pharmacy protocols and procedures
- Preventive care programs
- Specialty care and hospitals
- Transportation guidelines
- Wellness rewards

These materials are available to be printed and mailed to you at no cost. The item will be provided within five business days of request. If you do not have access to the internet, please call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**. You can also mail your request to us at:

MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia  
Enrollee Services  
3007 Tilden St., NW, POD 3N  
Washington, DC 20008

# It's easy to find a provider on our website

The screenshot shows the 'Find a Provider' page on the MedStar Family Choice website. The header includes the MedStar Family Choice logo, navigation links for 'For Enrollees' and 'For Providers', a language selector set to 'English', and a menu icon. The breadcrumb trail reads: 'MedStar Family Choice DC > Welcome MedStar Family Choice DC Enrollees > Find a Provider'. The main heading is 'Find a Provider'. A yellow callout box contains the text: 'Please take the [Find a Provider Website Survey](#). Your feedback helps us improve the website.' Below this, there are links to the 'DC Healthy Families Provider Directory' and 'DC Healthcare Alliance Directory', each with options for 'Printable (PDF)', 'Machine Readable (CSV)', 'Developer Portal', and 'Search User Interface'. A note states: 'Click [here](#) to find routine dental or routine vision providers. NOTE: Routine vision is only covered for DC Healthy Families enrollees.' A section titled 'Begin your search by selecting either DC Healthy Families or DC Healthcare Alliance. One or more of the filters below can be used to customize your search.' follows. Under the heading 'I belong to this health plan:', there are two radio buttons: 'DC Healthy Families' (selected) and 'DC Healthcare Alliance'. Below the radio buttons is a search input field with the placeholder text 'Search for medical providers and facilities' and a 'Search' button with a magnifying glass icon.

As a MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia enrollee, you are assigned a Primary Care Provider (PCP) if you did not choose one upon enrollment. If you do not like the PCP we chose, you may change your PCP.

We made it easy for you to find a provider on our website. You can search the Find a Provider online directory and narrow your search by categories to help you. Select a doctor by name, hospital affiliation, gender, language, specialty, city, or miles from your home. Our online directory also contains provider information such as office address, phone number, qualifications and certifications, education, and office hours.

If you would like information about a provider, call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549** or visit the Find a Provider search page on our website at **[MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/Find-a-Provider](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/Find-a-Provider)**. You can also visit the Enrollee Portal to send a secure message with the name of the PCP you would like. To access the Enrollee Portal, visit our website at **[MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits)**.





# Understanding your enrollee rights and responsibilities

As a MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia enrollee, you have the right to:

- Know that when you talk with your doctors and other providers, it's private.
- Have an illness or treatment explained to you in a language you can understand.
- Participate in decisions about your care, including the right to refuse treatment.
- Receive a full, clear, and understandable explanation of treatment options and the risks of each option so you can make an informed decision.
- Refuse treatment or care.
- Be free from any form of restraints or seclusion used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation.
- Can see and receive a copy of your medical records and request an amendment or change, if incorrect.
- Receive access to healthcare services that are available and accessible to you in a timely manner.
- Choose an eligible PCP/PDP from within MedStar Family Choice DC's network and change your PCP/PDP.
- Make a Grievance about the care or services provided to you and receive an answer.
- Request an Appeal or a Fair Hearing if you believe MedStar Family Choice DC was wrong in denying, reducing, or stopping a service or item.
- Receive Family Planning Services and supplies from the provider of your choice.



- Obtain medical care without unnecessary delay.
- Receive a second opinion from a qualified healthcare professional within the network or, if necessary, to obtain one outside the network at no cost to you.
- Receive information on Advance Directives and choose not to have or continue any life-sustaining treatment.
- Receive a copy of MedStar Family Choice DC's Enrollee Handbook and/or Provider Directory.
- Continue the treatment you are currently receiving until you have a new treatment plan.
- Receive interpretation and translation services free of charge.
- Refuse oral interpretation services.
- Receive transportation services free of charge.
- Get an explanation of prior authorization procedures.
- Receive information about MedStar Family Choice DC's financial condition and any special ways we pay our doctors.
- Obtain summaries of customer satisfaction surveys.
- Receive MedStar Family Choice DC's "Dispense as Written" policy for prescription drugs.
- Receive a list of all covered drugs.
- Be treated with respect and due consideration for your dignity and right to privacy.

As a MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia enrollee, you are responsible for the following:

- Treating those providing your care with respect and dignity.
- Following the rules of the DC Medicaid Managed Care Program and MedStar Family Choice DC.
- Following instructions you receive from your doctors and other providers.
- Going to scheduled appointments.
- Telling your doctor at least 24 hours before the appointment if you must cancel.
- Asking for more explanation if you do not understand your doctor's instructions.
- Going to the Emergency Room only if you have a medical emergency.
- Telling your PCP/PDP about medical and personal problems that may affect your health.
- Reporting to Economic Security Administration (ESA) and MedStar Family Choice DC if you or a family Enrollee have other health insurance or if you have a change in your address or phone number.
- Reporting to the Economic Security Administration (ESA) and MedStar Family Choice DC if there is a change in your family (i.e. deaths, births, etc.).
- Trying to understand your health problems and participate in developing treatment goals.
- Helping your doctor in getting medical records from providers who have treated you in the past.
- Telling MedStar Family Choice DC if you were injured as the result of an accident or at work.

# Your options for emergency care

We understand that it can be difficult to know the difference between what may or may not be an emergency. When you are unsure if you are having a medical emergency, you should call the Nurse Helpline for help at **855-798-3540**. The Nurse Helpline can help you decide where to go for your care. There are many options for care.

You should consult your MedStar Family Choice DC Primary Care Provider (PCP) assigned to you. Many providers work at Urgent Care facilities throughout the District. We also offer MedStar eVisit - Telehealth which gives you 24/7 video access to trusted providers from your tablet, smartphone, or computer. To learn more or to sign up, please visit [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/eVisit](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/eVisit).

You should visit the Emergency Department when you need care right away for a serious, sudden injury or illness. If you do not have a life-threatening, sudden illness, or injury you may have to wait to be seen in the Emergency Department sometimes for several hours during busy times where you may be exposed to other illnesses around you like COVID-19. Consult your PCP.

For any life-threatening emergency or sudden illness call 911 or go directly to the Emergency Department.

## How to request out-of-network services

If MedStar Family Choice DC is unable to provide a necessary and covered service to an enrollee within our network, the plan may allow the service to be provided outside of the network. In order for this to happen, the provider should fax the request to the MedStar Family Choice DC Prior Authorization department at 202-243-6258 for approval. MedStar Family Choice DC reviews all requests. In cases where out-of-network services have been approved, the enrollee is not responsible for the cost of the service.

## Understand how to get a referral to a specialist

Primary Care Providers (PCP) will give you great advice about your healthcare needs. If any of your medical conditions require seeing a specialist, your PCP will refer you to one in our network. If an in-network provider is not available, MedStar Family Choice DC will help arrange and assist with authorization for the out-of-network provider. If your PCP can care for the condition without referring you, he or she will treat your medical condition.

If you are a female enrollee and your PCP is not a women's health specialist, you have the right to see a women's health specialist within the MedStar Family Choice DC network without a referral. If you want a second opinion, you have the right to obtain one from another in-network provider. If another in-network provider is not available, MedStar Family Choice DC will help arrange a second opinion outside of the network at no cost to you.

You can contact your PCP or Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549** for help getting a second opinion. A referral may be required. Most practitioners will need to see you in their office before a referral is written for a specialist. If you have questions or concerns about the healthcare services you receive, contact Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**.

## Case Management programs are available for enrollees

A highly qualified team of nurses and social workers is available to MedStar Family Choice DC enrollees with special needs, serious medical conditions, or social issues such as food, housing, and utilities. Our nurses and social workers provide education, support, and guidance to those Enrollees who need or would like extra assistance to manage their health. Our nurses and social workers can also assist with gaining access to healthcare services. Below are a few examples of medical and behavioral health conditions or healthcare needs where we may be of help to you:

- Stroke
- Cancer/tumors
- Sickle Cell Disease with severe crisis
- Acute trauma with complex care coordination needs
- Multiple chronic health conditions
- Complex psycho-social or behavioral needs
- Pre and post-transplant care
- High-risk pregnancy
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular disease (heart condition)
- HIV
- Substance use disorder
- Mental health (for example anxiety, depression, substance abuse)
- Social issues

You do not have to enroll in these services. You may be identified for enrollment if we see that you have certain conditions or medical needs. If you meet the criteria for enrollment, a Case Management staff member will reach out to you by phone or mail to explain your benefits and these services to you. Case Management programs are voluntary. If you would like to ask about one of these programs, or if you are already in one of these programs and you would like to stop participating, please contact us at **202-363-4348** or **855-798-4244** (select option 1 and then option 3), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.





# Learn about the enrollee grievance and appeal processes

MedStar Family Choice DC is committed to resolving enrollee grievances and appeals quickly and fairly. Our grievance and appeal processes can be found in your Enrollee Handbook which is posted on our website at [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits). If you don't have an Enrollee Handbook or access to our website, call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549** (TTY: 711), to receive a printed copy by mail at no cost to you. Our grievance and appeal processes include:

- How to file a grievance or appeal, and the differences between each
- How quickly we will respond to you
- What to do if you do not agree with our decision

After receiving a final determination from the appeals process, enrollees have the right to contact the Health Care Ombudsman if there is a concern about a decision made by MedStar Family Choice DC. The mission of the Office of Health Care Ombudsman is to guide, advocate, and help people navigate through the healthcare system. They help enrollees understand their healthcare coverage and assist in appealing health insurance decisions. The Health Care Ombudsman does not make decisions about grievances, appeals, or fair hearings.

Health Care Ombudsman  
441 4th St., NW  
Suite 250 North  
Washington, DC 20001

Phone: **202-724-7491** or **877-685-6391 (toll-free)**  
Fax: 202-442-6724; Confidential Fax: 202-478-1397  
Email: [healthcareombudsman@dc.gov](mailto:healthcareombudsman@dc.gov)

## Interpretation and translation services are free

If you know a MedStar Family Choice DC enrollee who does not speak English, or doesn't speak it well, call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**. We have interpreters to help enrollees when visiting their doctors. We will also provide an interpreter or translation services to help enrollees who do not speak English or read written information sent by Enrollee Services. If you or someone you know is deaf or has trouble hearing, enrollees can access TTY assistance by calling 711. MedStar Family Choice DC also has representatives available who can use sign language to help during doctor visits. You, or someone who can speak for you, must let Enrollee Services know that this service is needed.

# Compliance Corner

## Topic: Protecting the privacy of your health information

Did you know that there are laws as well as written policies in place that protect your privacy? MedStar Family Choice DC knows the importance of keeping your protected health information safe and secure. We have policies in place to do so. Before giving your protected health information to you over the phone, MedStar Family Choice DC is required to verify your identity and authority to access specific protected information. To do this, our staff members will ask you for identifiers such as your name, address, or date of birth before giving you any protected health information.

MedStar Family Choice DC is also required to maintain the privacy of your written and electronic protected health information. Paper documents are kept in secure locations. Electronic protected health information is encrypted on our devices. Employees may only use or disclose protected health information for a purpose permitted by law or applicable requirement, and access is based on their specific job duties. Our employees receive training on how to protect health information. MedStar Family Choice DC also employs additional methods to secure email communications.

In your Enrollee Handbook, located on our website at [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits), there is a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices. Our Notice of Privacy Practices can also be found on our website at [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Privacy-Practices](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Privacy-Practices). This important information describes how MedStar Family choice DC may use and disclose your medical information. It also describes how you can access this information, and how to report a complaint if you feel your privacy has been violated.

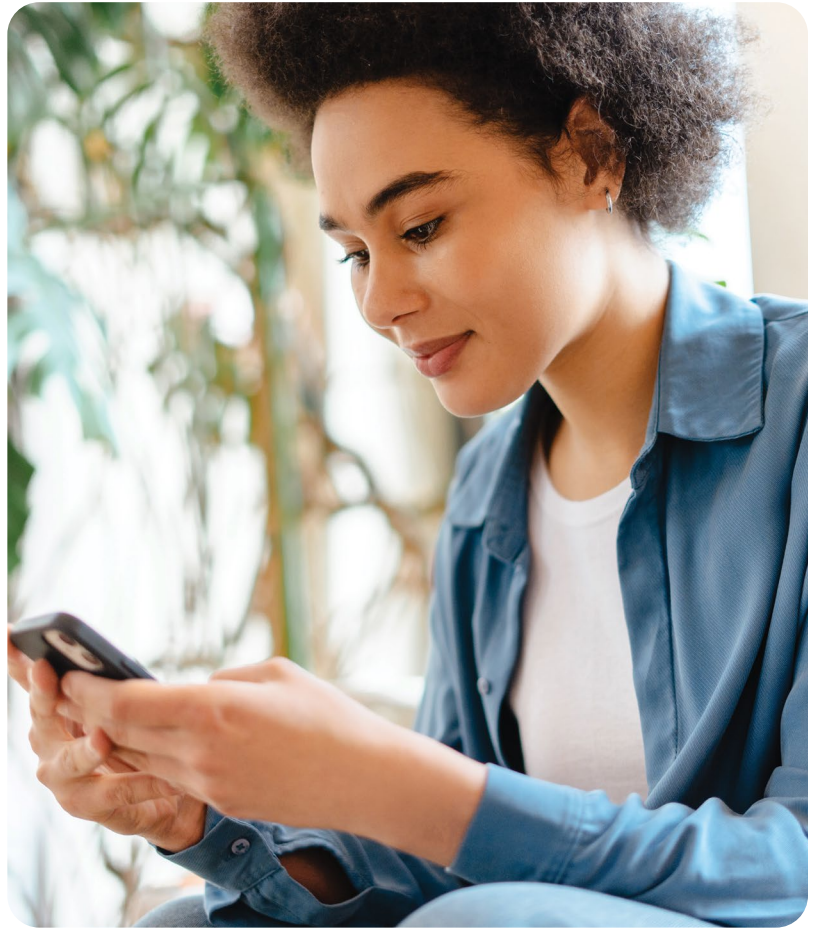
If you have any questions related to protecting your health information or would like to request a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices, please contact Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**.



# A list of approved medications is on our website

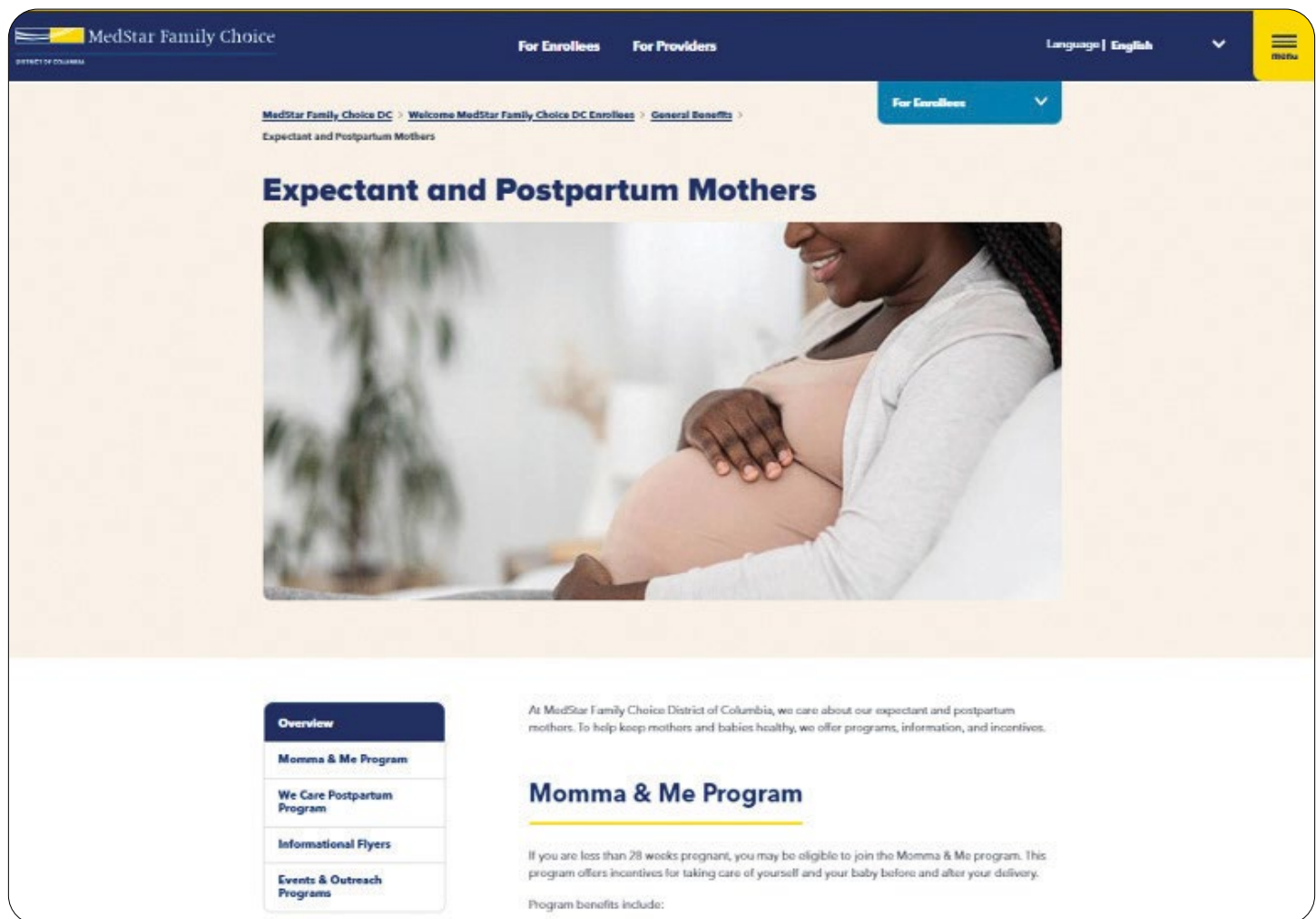
The MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia medication list is available on the pharmacy page of our website at [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/Pharmacy-Benefits](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/Pharmacy-Benefits). The medication list, also known as a drug formulary, includes all of the approved prescription medications covered by MedStar Family Choice DC. Any changes to this list will be included in the updated issue of Covered Prescription Medications posted on the website.

Also, there is a recent medication coverage changes section with a summary of the latest updates. If you don't have access to our website and have questions about a specific medicine, we can send information to you. If you or your doctor wants you to take a medication that is not on this list, we have a process in place to review those medication requests. Call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549** to learn more.





# New Expectant and Postpartum Mothers webpage!



At MedStar Family Choice DC, we care about our expectant and postpartum mothers. To help keep mothers and babies healthy, we offer programs, information, and incentives. Learn more on our new Expectant and Postpartum Mothers webpage. It includes information about our Momma & Me Program, We Care Postpartum Program, outreach programs and events, and much more! For more information visit [MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits/Expectant-and-postpartum-Mothers](https://www.MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com/Enrollees/General-Benefits/Expectant-and-postpartum-Mothers).



3007 Tilden St., NW, POD 3N  
Washington, DC 20008

# MedStar Family Choice

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Enrollee Newsletter Winter 2025

MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or sex.

If you do not speak and/or read English, please call **888-404-3549** between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. A representative will assist you.

The Enrollee Newsletter is a publication of MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia. For more information on your plan or anything in this newsletter, please visit **MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com** or call Enrollee Services at **888-404-3549**.

**Lisa Subrize**, Vice President and Executive Director, MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia

**Erica McClaskey, MD, MS, FAAFP**, Senior Medical Director and Chief Medical Officer, MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia

**Lisa McDonough**, Manager, Marketing and Member Experience, MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia



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3007 Tilden St., NW, POD 3N  
Washington, DC 20008

**202-363-4348** or **855-798-4244** (toll-free)

**MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com**



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