



WINTER 2024

# Health Matters

Our Purpose Is You



## NEW MEMBER PORTAL FEATURE SPOTLIGHT: CHANGING YOUR PCP

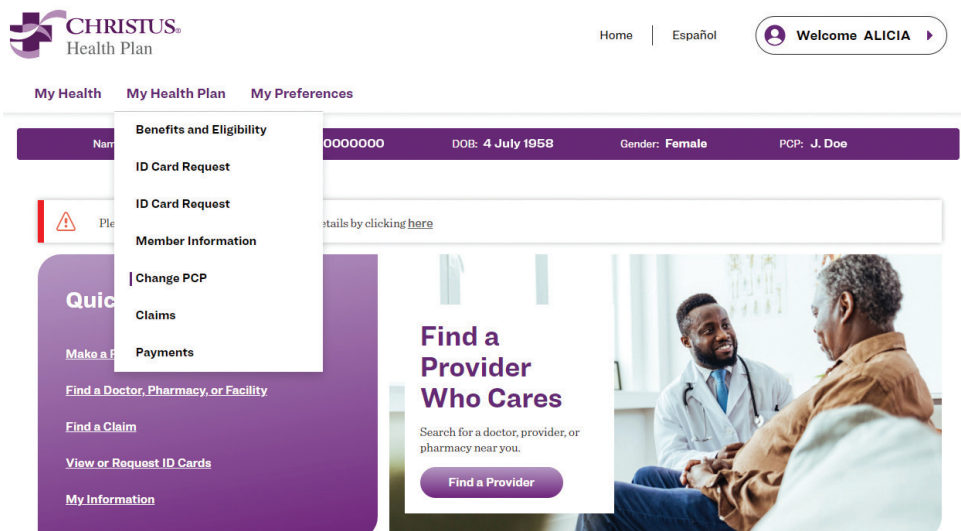
Your new member portal allows you to update your Primary Care Provider (PCP) with ease!

Sign In or Register today to access this feature! In your account, select “Change PCP” from the “My Health Plan” drop down menu.

If you already know which PCP you’d like to select, enter their information in the provided fields and click Submit.

If you don’t know which PCP you’d like to work with, use the “click here” link at the top of the page to use our CHRISTUS Provider Directory. Once you’ve decided on a new Provider, enter their name and address in the provided fields and click Submit.

Your account will be updated in 3-5 business days, then you can download your new member ID card. A new member ID card will also automatically be mailed to you within two weeks.



## EMBRACE THE GIFT OF GIVING

Did you know that every two seconds in America, someone urgently needs blood? This need extends beyond unexpected emergencies like car crashes, encompassing a wide range of medical treatments like surgeries and bone marrow transplants.

Only three percent of eligible Americans currently donate blood, despite 65% of the population being able. Additionally, less than 20% of blood donations come from individuals in communities of color, and donations from individuals aged 19-24 have declined by nearly 32% from 2019 to 2021.

Given the current state of blood donations, there is an urgent need for younger, more diverse donors. Save a life and donate blood today.

## IS SOMETHING MISSING?

*By Deborah Simmen, MA HCM*

If you were given a choice between a two-legged stool or one with three legs, which would you choose to sit or stand?

While the novelty of balancing on a two-legged stool might hold some appeal, eventually it would leave us vulnerable to tipping over. For the long term, most of us would wisely choose the three-legged stool for its safety, support and comfort.

Health and wellness are like a three-legged stool. Most of us don't pay attention to how we are feeling until something happens and we realize that something is "not quite right." At CHRISTUS Health, we believe that every person is a beautiful combination of body, mind and spirit. That perfect blend is what makes us uniquely human. Our wholistic care approach embraces the physical (body), emotional and intellectual (mind) and spiritual (spirit) dimensions of your health and wellness. Being "healthy" means paying attention to all three aspects of our humanity. Your body, mind and spirit work together to your unique identity, they support your complete health and wellbeing, and they each contribute to who you are meant to be!

It is important to know that spirituality and religion have been a source of healing, comfort and relief for multitudes of people for thousands of years. While spirituality is expressed in many different ways, medical research links the integration and practice of spirituality with:

- Better physical health
- Better mental health in the face of challenges, stress, pain, suffering and even death
- Better social health in relationships with others, society and the world

We want to support and empower you in all aspects of your health – including physical, mental and spiritual health to ensure a more comprehensive and you-centered plan for care. Don't find yourself struggling to balance on a two-legged stool when it comes to your optimal and comprehensive health and wellbeing. Take control and let your care team know how they can better care for all of you including your body, mind and spirit.



**Deborah Simmen, MA HCM**

Vice President Mission Integration  
and Spirituality  
CHRISTUS Health

## COMMON WINTER ILLNESSES

During the winter months, colds and viruses are at their peak. There are a few common illnesses during this time that are important to be aware of:

### RSV & UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

An upper respiratory infection affects the upper part of your respiratory system, including your sinuses and throat. Upper respiratory infection symptoms include a runny nose, sore throat and cough.

A more serious upper respiratory infection called Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) can occur. For most, it causes mild symptoms, but when at-risk populations like infants are infected RSV can be serious. Each year it is the leading cause of infant hospitalization in the United States.

Individuals at highest risk for severe RSV infection include:

- Infants
- Adults older than 65 or with other underlying health issues
- People with weakened immune systems
- Individuals living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities

To help prevent the spread of RSV, try to stay home when sick, cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands, and avoid close contact with others. Some vaccines have been approved for use. Please consult with your doctor for more information.

### PHARYNGITIS

Pharyngitis is a sore throat caused by viruses and bacteria commonly from colds, the flu or even strep. Smoking can also contribute to pharyngitis.

While many of these instances are usually mild, treating strep throat quickly can be important. Symptoms of Strep can be sore throat, fever and swollen lymph nodes in the neck. Typically, strep is treated with antibiotics to prevent further medical issues. Getting your flu vaccine is one way to arm yourself against pharyngitis.



## DID YOU MOVE? NEXT STEPS TO UPDATE YOUR INFO.

Did you change your mailing address or phone number in 2023? To be sure you still receive all your necessary communications, contact DEERS to update your address, email addresses or phone number(s).

1. **Log into milConnect**  
(<https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>)
2. **Call 1-800-538-9552 (TTY/TDD: 1-866-363-2883)**
3. **Fax updates to 1-800-336-4416 (Primary) or 1-502-335-9980 (Alternate)**
4. **Mail updates to:**
  - a. **Defense Manpower Data Center  
Support Office  
Attn: COA  
400 Gigling Road  
Seaside, CA 93955-6771**



## ARE YOU READY TO QUIT SMOKING?

If you've been struggling with smoking and are ready to quit, you have many options to help with your cessation journey. One of the most important first steps is deciding to quit!

### THE BENEFITS OF QUITTING SMOKING:

- Reduces the risk of premature death
- Improves health and enhances the quality of life
- Reduces the risk for many adverse health effects including heart and lung diseases as well as cancer

### TO HELP YOU QUIT, THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS AVAILABLE:

- Your primary care provider and medications
  - Your doctor can help you develop a plan to quit smoking and explore other options like nicotine replacement
  - Other counseling options may be explored as well
- Help lines like a quit line coach at 1-800-QUIT-NOW

## ACTIVATE YOUR FREE CALM MEMBERSHIP!

Calm is a self-care resource that's part of your USFHP benefits. 84% of users report better overall mental health.

You can activate on a desktop or through the mobile app using the access code below. Contact member services at 800-678-7347 for activation details.

Access code:  
**CHRISTUSHEALTH2024**



**SCAN QR TO  
ACTIVATE.**

**FOR ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT MEMBER SERVICES AT 1-800-678-7347**





5101 N. O'Connor Blvd.  
Irving, TX 75039



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## FRAUD, WASTE OR ABUSE?

Report potential fraud, waste or abuse in the CHRISTUS Health Plan Network by submitting details to the Special Investigations Unit via email, secure fax or phone.

**FWA HOTLINE:** 855.771.8072

**EMAIL:** [ChristusHealthSIU@ChristusHealth.org](mailto:ChristusHealthSIU@ChristusHealth.org)

**SECURE FAX:** 210.766.8849

If you prefer anonymity, call the Integrity Line at 888.728.8383 or visit [ChristusIntegrityLink.org](http://ChristusIntegrityLink.org).

For compliance questions or concerns, you can email us at [CHPCompliance@ChristusHealth.org](mailto:CHPCompliance@ChristusHealth.org)



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**[CHRISTUShealthplan.org](http://CHRISTUShealthplan.org)**