

# Member news



## SelectHealth – A Gateway to the Care you Need

2020 has been a challenging year, with fear of COVID-19 and social unrest weighing heavily on most people. We know that for many SelectHealth members, these struggles just add to a long list of lingering challenges. Many couldn't always get the healthcare they need and deserve because of their race, sexual orientation, gender preferences, or where they live.

**Here are some ways SelectHealth is working to help connect members with the care they need:**

**End The Epidemic (ETE)** – An active member in ending the AIDS epidemic, SelectHealth uses ETE funds to improve access to care in underserved communities. CDC Director Robert R. Redfield, MD, says about this program, "Scientific advancements are powerful, but we won't end this epidemic unless we commit to addressing the health disparities clearly evident with the AIDS epidemic. This funding will assist communities as they address the long-standing gaps in equitable access to advancements in HIV."

**Member Advisory Committee (MAC) Meetings** – We know that we can't address what you need without listening to you directly. That's why you're invited to attend a MAC meeting where you can tell us what we are doing right and how we can help you better.

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**Community Partners** – We partner with organizations like The Alliance for Positive Change to offer members alternate ways to get clinical and behavioral health support.

**This year, it's been especially hard to take care of your health. Our Steps to a Healthier Life (Steps)** program rewards your efforts to stay healthy. So, when you participate in a smoking cessation program, see your dentist or eye doctor, and get your cancer screenings, you'll earn Visa gift cards. (See [selecthealthny.org/steps](https://selecthealthny.org/steps) for more information.)

If you need help with any of the resources mentioned above call Member Services at 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711).

## SelectHealth Supports Transgender Members

SelectHealth is committed to reaching, educating and offering customized services to transgender New Yorkers.

We are:

- Happy to get to **know** you
- Here to help you **understand** your healthcare coverage
- Ready to **refer** you to community support services through our outreach team
- Here to **follow-up** to make sure you stay on a course toward wellness
- In your **community**. Look for SelectHealth tables, operated by dedicated outreach specialists, offering educational information and support services to anyone interested.
- A plan that sees you through the **gender-affirming process**, including surgery and aftercare by VNSNY Gender Affirmation Program (GAP) providers



### The TransAction Taskforce: Making Things Happen

Recently, CHOICE formed the **TransAction Taskforce** as a new way to continue helping transgender members get the healthcare and support services they need. The taskforce employs CHOICE outreach specialists, marketing and product experts and members of the transgender community.

SelectHealth partners with community-based organizations to educate people in need on what is available to help them. One example is the work we do with **FACES NY**, an organization offering education, outreach, advocacy and housing.

Community alliances enable SelectHealth to reach people who can thrive with our help.

Members can call SelectHealth at 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711) or go to [SelectHealthNY.org](https://www.SelectHealthNY.org) for more information.

**Source:** [facesny.org/](https://facesny.org/)

## Protecting Your Health during a Medical Crisis

COVID-19, combined with the flu season, poses a **serious** health emergency.

**This year it's especially important that you get your flu vaccine to protect your health and those around you.**

The symptoms of COVID-19 and the flu are very similar, including fever, body aches, cough and difficulty breathing. If you get both at once, you can get very sick and may need to be hospitalized.

**Protect yourself by:**

- Wearing a mask and washing your hands often
- **Getting your flu shot**

The flu shot is available, at no cost to you. For help finding a location with vaccines near you, call Member Services at 1-866-469-7774, Monday – Friday, 8 am – 6 pm.



## Add Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Testing to Your Stay-Healthy Agenda

### What You Need to Know

- You can have an STI even if you feel healthy and have no symptoms.
- You can get an STI through vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- The only way to know if you have an STI is to get tested.
- Your doctor may order urine, throat or anal tests to diagnose an STI.
- Untreated, STIs can damage your vision, hearing, brain or heart and cause infertility.
- Chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis can be cured with antibiotics.
- HIV, HPV and genital herpes cannot be cured but can be managed well with antiviral medications.

The goal is to make STI testing a part of your annual stay-healthy routine. Be your own best advocate and discuss STI testing with your doctor.

**Source:** [gettested.cdc.gov/search\\_results](https://gettested.cdc.gov/search_results)

## New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute Chose the SelectHealth team!

The AIDS Institute invited the SelectHealth team to speak at their virtual 2020 "Ending the Epidemic (ETE) Summit" which took place during World AIDS Day (Dec 1-3) events. The 2020 theme was "The Story of Ending the Epidemic: Past, Present, and Future." The team shared stories showing that with the right support, lives can improve, even in the face of many challenges.

**Source:** [engagenyc.org/mpowerments-events/2020/ete-summit](https://engagenyc.org/mpowerments-events/2020/ete-summit)

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The AIDS Institute, is dedicated to wiping out HIV and improving the health of persons living with HIV and AIDS and improving the lives of the LGBTQ community.

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## CHOICE Welcomes Mark Godfrey to the Board - A True Advocate for SelectHealth Members!

Recently, the CHOICE Board of Directors welcomed SelectHealth member Mark Godfrey. Mark has advocated for the needs of people who are living with HIV, homeless and/or transgender and works one-on-one in communities where at-risk people live.

We are excited to have Mark help us make the best health plan decisions with your needs in mind.

**Hany Abdelaal**, DO, President of VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans remarks:

"It's always been part of VNSNY's mission to care for vulnerable populations and address racial disparities. Mark's views align with the quality goals and the diversity that we are focusing on."

VNSNY CHOICE complies with Federal civil rights laws. VNSNY CHOICE does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

ATENCION: si habla español, tiene a su disposicion servicios gratuitos de asistencia linguistica. Llame al 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711)。



## Comforting, Healthy Veggie Soup

This easy, veggie-packed soup comes together in no time, but tastes like it took hours. Serves 6.

### Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive or vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion and zucchini and 4 medium carrots (diced)
- 2 stalks celery (diced)
- 1 garlic clove (minced)
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp salt and ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 14 oz can diced tomatoes
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 ½ cups (14 oz can) beans (cannellini, black, kidney or pinto beans)
- ½ cup chopped parsley or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar

### Instructions

1. In a large pot heat olive/vegetable oil over medium heat.
2. Add the onion, carrots and celery and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the zucchini, garlic, thyme, salt and black pepper and cook 1 minute.
4. Add tomatoes, broth and beans. Bring to a boil, simmer uncovered until the zucchini is tender, about 5 minutes.
5. Stir in parsley and simmer for one more minute.
6. Remove from heat and stir in red wine vinegar. ENJOY!

*Have You Checked  
Out YOUR New  
SelectHealth Website?*

We're excited to present SelectHealth's new website, with easy-navigation, vibrant colors and interesting photos of people just like you! The website makes it easy to learn about your coverage, find doctors and specialists, and seek out support services. The website is accessible by mobile device or computer so you can get information wherever you are.

Check it out at [SelectHealthNY.org](https://www.SelectHealthNY.org).

### If Something Seems Wrong, Tell Us.

SelectHealth is committed to finding and stopping fraud, waste, or abuse in our health care plans.

### Anonymous Reporting

VNSNY CHOICE Compliance Hotline: 1-888-634-1558.  
File an online report at: [vnsny.ethicspoint.com](https://vnsny.ethicspoint.com).  
Learn more at: <https://www.vnsnychoice.org/compliance-program/>.

### Member Services

1-866-469-7774 (TTY: 711)

8 am – 6 pm, Monday – Friday

[SelectHealthNY.org/member](https://www.SelectHealthNY.org/member)

"Progress" Pride Flag by Daniel Quasar  
([quasar.digital](https://www.quasar.digital) LLC)



**Select  
HEALTH**  
VNSNY CHOICE



# Vaccinations for Adults Living with HIV

## Vaccines are important at any age.

Getting vaccinated is a lifelong, life-protecting task. Don't leave your healthcare provider's office without making sure you've had all the vaccinations you need.



Here is a summary of the vaccinations you may need to protect your health if you are living with HIV. Talk to your doctor about which are right for you. Bring this list as a handy reference to your next office visit.

- ✓ **Flu**
- ✓ **Hepatitis A and B**
- ✓ **Hib, type b (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b)**
- ✓ **HPV (Human papillo-mavirus) (Adults age 27-45, with HIV)**
- ✓ **Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)\***
- ✓ **Meningitis A**
- ✓ **Meningitis B\***
- ✓ **Pneumonia**
- ✓ **Tdap, Td booster (Tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough [pertussis])**
- ✓ **Chickenpox**
- ✓ **Shingles (Age 50 or older without HIV symptoms)**

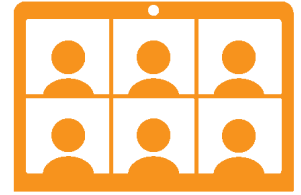
\*Consult your healthcare provider to determine your level of risk for infection and your need for this vaccine.

Source: [cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/health-conditions/hiv.html#foot1](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/health-conditions/hiv.html#foot1)

# Alliance for Positive Change Support Groups

The Virtual Alliance Support Groups are ongoing and conducted using Zoom. Join us to learn about topics like harm reduction, treatment adherence, living in balance, safer sex, stress management, self-esteem, coping, and more.

Please email the facilitator before the start of the group. You will be given the Zoom video or call-in information. If you have any questions call 212-645-0875.



| Workshop Name  | Date/Timing                                 | Contact Information   | Is This for You?  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Breakfast Group</b>   | Mondays<br>11:00 am – 11:30 am<br>(Zoom)    | Facilitator: Jada LeGrand<br>(nakikiya@alliance.nyc)                  | Open to anyone, this is a safe space to congregate and talk.  |
| <b>YMSM Group</b>  | Mondays<br>3:00 pm – 3:30 pm<br>(Zoom)      | Facilitator: Naheem Escort<br>(naheem@alliance.nyc or 646-565-7893)   | Open to MSM ages 18-29.   |
| <b>Women's Group</b>   | Tuesdays<br>11:00 am – 11:30 am<br>(Zoom)   | Facilitator: Josephine Ledda<br>(josephine2@alliance.nyc)             | Open to all people who identify as women.   |
| <b>Treatment Chat</b>  | Tuesdays<br>2:00 pm – 2:30 pm<br>(Zoom)     | Facilitator: Sam Rodriguez<br>(sam@alliance.nyc or 646-831-6789)      | Open to anyone – share strategies for adhering to medication.   |
| <b>Living In Balance Group</b>                                 | Wednesdays<br>11:00 am – 11:30 am<br>(Zoom) | Facilitator: Jean-Pierre Louis<br>(jean@alliance.nyc or 478-227-7209) | Open to anyone affected by substance use.   |
| <b>Transgender Women's Group</b>                               | Wednesdays<br>2:00 pm – 3:00 pm<br>(Zoom)   | Facilitator: Ada Suriel<br>(ada@alliance.nyc or 347-378-6108)         | <i>My Social Room</i> is a group for Transgender Women.   |
| <b>RAICES Group</b>  | Thursdays<br>11:00 am – 11:30 am<br>(Zoom)  | Facilitator: Maria Madrid<br>(maria@alliance.nyc)                     | Open to all Spanish-speaking to discuss harm-reduction, safer sex, substance use.                               |
| <b>Seeking Safety Support Group for Spanish Speaking Women</b> | Fridays<br>12:00 pm – 1:00 pm<br>(Zoom)     | Facilitator: Ada Suriel<br>(ada@alliance.nyc or 347-378-6108)         | Open to Spanish-speaking women – build skills to deal with past traumas, like domestic violence, substance use. |
| <b>MSM Group</b>   | Fridays<br>2:00 pm – 2:30 pm<br>(Zoom)      | Facilitator: Naheem Escort<br>(naheem@alliance.nyc or 646-565-7893)   | Open to all MSM – talk about safer sex.   |

These events are current as of the date of this mailing. Please call the Alliance for up-to-date information.