

# HEALTHFOCUS

2026 Spring  
Member Newsletter  
**VillageCareMAX Managed  
Long-Term Care (MLTC) Plan**

**Spring is in the Air**  
What to Know About  
Spring Allergies

**Plan Ahead with  
Advance Directives**  
Electronic Health  
Care Proxy Form

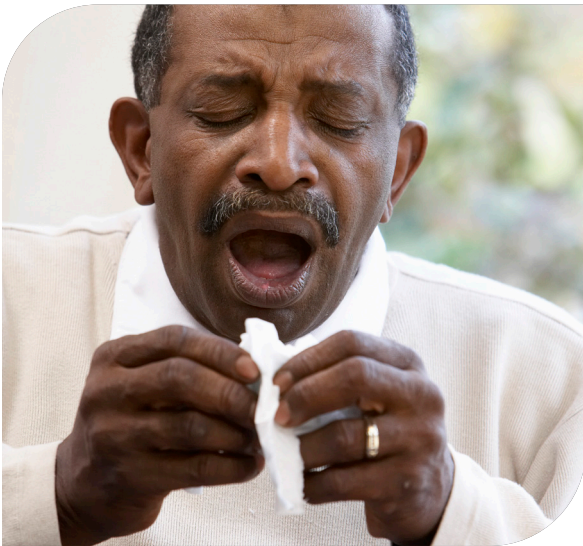
**Healthy, Happy,  
Balanced Living**  
Experience the Bronx  
Community Center

[www.villagecaremax.org](http://www.villagecaremax.org)

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VILLAGECAREMAX



## Spring Allergy Sneezon:

### FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SPRING ALLERGIES

Spring is a beautiful time of year, but it can also bring itchy eyes, sneezing, and stuffy noses. Seasonal allergies happen when your body reacts to tiny bits of pollen floating in the air. These allergies can make you feel tired, uncomfortable, or just not like yourself. Here are five things you should know about spring allergies:

#### 1. Tree Pollen is the Main Trigger

In early spring, pollen from trees like oak, birch, and poplar often cause sneezing, runny noses, and itchy eyes.

#### 2. Allergies are Caused by your Body Overreacting

Your immune system responds to pollen by releasing chemicals such as histamine. This can lead to sneezing, swelling, and itchy, watery eyes.

#### 3. It Might Seem Like a Cold

Your body's response to pollen may seem like a cold at first, but there are differences. Allergies usually come with clear, watery mucus, itchy or dry eyes, and no fever. They also begin quickly—often right after you're exposed to pollen.

#### 4. Allergy Season Varies by Region and Weather

Different parts of the country have different peak allergy seasons. Weather changes can make pollen season shorter, longer, or more intense.

#### 5. Treatments Can be a Big Help

Many people feel better with over-the-counter medicine, nasal sprays, or staying indoors when pollen counts are high. If your symptoms are strong, a doctor may recommend long-term options like allergy shots.

#### Source Links:

1. [Mayo Clinic - Hay Fever \(Allergic Rhinitis\): Symptoms & Causes](#)
2. [Cleveland Clinic - Allergic Rhinitis \(Hay Fever\)](#)
3. [MSD Manual Consumer Version - Seasonal Allergies Overview](#)
4. [Healthline - Seasonal Allergies: Symptoms, Causes & Treatment](#)

# Plan Ahead with Advance Directives

Thinking about how you want to be cared for in the future is crucial. Having Advance Directives in place is an essential step to ensure that your wishes are understood and followed by health care providers.

At VillageCareMAX, your Care Manager can assist you with establishing your Advance Directives and ensure your wishes are communicated, especially if you are unable to do so. It's important to let your care manager know if you have any signed Advance Directives, as they can keep a copy in your care management record and ensure your doctor is informed of your decisions regarding your care.

## Advance Directives in New York:

- NY State Health Care Proxy
- Living Will
- Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR)
- Medical Order for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST)

## Types of Advance Directives:

### HEALTH CARE PROXY

A Health Care Proxy Form allows you to choose someone you trust to make health care decisions on your behalf. If you are unable (even in the short term) to make health care decisions, someone else must decide for you. In New York State, only a health care agent that you appoint has the legal authority to make medical decisions if you are unable to decide for yourself.

Find the [Health Care Proxy](#) form online. The form comes in different languages.

### LIVING WILL

In a living will, the instructions must clearly state the kinds of treatment you would not want to receive and the conditions in which you would refuse such treatment. Unlike the health care proxy, no one can interpret the living will for you, so your instructions must be clear and specific. Consult a lawyer to help you with a living will.

### DO NOT RESUSITATE (DNR)

A DNR order tells the doctor and other staff not to perform CPR on you if your breathing or heartbeat stops. This decision is specifically about CPR and does not cover any other treatments; it is a directive from a doctor.

### MEDICAL ORDER FOR LIFE SUSTAINING TREATMENT (MOLST)

A MOLST document provides more comprehensive information than a DNR order, including your wishes for health care, such as DNI ("Do Not Intubate") and DNR. It is a hot pink form that is recognized by paramedics, hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities, ensuring that your preferences are respected in critical situations. If you want to sign a MOLST document, discuss this with your doctor.



## Need Help?

VillageCareMAX Managed Long-Term Care Plan (MLTC) members, call Member Services at 1-800-469-6292 TTY/TTD 711. 8AM - 8PM, 7 days a week.

[www.villagecaremax.org](http://www.villagecaremax.org)

## Save Time with Paperless Forms

Filling out plan forms is faster and easier when you go paperless. You can complete and submit many of your plan forms online-no printing, postage, or trips to the mailbox.

### ACCESS ELECTRONIC FORMS BY FOLLOWING THESE STEPS:

1. Go to: [www.villagecaremax.org/mltc](http://www.villagecaremax.org/mltc)
2. Click: “For Members”
3. Select “Plan Materials and Resources”.
4. Scroll down until you find the form you want to fill out.
5. Follow the step-by-step instructions to complete and sign the form online. Once the form is completed, it will be saved to the VillageCareMAX system.



# Visit the VillageCareMAX Bronx Community Center

The VillageCareMAX Bronx Community Center is here to help you live a healthy, happy, and balanced life. We know good health is about more than doctor visits. It's about having support and resources for your whole well-being. Our center connects Bronx residents to important health and wellness services, all in one place.

Our staff speaks English and Spanish and is ready to help with things like: filling out forms, getting groceries, understanding VillageCareMAX health plan benefits and more.

We have many free programs and activities for everyone in the community. Here are some photos from our recent events.

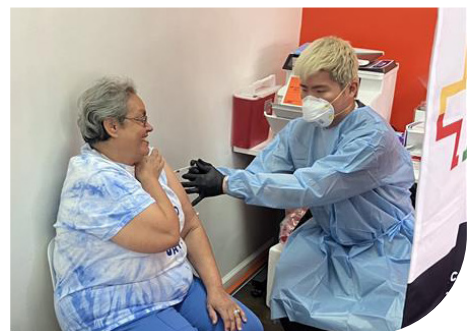
**WELLNESS EVENTS:** Stay healthy with free vision, hearing, and dental screenings for the community.

**SNAP SUPPORT:** Get help applying for or renewing your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

**HEALTHY COOKING WORKSHOP:** Enjoy fun food demonstrations and learn healthy, tasty recipes.

[CHECK OUR CLASS AND EVENT SCHEDULE ONLINE](#)

**Come see how the VillageCareMAX  
Bronx Community Center can support your  
health and wellness!**



**VillageCareMAX  
Bronx Community Center**  
798 Southern Blvd,  
Bronx, NY 10455  
1-800-469-6292 (TTY: 711)

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## Get Extra Support with Social Care Networks

VillageCareMAX members can get extra help through Social Care Networks (SCNs). These networks connect you with free local services that can assist with important needs like housing, food, and transportation. If you have Medicaid, you might be eligible for support to improve your health and well-being.

With an SCN, you can meet with a Social Care Navigator. They will help you find the support you need by asking questions and checking your eligibility. Services offered include help with home safety, transportation to important places, and job training.

To get started, you can call VillageCareMAX Member Services at 1-800-469-6292 (TTY: 711) and ask for a Social Care Network in your area. You can also contact your local SCN directly or visit their website to begin your application. A Social Care Navigator will help you understand what services you qualify for.

Contact the SCN in your county directly using the information in the chart below. Once you're connected, a Social Care Navigator will help you confirm eligibility, explain available services, and connect you to the right programs.

Social Care Network	Counties Covered	Phone Number	Website
Hudson Valley Care Coalition, Inc.	Putnam, Westchester	800-768-5080	<a href="https://hudsonvalleycare.org/services/hudson-valleys-social-care-network">hudsonvalleycare.org/services/hudson-valleys-social-care-network</a>
Public Health Solutions	Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn	888-755-5045	<a href="https://wholeyou.nyc">wholeyou.nyc</a>
Staten Island Performing Provider System	Staten Island (Richmond)	917-830-1140	<a href="https://statenilandpps.org/social-care-network">statenilandpps.org/social-care-network</a>
Somos Healthcare Providers, Inc.	Bronx	833-SOMOSNY (833-766-6769)	<a href="https://somoscommunitycare.org/social-care-network">somoscommunitycare.org/social-care-network</a>



## Move Easier, Feel Better:

### YOUR PLAYBOOK FOR PAIN CARE

Pain can make it hard to sleep, move, and enjoy your day. If pain is not managed, it can get worse. It is important to notice if your pain changes so you can tell your care team.

### Try to Pay Attention to:

- Where the pain is
- How strong the pain feels
- How often you feel pain
- What makes it better or worse

### Steps to Manage Pain:

- Communicate your pain levels to your care team.
- Follow your prescribed treatment plan.
- Attend scheduled therapy visits and use your assistive equipment as directed.
- Stay active with gentle stretches or short walks to reduce stiffness and pain.



### Stop

If you feel dizzy, short of breath, or unsafe, and call your doctor.

### We Are Here for You

We want to help you stay healthy and independent. If you have questions about pain management or your bladder health or your benefits, please call Member Services.

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# Better Bladder Health:

## SMALL STEPS TO STAY AHEAD OF BLADDER ISSUES

Many older adults experience bladder control issues, which can affect your confidence and make it harder to maintain independence. As we age, our bladder muscles can weaken, but remember, you don't have to live with these challenges.

### What You Can Do Today:

- Talk to your nurse and Care Manager if you have accidents, new symptoms, or feel a strong need to use the bathroom. Do not feel embarrassed to share this information.
- Try to use the bathroom on a regular basis, even if you do not feel the need to go. This can help train your bladder.
- Drink enough water to stay hydrated, and try to limit drinks with caffeine or alcohol, as they can make bladder problems worse.
- Use durable medical equipment (DME), such as raised toilet seats, grab bars, and bedside commodes to make it easier and safer to use the bathroom.



# Make a Difference: Join the VillageCareMAX Member Advisory Committee

At VillageCareMAX, we truly care about what you have to say. That's why we created the Member Advisory Committee. The Member Advisory Committee gives you a voice to share your ideas, concerns, and experiences about the care and services we provide.

## As a committee member, you can:

- Help improve how members access services
- Offer suggestions to improve care coordination
- Promote health equity, with a focus on helping underserved communities

## Meeting will have VillageCareMAX representatives from:

- Member Services
- Enrollment and Eligibility
- Grievance and Appeals
- Case Management
- Network Management
- Quality
- Pharmacy

Your feedback helps us understand what matters most to you and guides us as we continue improving the care and support you receive.



## Interested in joining the VillageCareMAX Member Advisory Committee?

Call 1-800-469-6292  
(TTY: 711), toll-free,  
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., 7 days a week.

## Need Help?

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# Notice of Non-Discrimination

**VillageCareMAX** complies with Federal civil rights laws. **VillageCareMAX** does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (as defined in 45 CFR § 92.101(a)(2)).

**VillageCareMAX** provides the following:

- Free aids and services to people with disabilities to help you communicate with us, such as:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters
  - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Free language services to people whose first language is not English, such as:
  - Qualified interpreters
  - Information written in other languages

If you need these services, call **VillageCareMAX** at 1-800-469-6292.  
For TTY/TDD services, call 711.

If you believe that **VillageCareMAX** has not given you these services or treated you differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with the **VillageCareMAX Grievance & Appeals Specialist** by:

Mail: 120 Broadway, Suite 2840, New York, NY 10271  
 Phone: 1-800-469-6292 (for TTY/TDD services 711)  
 Fax: 1-347-226-5180  
 In person: 120 Broadway, Suite 2840, New York, NY 10271  
 Email: [Complaints@villagecare.org](mailto:Complaints@villagecare.org)

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights by:

Web: Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>  
 Mail: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 200 Independence Avenue SW., Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, DC 20201  
 Complaint forms are available at [www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html)  
 Phone: 1-800-368-1019 (TTY/TDD 800-537-7697)

This notice is available at VillageCareMax website: [www.villagecaremax.org](http://www.villagecaremax.org).

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