



## Message from the CEO

*Carol Carew*

The holidays have officially begun.

But along with all the festivities, remember that if you need health insurance for 2024, the deadline to enroll is Dec. 15. If you are unsure how to go about finding a plan, give us a call. We can help you navigate the system. See the back page for more information.

We aren't the only ones who are busy this season. The COVID virus and influenza are also very busy infecting as many people as possible. Protect yourself and get vaccinated. You can even have the vaccines at the same time! Give us a call. It takes a couple of weeks for your body to build immunity for protection so the sooner you get vaccinated the better, before holiday gatherings.

To stay up-to-date on what we are doing, follow us on Facebook and Instagram. And you can subscribe to this newsletter from our website and get it emailed to you. Happy Holidays!

*Carol*

## December is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Month

Visit [NIMH » Seasonal Affective Disorder \(nih.gov\)](https://www.nimh.nih.gov)

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that is related to changes in seasons. Some people experience mood and behavior changes when the amount of daylight varies throughout the year. SAD usually starts in the fall or winter and goes away in the spring or summer. SAD can cause:

- **Emotional distress.** People with SAD may feel listless, sad, hopeless, worthless, or guilty. They may lose interest in activities they once enjoyed, have trouble concentrating. These symptoms can interfere with their daily functioning and relationships.
- **Physical discomfort.** People with SAD may also experience changes in their appetite, weight, energy, and sleep patterns. They may crave foods high in carbohydrates, overeat, or gain weight. They may feel tired, sluggish, or oversleep. Alternatively, they may have trouble sleeping, poor appetite, weight loss, or agitation.

The exact causes of SAD are not fully understood, but some possible factors include:

- **Biological clock.** The reduced sunlight in fall and winter may disrupt the body's internal clock, which regulates sleep, mood, and hormones. This may lead to feelings of depression.
- **Melatonin levels.** The change in season may affect the production of melatonin, a hormone that influences sleep and mood. Melatonin levels tend to rise in the dark and fall in the light. People with SAD may have higher melatonin levels in the winter or lower melatonin levels in the summer, which may affect their mood and sleep.
- **Serotonin levels.** The reduced sunlight may also cause a drop in serotonin, a neurotransmitter that affects mood, appetite, and sleep. Low levels of serotonin are linked to depression.

If you think you have SAD, talk to your provider or a mental health professional for a proper diagnosis and treatment. SAD is a serious condition that can affect your quality of life, but it can be managed with the right support. Our behavioral health team can help.



## We are hiring ...

Visit [www.bucksportrhc.org](http://www.bucksportrhc.org) to learn more.

- Dental Hygienist (Flexible Per Diem)
- Dentist
- Family Practice MD/DO
- LCSW - Clinic and School-Based Health Center
- Medical Assistant, Ellsworth
- Coordinator Behavioral Health/Medical Assistant
- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Phlebotomist I
- Dental Assistant, Full-Time



## December is Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness Month

*U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*

The holiday season is a festive time with family and friends, but it can also be fraught with dangers. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission wants everyone to be safe.

Here are some tips to help you have a safe holiday.

### TOY Tips:

- Follow age guidance and other safety information on the toy packaging, and choose toys that match your child's interests and abilities.
- Get safety gear, including helmets for scooters and other riding toys –helmets should be worn properly at all times and be sized to fit.
- Keep small balls and toys with small parts away from children younger than age 3, and keep deflated balloons away from children younger than 8 years old (discard broken balloons at once).



### COOKING Tips:

- Never leave food unattended on the stove or in the oven.
- Keep children away from the cooking area, and keep flammable items like potholders and paper or plastic bags away from the stove and oven.
- Only fry a turkey outside and away from your home –not inside your garage or on your porch. Do not overfill the oil in the turkey fryer.

### DECORATING Tips:

- Make sure your live Christmas tree has plenty of water, and look for the "Fire Resistant" label when buying an artificial tree.
- Place burning candles in sight, away from flammable items, and blow them out before leaving the room.
- Only use lights tested for safety by a national recognized testing laboratory. Throw out sets with broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections.

For more information on how to have a *Home Safe Home* during the holidays, please visit CPSC's Holiday Safety Information Center at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

## ME Marketplace Health Insurance

The open enrollment period for the marketplace health insurance is happening now! Enroll by Dec. 15 for coverage that starts on January 1, 2024.

Mainers can enroll for marketplace insurance through the state website [www.coverme.gov](http://www.coverme.gov), where they can preview plans and prices for 2024. They can compare costs and coverage side-by-side including:

- Plan features and benefits
- Premiums and deductibles
- Total estimated costs for services
- Plans that cover your doctors and prescriptions

If you are losing or have lost MaineCare and have questions about the temporary Special Enrollment Period, visit [coverME.gov](http://coverME.gov)



## Word Search - Happy Holidays

Christmas	Snow	Candles
Mistletoe	Holiday	Cookies
Santa	Presents	Carols
Hanukkah	Menorah	Cheer

