



CONTACT: Kathryn Knox Soman

212-908-8588

somank@metroplus.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

METROPLUS HEALTH PLAN, RESPONDING TO COVID-19 CRISIS, ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO DELIVER FOOD AND SAFETY CARE PACKAGES TO 10,000 OF ITS MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS

MetroPlusHealth to send dry foods, hand sanitizers, and surgical masks to struggling members to help meet the food and safety needs of its most at-risk members now sheltering in place at home.

(New York, NY – May 08, 2020) – MetroPlus Health Plan today announced the start of a new food and safety member care package initiative that will soon reach 10,000 of its members determined to be especially in need. The care packages, containing non-perishable foods and items like hand sanitizer and face masks, are particularly needed now as, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an urgent need for lower income New Yorkers to safely access food and personal protective equipment (PPE). To assist in the rollout of the new program, MetroPlusHealth enlisted its member rewards partner Finity.

Last month, as New York State continued to practice social distancing and much of New York City remained shut down, MetroPlusHealth identified a first group of potential care package recipients from its City-based membership, focusing first on those who are older or contending with multiple medical conditions or both – known factors for risk of potentially devastating effects from COVID-19.

Finity began distribution of the COVID-19 care packages on April 28th with the first packages arriving early this week, each containing a number of items carefully chosen based upon nutrition, shelf-life, and need, including:

- Instant meals (e.g., Ready Rice)
- Proteins (e.g., tuna packets)
- Hot cereal (e.g., oatmeal)
- Nutritional bars
- Dried fruit & nuts
- Staples (e.g., rice, beans, pasta)
- Face masks

- Hand sanitizer

Each package includes a message of hope and support from MetroPlusHealth.

“At MetroPlusHealth, we have taken many steps to support our members during this crisis, from launching 24/7 telehealth services to making it easier to access their health services and information to ensuring they can interact as much as possible with their health plan remotely from the safety and comfort of their own homes,” said **President and CEO of MetroPlus Health Plan Talya Schwartz, MD**. “But this new initiative is something very special and quite personal. Through these food and safety care package deliveries, we are directly helping to increase the wellbeing and security of members who most need our help.”

“I’m alone now,” said **Ms. P.**, a 68-year-old home health aide from Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, a MetroPlusHealth member, and recipient of one of the first care packages on May 5. “My family is gone, and usually I am taking care of people older and sicker than me. When I opened my box, I was overwhelmed. I cried. I felt so grateful, so totally blessed. This box was like a gift from the universe sent straight to me. I believe in giving to other people. The more you give kindness, the more it is given back. All of the things in this box, especially now, they are things I really need.”

To date, 4,000 packages have mailed out. Over the next few weeks, another 6,000 members of MetroPlusHealth who reside in New York City communities hard hit by COVID-19 will receive care packages, as the Plan continues to find new ways to offer comfort and support to its membership.

###

About MetroPlusHealth

Since 1985, MetroPlus Health Plan has built a reputation for providing access to affordable, quality health care to residents across New York City. A wholly-owned subsidiary of NYC Health + Hospitals, the nation’s largest public health system, MetroPlusHealth is the plan of choice for over half a million New Yorkers and has a five-star rating based on the State’s 2018 Consumer’s Guide to Medicaid and Child Health Plus Managed Care Plans in New York City. The health plan’s robust network of primary care doctors and specialists includes many independent community providers. Culturally sensitive, and fluent in more than 40 languages, MetroPlusHealth’s staff is as diverse as the great city it serves. For more information about MetroPlusHealth plans, benefits, and services, visit www.metroplus.org and join the conversation at facebook.com/metroplushealth and [twitter @metroplushealth](https://twitter.com/metroplushealth).

About Finity, Inc.

Finity is the leading health intelligence engagement company serving millions of Medicaid, Medicare, and Marketplace enrollees across the country in partnerships with states and health plans. Finity’s mission is to empower millions of people to make conscious health decisions. Visit www.finity.com to learn more.

