



**North Dakota  
Public Employees Retirement System**

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**To:** Payroll/Personnel Contacts

**From:** NDPERS

**Date:** May 5, 2005

**RE:** Wellness Program

I am writing to update you on an important new effort that will be a part of the PERS health plan starting this July. The NDPERS Board has directed staff to develop an employer based wellness program, pursuant to N.D.C.C. 54-52. 1-14, which states: *"The board shall develop an employer based wellness program. The program must encourage employers to adopt a board-developed wellness program by either charging extra health insurance premium to nonparticipating employers or reducing premium for participating employers."* The employer based wellness program will provide a premium discount option of 1% to employers. The goal of the program is to encourage employees to engage in healthy activities and provide support for this effort. The primary goal of this program is to increase the quality of employees' lives. The secondary benefits will be to reduce health care costs, absenteeism and increase productivity and morale in the workplace. Because of the diversified nature of our employer groups, the NDPERS Board recognizes that a "one-size fits all" approach is not a good option. Therefore, the program will be implemented in phases to allow each employer time to determine what works best in their own worksite. The Board is also seeking 100% employer group participation.

NDPERS has sent a letter requesting support for this wellness program to each employer's top management along with a wellness concurrence form that needs to be completed and signed by that person. NDPERS asks that each employer designate a wellness coordinator(s) and return the information to this office by **May 12, 2005**. We are sending this letter to you so you are both aware of the upcoming employer based wellness program and hopefully supportive of the effort.

All employer groups participating in the wellness program will be awarded a 1% reduction in their health premiums effective July 1, 2005. In the event your employer group decides not to participate in the employer based wellness program offered through NDPERS, your premium will remain at the full amount for the biennium. ***NOTE: For state agencies, the health premium rate reflected in the budget assumes that all agencies will participate in this program. Therefore, to obtain the group rate funded in the budget for this coming biennium, a state agency will need to send back the attached form. If you elect not to participate, your premium costs will be 1% higher than the budgeted rate.***

The Board recognizes that you have many other responsibilities with few resources. Therefore, we are attempting to implement this program so it can be integrated into your operation with minimal disruption. A Wellness Forum is tentatively planned in the fall to provide support and training to the designated wellness coordinator(s). During the Wellness Forum, wellness coordinator(s) will be coached on developing the wellness programming that will need to be completed for implementation in 2006.

If you have any questions, please call me at 328-3978 or outside of Bismarck – Mandan at 1-800-803-7377.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Binder, PHR  
Employee Programs Benefits Specialist

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