

Perspectives

FOR ACTIVE
MEMBERS
OF THE
NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT
SYSTEM

SPECIAL EDITION 2009 • VOLUME 31, NUMBER 4

In this issue...

- **BCBSND Launches Wellness Program**
- **Practice Good Hygiene to Prevent H1N1**
- **Diabetes Management Program**
- **Prenatal Plus Program**
- **Tobacco Cessation**



This newsletter is published by
the North Dakota Public
Employees Retirement System
Box 1657, Bismarck, ND 58502
701-328-3900

Toll free: 1-800-803-7377
nd.gov/ndpers

Board Members:

Jon Strinden
Chairman

Thomas Trenbeath

Attorney General Appointee

Arvy Smith

State Health Officer Designee

Members Elected:

Mike Sandal, Joan Ehrhardt,
Howard Sage, Levi Erdmann

Sparb Collins

Executive Director

Kathy M. Allen

Editor

BCBSND Launches Wellness Program

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota is pleased to offer two wellness programs to NDPERS members, effective July 1, 2009. NDPERS members and spouses age 18 and older who are covered by the NDPERS' plan are eligible to participate.

NDPERS members and eligible spouses can each qualify to receive up to a total incentive of \$250 each year that can be earned for one or both programs.

- **Health Club Credit.** NDPERS members and their eligible spouses can each earn monthly credit of up to \$20 for working out 12 days a month at a participating health club center.

- **MyHealthCenter.** NDPERS members and their eligible spouses can earn points to apply toward incentive prizes in this online program. MyHealthCenter provides personal coaching, the QuitNet tobacco cessation program, customized plans for fitness and nutrition, and family tools for kids.

Practice Good Hygiene to Prevent H1N1

The World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared swine flu a pandemic in June. H1N1 is the first global flu pandemic since 1968.

Dr. Jon Rice, Medical Management Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at BCBSND, reminds NDPERS members of the primary prevention methods, which are to practice good hygiene, such as washing your hands with soap and covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough.

Symptoms of H1N1 flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza. The symptoms include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Practicing good hygiene is important at all times. Follow these tips to stay healthy.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw away the tissue, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective. When you use hand sanitizer, rub your hands until the gel is dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you have flu-like symptoms at least 24 hours after your fever has ended.
- Stand three feet away from people with flu-like symptoms.
- Improve airflow in your living space by opening windows.
- Practice good health habits including adequate sleep, eating nutritious food and keeping physically active.

Diabetes Management Program

The Word is Out...

- *Excellent program – thank you!*
- *My diabetes has improved at least 50-percent.*
- *This is an amazing program and it has helped me immensely.*
- *Very helpful!*
- *I wish this program would have been available 10-20 years ago.*

These are just a few of the comments from members participating in the diabetes management wellness program offered by NDPERS. This service, which has been offered since July 2008, is provided by pharmacists and other health professionals throughout the state. The North Dakota Pharmacy Service Corporation administers this program. Preliminary data shows that members participating in the program are experiencing improved results in managing their diabetes.

The Diabetes Management program focuses on helping members better understand and control this harmful disease. There will be a series of visits with a designated provider selected by the member. The visits will take from 30-60 minutes to complete. The provider will review the member's health history, diabetes goals, recent lab results, and all of their current medications. The provider will then educate the member on their health conditions, make recommendations to improve their medication therapy, and refer them to other health care providers such as dieticians or eye specialists if needed. Information will be shared with the

member's doctor to make sure that everything is done to meet their medication and health goals. The member's health will be improved by utilizing the specialties of a variety of health care professionals.

Members will benefit from this program in multiple ways. Most importantly, their overall health will be improved. Secondly, members participating and complying with the requirements of the program will receive quarterly reimbursements for out-of-pocket co-pays (currently \$20 for brand name medications and \$5 for generic medications) spent on diabetic medications and certain medications used for kidney protection.

Members can improve their physical and financial health by enrolling in this program!

Members can continue to enroll in this program. To be eligible to participate, members must be diagnosed with a type of diabetes. For additional information, you can visit the program website at www.aboutthepatient.net, or call Frontier Pharmacy, the Clinical Coordinator, at 1-877-364-3932. The entire cost of the program is paid by NDPERS.

Prenatal Plus Program

The Prenatal Plus program is a free, voluntary educational support program for expectant mothers. This program helps to identify women at high risk for premature delivery and to decrease the incidence of preterm births.

To enroll in this program, simply call the number on the back of your Blue Cross Blue Shield of ND health ID card and sign up for your free pregnancy assessment. The best time to call is after your first prenatal visit with your health care provider. After you've enrolled in the program, an

experienced nurse will call you back to perform a pregnancy assessment over the phone. This short survey will allow BCBSND to tailor their support to meet your particular needs. If the assessment determines you are at risk for having a premature or low birth-weight baby, you will be offered additional assistance from an experienced BCBSND case manager.

As a Prenatal Plus participant, you will receive a packet of valuable health information related to your pregnancy, a pregnancy calendar and prenatal visit chart, samples

NDPERS Offers State Employees Help with Quitting Tobacco

If you are a state employee who uses tobacco and is interested in quitting, you can get help from the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System (NDPERS) Tobacco Cessation Program.

Administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND), the program is available to help state employees, along with any of their dependents 18 and older, to quit using tobacco.

To get started you can call the North Dakota Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800.784.8669), find a cessation provider in your area by visiting www.bcbsnd.com/ehealth/ndpersquit or call BCBSND at 800.223.1704.

Participants can utilize one of the cessation programs across the state or can call the Quitline for help with quitting. Once you enroll in a program, an initial assessment will be performed to determine how ready you are to quit, what your smoking or chewing triggers are and what type of nicotine replacement therapy, such as patches or gum, and/or prescription medication, you may need. If prescription medication is recommended, you will also need to visit a doctor.

The program will reimburse you for any costs associated with taking a cessation class and will cover your co-pay if need to make an office visit. Prescription and over-the-counter medication will be reimbursed up to \$500. If you choose to use the Quitline, you will be reimbursed for your office visit and your prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Individuals are eligible to enroll in the program once every six months. The program will end April 30, 2011.

and coupons, and a "Take Care of Your Child" book.

To learn more about Prenatal Plus, listen to the Prenatal Plus podcast on bcbsnd.com. Visit https://www.bcbsnd.com/members/membercasts/membercast_013.html.

www.bcbsnd.com/ehealth/ndpersquit