



**NORTH DAKOTA  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES  
RETIREMENT SYSTEM**



# Coordinator Newsletter

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February 2014



February is National Heart Month.

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The American Heart Association recommends that heart attack prevention begin by age 20 for men and women. This means assessing risk factors and working to keep them low. For people older than 40, or those with multiple risk factors, it's important to calculate the risk of developing cardiovascular disease in the next 10 years.

The good news from the American Heart Association is that there are some risk factors that you can change:

- **Tobacco smoke**

A smoker's risk of developing coronary heart disease is two to four times that of a nonsmoker. People who smoke a pack of cigarettes per day have more than twice the risk of heart attack than people who have never smoked.

- **High cholesterol**

The risk of coronary heart disease increases as the higher the number for cholesterol. A person's cholesterol level is also affected by age, sex, heredity and diet. Check this list to see if your numbers are where they should be:

- Total cholesterol: Less than 200 mg/dL
- LDL (bad) cholesterol:
  - If you're at low risk for heart disease: Less than 160 mg/dL
  - If you're at intermediate risk for heart disease: Less than 130 mg/dL
  - If you're at high risk for heart disease (including those with existing heart disease or diabetes): Less than 100mg/dL
- HDL (good) cholesterol: 40 mg/dL or higher for men and 50 mg/dL or higher for women
- Triglycerides: Less than 150 mg/dL

- **High blood pressure**

High blood pressure increases the heart's workload and increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney failure and congestive heart failure. When high blood pressure exists with obesity, smoking, high cholesterol levels or diabetes, the risk of heart attack or stroke increases by several times.

- **Physical inactivity**

Regular moderate-to-vigorous physical activity helps prevent heart and blood vessel disease. The more vigorous the activity, the greater your benefits are. Physical activity can help control cholesterol, diabetes and obesity, as well as help lower blood pressure in some people.



Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota is an  
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Noridian Mutual Insurance Company

- **Obesity and overweight**

People who have excess body fat are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke even if they have no other risk factors. Excess weight increases the heart's work and can make diabetes more likely to develop. Losing even as few as 10 pounds can help you lower your heart disease risk.

- **Diabetes mellitus**

Diabetes increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. At least 65 percent of people with diabetes die of some form of heart or blood vessel disease.

The most common heart attack symptom is *chest pain* or *discomfort*. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, such as *shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain*. If you have a history of heart disease or have one or more risk factor mentioned above, be sure to consult your physician for more information. If you are feeling symptoms or chest pain, call 911 for immediate attention.

### **My Life Check can improve your heart health**

Need some help with making changes to improve your health? You are not alone. That's why the American Heart Association created My Life Check and the Simple Seven. When you take the online My Life Check assessment, you can find out where you stand in seven important areas and learn how to:

1. Get active
2. Control cholesterol
3. Eat better
4. Manage blood pressure
5. Eat better
6. Reduce blood sugar
7. Stop smoking

When you complete the assessment, you will receive results that will help you to take action and develop a personalized plan to help you make changes for a long, healthy future.

Visit [www.mylifecheck.heart.org](http://www.mylifecheck.heart.org) to find out your heart health score.

### **American Heart Association encourages worksites to get healthy**

Alarming, one in two men and one in three women are at risk for heart disease. Your lifestyle plays a major role in whether you are at risk. The American Heart Association's "My Heart. My Life." healthy living initiative can help people, families and worksites understand how to get active and eat healthy.

You can find worksite specific programs at [http://www.startwalkingnow.org/start\\_workplace.jsp](http://www.startwalkingnow.org/start_workplace.jsp).

Need more healthy messages for your employee newsletter? Sign up for the free quarterly Heart at Work e-newsletter at <http://pages.heartemail.org/HeartAtWorkEnewsRegistration/>.

### **Applications due February 28**

Feb. 28 is the deadline to submit your Wellness Program Discount Application (SFN 58436) and Wellness Benefit Funding Program Application (SFN 58361) for the upcoming plan year. Don't delay and submit your application today!



Keep your heart healthy.

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Have you been vaccinated for chickenpox?

## Chickenpox vaccine is for young and old

Last year, Barbara Walters made headlines when she was hospitalized after developing chickenpox. If you did not contract chickenpox as a child, you are at risk for developing severe symptoms and complications, including pneumonia.

Whatever age you experience chickenpox, it isn't pleasant. Caused by the varicella-zoster virus, the classic symptoms of chickenpox are tiredness, fever and a blistering, itchy rash. Extremely contagious, the virus can be spread through contact with open sores and by coughing and sneezing.

If you haven't had chickenpox or haven't been vaccinated for it, you are at risk for developing it. You may be at increased risk for severe symptoms or complications, if you have HIV/AIDS or cancer, or have undergone a transplant or chemotherapy, or take immunosuppressive medications or long-term steroids.

Complications can include dehydration, pneumonia, bacterial infections of the skin, bone infections, joint infections, blood stream infections and toxic shock syndrome. Some of these complications can lead to hospitalization and even death.

Fortunately, a vaccine that protects against chickenpox is available. The varicella (chickenpox) vaccine is routinely recommended for children between ages 12 months to 15 months with a second dose recommended at ages 4 to 6 years. The vaccine is also recommended for everyone who has never had chickenpox or been vaccinated.

Before the varicella vaccine was introduced in the U.S. in 1995, there were about 4 million cases of chickenpox each year. Of those cases, about 100 people (mostly adults) died and more than 11,000 people need to be hospitalized each year.

NDPERS Group Health Insurance Plan covers the cost of the varicella vaccine and the administration fee — just bring your insurance card with you to your doctor's office, pharmacy or local public health unit. When visiting your health care provider for varicella vaccine, be sure to ask about other vaccines.

## Don't forget to complete your Health Assessment in HealthyBlue

Employees and spouses 18 or older on the BCBSND health plan are eligible for a reimbursement of up to \$250 each. Our wellness benefit calendar has reset as a result of the new year, so each individual will need to log into HealthyBlue and complete the health assessment. This annual assessment should take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Not completing the assessment can cause a lapse in payout of the Health Club Credit. Be sure to log in today at [www.ndpershealthyblue.com](http://www.ndpershealthyblue.com).

## Send us your Wellness Stars

Do you know of an employee who is living a healthy lifestyle? We are looking for success stories and would like to start regularly recognizing these efforts. If you know an employee who is demonstrating a healthy lifestyle through exercise, healthy eating or smoking cessation, we encourage you to nominate him or her as a "Wellness Star of the Month" by the 15th of each month.

Please contact Stacy Duncan at [stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com](mailto:stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com) or (701) 277-2884 to complete the nomination form.



Don't forget to complete your Health Assessment in HealthyBlue.

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## Gearing Up for Worksite Wellness Training

### Location

Bismarck, Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce  
Fargo, Dakota Medical Foundation

### Date of Training

March 4-5, 2014  
April 7-8, 2014

NDPERS Wellness Coordinators qualify for the discounted rate of \$99. If you are interested, email [stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com](mailto:stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com) for an NDPERS-specific registration form if you do not have one already.

## Healthy Activities Spotlight

Last month, we mentioned National Wear Red Day, which is set for February 7. This month, we have even more free resources from the American Heart Association. Join the fight against women's heart health and "paint" your workplace red. Free Wear Red Day Tools and Resources are available at: <https://www.goredforwomen.org/wearredday/resources/>.

## Healthy Recipes

This recipe from American Heart Association will be a big hit in February or any time of the year.

### Berry-Topped Pudding Pie

Baking time: 50 minutes

Cooling time: 2 hours

Serves 8; 1 slice per serving

### Ingredients

Canola or corn oil for pie pan

2 large egg whites

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup sugar

3/4 cup walnuts or pecans, finely chopped

1 small package fat-free, sugar-free instant lemon or vanilla pudding mix, prepared with 2 cups cold fat-free milk

12 ounces fresh berries or other fruit, sliced if needed

1/2 cup fat-free frozen whipped topping, thawed (optional)

### Cooking Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 300°F. Pour a small amount of oil onto a paper towel and lightly wipe the bottom and side of an 8- or 9-inch pie pan.
2. In a large mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the egg whites, vanilla, cream of tartar, and salt on medium speed until foamy. With the mixer still running, gradually add the sugar in a slow, steady stream, until stiff peaks form. (The peaks shouldn't fold over when the beater is lifted.) Very gently fold in 1/2 cup of the nuts.
3. Using a flexible spatula or rubber scraper, spread the meringue over the bottom and up the side of the pie pan and onto the lip of the pan, but not over the edge of the pan. Sprinkle the bottom of the pan with the remaining nuts.
4. Bake for 50 minutes, or until the meringue is firm and lightly browned. Transfer to a cooling rack and let cool completely, at least 2 hours.
5. Using the package directions, prepare the pudding. Spread over the cooled crust. Arrange the fruit decoratively over the pudding. Top with the whipped topping.

**Note:** In warm weather, meringues will get gummy after a few days, so it's best to serve this dessert within 24 hours.



The Berry-Topped Pudding Pie is a perfect dessert for Valentine's Day.

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## Promote heart health this month

You can find lots of great information at the sites listed below to promote healthy hearts at your worksite:

- [Heart.org](http://Heart.org), [Heart.org/NorthDakota](http://Heart.org/NorthDakota) and [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org)  
Official websites for heart and stroke information
- [StartWalkingNow.org](http://StartWalkingNow.org)  
Get walking with our online tools and resources for companies and individuals such as walking paths, trackers and walking plans.
- [Heart.org/NutritionCenter](http://Heart.org/NutritionCenter)  
Information on healthy diet goals, cooking, shopping, eating out and recipes.
- [Hearthub.org](http://Hearthub.org)  
Information, tools and resources about heart disease and stroke.
- [Heart.org/CPR](http://Heart.org/CPR)  
Find a CPR class.
- [BeTheBeat.Heart.org](http://BeTheBeat.Heart.org)  
Youth training.
- [YoureTheCure.org](http://YoureTheCure.org)  
You're the Cure is a nationwide network of people dedicated to finding a cure for heart disease and stroke through advocacy.

## Monthly Wellness Consultant call/webinar schedule

Mark your calendar for these WC calls and webinars:

- Wednesday, February 5 at 1 p.m. CST  
To join the February call/webinar: Go to (#797 607 543)  
<https://meetingcenter33.webex.com/meetingcenter33/j.php?ED=192339162&UID=494098687&RT=MiM3>
- Wednesday, March 5 at noon CST  
To join the March call/webinar: Go to (#794 012 330)  
<https://meetingcenter33.webex.com/meetingcenter33/j.php?ED=192340372&UID=494098687&RT=MiM3>
- Wednesday, April 2 at 1 p.m. CST  
To join the April call/webinar: Go to (#793 726 678)  
<https://meetingcenter33.webex.com/meetingcenter33/j.php?ED=192566457&UID=494098687&RT=MiM3>

For audio: Dial 1-888-330-1716 Code: 704446

Friendly reminder: Please mute your phones during the calls as a courtesy to other listeners. If your phone does not have a mute button, dial #0 and then select option 1. To comment or ask a question, you can un-mute by again dialing #0-1. We would also like to ask that you avoid putting your line on hold, as the background music can be heard by all other participants. Thank you.



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WC calls and webinars.

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## Coming up in March

Consider promoting these events next month!

- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- National Nutrition Month
- International Woman's Day: March 8
- Kick Butts (Tobacco) Day: March 19
- American Diabetes Alert Day: March 25

## A Partnership for Worksite Wellness

NDPERS and BCBSND are working together to support and provide you and your fellow employees the opportunity to have a healthier and more engaged worksite through Worksite Wellness tools. We appreciate feedback on all our wellness tools to serve your worksite better and welcome your suggestions.

Please take time to fill out surveys we may submit to you from time to time to evaluate these programs.

Here is a list of contacts that will be useful to you as a Wellness Coordinator:

### Stacy Duncan

NDPERS Wellness Consultant  
701-277-2884

[stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com](mailto:stacy.duncan@bcbsnd.com)

Stacy is your main resource contact. She can help you with general wellness program questions and assist you with enhancing your worksite wellness programs.

### Rebecca Fricke

NDPERS  
[rfricke@nd.gov](mailto:rfricke@nd.gov)

Rebecca can help you with 1% premium questions, points on programs, updating coordinator information and the status or questions about the application process or forms.

### Kathy Allen

NDPERS  
[kallen@nd.gov](mailto:kallen@nd.gov)

Direct funding program questions to Kathy.

### Onalee Sellheim

BCBSND  
[onalee.sellheim@bcbsnd.com](mailto:onalee.sellheim@bcbsnd.com)

Direct questions about benefit plans or schedule Member Education programs through Onalee.

### Jodi Crouse

BCBSND  
[jodi.crouse@bcbsnd.com](mailto:jodi.crouse@bcbsnd.com)

To collect aggregate data on your employer from the Health Reimbursement Arrangements, HealthyBlue and Health Club Credit, contact Jodi.

### Milissa Van Eps

BCBSND  
[milissa.van.eps@bcbsnd.com](mailto:milissa.van.eps@bcbsnd.com)  
701-795-5360

Contact Milissa to set up a Member Education program if you are located in eastern North Dakota.

### Heather Horner

BCBSND  
[heather.horner@bcbsnd.com](mailto:heather.horner@bcbsnd.com)  
701-200-3905 (cell)

Contact Heather to set up a Member Education program if you are located in western North Dakota.

NDPERS and BCBSND are working together to support and provide you and your fellow employees the opportunity to have a healthier and more engaged worksite through Worksite Wellness tools.

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