



## NDPERS WELLNESS BENEFIT PROGRAM

### Program Overview

The Wellness Benefit Program is available to employer groups that participate in the NDPERS group health plan and participate in the Employer Based Wellness Program. The Wellness Benefit Program, in conjunction with the premium discount program, encourages employers to commit to promoting wellness planning and programming at their work sites. The Wellness Benefit Program provides funding assistance to employers that develop and sponsor on-site wellness programs for their employees. Benefits are available to eligible employers once each fiscal year of the biennium. To apply for funding assistance, you must complete a Wellness Benefit Program Application form. All applications must be authorized by the agency designated wellness coordinator. The application must show a direct correlation between the request for funding and the programs approved on the Employer Based Wellness Program Discount application. The application is evaluated by a committee comprised of a NDPERS staff member, a representative from the Health Department, and a representative from BCBS.

Some areas of evaluation include:

- How the need or interest for the proposed program was assessed.
- How well the program will impact health care cost savings.
- Whether the budget is reasonable and adequately justified.
- Financial contribution by the employer and/or the participants.
- Expected level of participation.
- Employer's plan to promote participation and encourage ongoing employee involvement in wellness activities.

The Committee has 60 days in which to evaluate and respond to your request. You will be notified whether or not your application has been approved.

### Covered Services

Funds are available for agency group programs and program related activities only. The following activities/services are not eligible for reimbursement:

- Food items or services, bottled water or water dispensers
- Incentives, prizes or gift certificates
- Services for massages
- Individual memberships in diet programs, health, athletic or fitness clubs
- Exercise equipment or health monitoring equipment
- Printing expenses

Employer's should fund these items through other means available based on their budget authority or you may consider an employee contribution to help offset these costs. In addition, funds cannot be used for the benefit of dependents, the general public, or in the case of a campus or school, for students.

Programs or program related activities will be reimbursed based on the following schedule:

Calculation 1: 100% of the first \$500 or actual program expense, whichever is less, plus 75% of actual expenses in excess of \$500 to a maximum benefit of \$1,000,

**OR**

Calculation 2: \$2.00 times the number of health contracts.

The Committee will use the calculation that provides the best benefit to the employer based on actual program expenses.

As the calculations above indicate, you will be responsible for expenses that exceed the maximum benefit allowed under either method. You may want to consider a registration fee for participants or an employer contribution in order to fund any additional expenses.

### **Reimbursement**

There are two options available to receive reimbursement for your program services, materials, supplies, etc:

- We can reimburse the vendor direct, or
- The department can pay the cost.

To reimburse the vendor, you must provide an itemized invoice with date of services. If the department pays the expense, you must include a copy of your cancelled check with an itemized invoice and we will reimburse the department. We cannot reimburse individual employees for expenses.

**Note:** Any entity or individual that will be reimbursed is considered a vendor. This includes retail stores, hospitals, clinics, nutritionists, fitness experts, etc. that provide supplies, materials or personal services or are conducting any part of the program.

### **Programs Available**

You may develop your own program or apply for a program sponsored and promoted by NDPERS. Currently PERS sponsors the *5 A Day Challenge*, and in conjunction with BCBS and the American Heart Association, the *Walking Works* and *Go Red North Dakota* programs, respectively. To view information about these programs, please refer to our web site at [www.gov.nd/ndpers](http://www.gov.nd/ndpers) and click on *Program Administration* on the menu and then select the *NDPERS Employer Based Wellness Program* icon. By selecting the designated logo at the bottom of the page, you may view additional information about these three programs. You will also find references or links to other wellness sites that can be used as additional resources in developing your work site program.

### **How to Apply for Funding Assistance**

If you are considering conducting an on-site wellness program for your employees, application forms are available on our web site referenced in the "Programs Available" section above. Two applications are available; one for the *5 A Day Challenge* and one for all other programs. The forms can be filled out on-line, but must be printed. Submit your completed application to NDPERS. Be sure to include any documentation that supports or describes your proposed wellness activity or identifies how you assessed your employees' interest in the program.