

Perspectives

FOR ACTIVE
MEMBERS
OF THE
NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT
SYSTEM

WINTER 2006 SPECIAL EDITION VOLUME 29, NUMBER 1

Keep Healthy with MyHealth Connection

Submitted by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota

The following program is available to active employees and their dependents, employees and dependents on COBRA continuation, and pre-Medicare employees and their dependents.

It's 2 a.m. and your child has a fever. Should you go to the emergency room? You are considering back surgery. What questions should you ask your doctor? You have diabetes. How can you prevent long-term complications like heart and kidney disease? All are certainly important questions; now you have a resource to get some answers.

You can call **1-800-658-2750** anytime for answers to your health questions. The North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System group health plan, underwritten by BCBS of North Dakota, has been enhanced to include 24-hour access to personal Health Coaches through MyHealth Connection.

MyHealth Connection is a team of specially trained nurses, respiratory therapists, dietitians and other professionals who can answer your health questions about prevention and treatment options. This program is provided – at no cost to you – by NDPERS.

What can MyHealth Connection's Health Coaches do for you and your family?

- Offer education and support on heart disease, breast cancer, diabetes and more.
- Provide information about the risks and benefits of available treatment options when you are facing a back, joint, revascularization, cancer or other surgical decisions.

Continued



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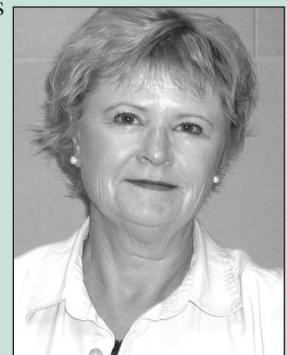
Rosey Sand, Howard G. Sage,
Joan Erhardt, Ron Leingang
Sparb Collins

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NDPERS Board Election

Joan Ehrhardt was elected as the active member representative to the NDPERS Board. She will be completing the term vacated by David Gunkel. The term began January 19, 2006 and ends June 30, 2009. Joan is employed by the Department of Human Services as a registered nurse with the ND Medicaid program. The following is a recap of the election results:

	Number of of Votes
Joan Ehrhardt	608
Mike Sandal	485
Ardy Pfaff	454
Rick Larson	149
Invalid Ballots	89
Write-In Ballots	5
Received after Deadline	16
Total	1,806



Joan Ehrhardt

Want To Quit Smoking?

Consider the NDPERS Smoking Cessation Program



If you are a smoker or tobacco user and want to quit, this program is for you.

The North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System recently received a grant to help state employees and their dependents age 18 and older quit smoking or chewing tobacco. The grant will help pay for participating in one of more than 20 approved smoking cessation programs. Most of these programs are available through public health departments across the state of North Dakota. This project is administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota.

Who is eligible?

All current state employees and their dependents age 18 and older, have NDPERS health coverage, who smoke or chew tobacco and want to quit are eligible to participate. County, city and other members of the NDPERS group are not eligible through this project; however, smoking cessation funds may be available at the local level.

What will be provided?

An initial assessment will determine how ready you are to quit, your smoking or chewing triggers 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 need to visit your doctor.

In addition, individual, group or telephone counseling will be provided. Your program provider will call you on a quarterly basis to monitor your progress the first year after you quit.

How long do the programs take?

Most of the approved programs are eight weeks.

How do I get started?

You may start anytime during the enrollment period: September 1, 2005 to April 30, 2007.

Grant money will reimburse the smoking cessation provider \$200 after you complete the eight-week program. This

covers the initial assessment, counseling and follow-up. If you decide to try the North Dakota Quitline, the program will reimburse you for the office visit, if you need to make one, and your prescription and over-the-counter medications.

The program will pay 100 percent of your out-of-pocket expenses for your office visit and prescription and over-the-counter medication up to \$500, for a total benefit of \$700 (see chart below). The program will end April 30, 2007.

Smoking cessation Counseling:	\$200
Office Visit, RX and over-the-counter medications:	100% up to \$500
Total	\$700

The program provider may charge additional fees for counseling services. Ask your program provider for details prior to enrolling.

Who do I contact to enroll or if I have questions?

Contact BCBSND at 1-800-223-1704 or (701) 282-1400 if calling from the Fargo area.

How do I enroll?

[Find a provider in your area.](#) This information is also available on the NDPERS web site home page at www.nd.gov/ndpers and click on the NDPERS Wellness Programs

Information. When you make your initial visit to the cessation program in your area, please contact BCBSND with your enrollment information at the phone number listed above. Once eligibility is verified, you will then receive a smoking cessation program identification card to use when you visit your doctor and when you buy medications. *Be sure to show this identification card to your health care professional.*

- Your doctor should submit the office visit claim to the address shown on the back of the identification card.
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications will require payment at the pharmacy. Keep your receipts and send them to BCBSND for reimbursement of your claims.

If you choose to enroll in the Quitline cessation program, please call BCBSND at the phone number listed above. Eligibility for the program will be verified and a smoking cessation identification card will be sent to you. *Use the identification card when you purchase medications.*

- Prescription and over-the-counter medications will require payment at the pharmacy. Keep your receipts and send them to BCBSND at the address shown on the back of the identification card for reimbursement of your claims.

MyHealth Connection... *Continued from front page*

- Work with you to identify key questions to ask your doctor.
- Allow time to discuss your health concerns with a health professional that is willing to listen.

In addition, you will be able to access a valuable online health "encyclopedia" by logging onto www.thedialogcenter.com/bcbsnd and using MyHealth Connection's Healthwise, Knowledgebase to quickly

find easy-to-understand articles on thousands of health topics at your fingertips. To log on to this site, you will need your BCBS benefit plan number found on your insurance identification card, and you will be required to establish a password.

Plan to take advantage of this complimentary, valuable new service – it can help you make better health care decisions.

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