

your

BENEFIT MESSENGER

THE NMRHCA'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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Quarterly News Letter - Spring Edition

NMRHCA LEGISLATION MAKES PROGRESS - PASSES THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BUT STALLS IN THE SENATE

The New Mexico Health Care Authority (NMRHCA) had two pieces of legislation introduced into the 2015 legislative session - Senate Bill 169 was introduced by Sen. Gay Kernan of Hobbs and House Bill 436 was introduced by Rep. Tom Salazar of Las Vegas and co-sponsored by Rep. Dennis Roch of Logan. We are extremely grateful to each of these legislators as each of them actively advocated for these pieces of legislation throughout the 60-day session.

SB169 and HB436 requested an increase in the contribution levels of active employees and their employers. The bills were scaled-back versions (only half of previous requests) of the legislation NMRHCA has had introduced for the past three years now and is necessary to account for health care costs that continue to increase at a rate higher than public payroll.

HB436 was passed through the House Health and Ways and Means committees as well as the full House. While there was a good, spirited debate, the committee and floor votes were all unanimous in support of NMRHCA's request. SB169 similarly passed through the Public Affairs committee with bipartisan support but waited over a month for a hearing in Senate Finance. SB169 was heard three days before the end

of the session and was tabled after budgetary concerns were discussed.

NMRHCA will continue to work with the legislature and the executive branch to try and make sure that contribution levels are adjusted such that NMRHCA's programs can continue to provide a high level of value for both current and future retirees.

LETS QUIT TOGETHER IN 2015

We all have our reasons (well, about 20% of us do). I started smoking in boot camp back in 1984 and have smoked pretty much a pack-a-day for 30 years. I have always known it was a deadly habit. All the facts from the Center for Disease Control and the American Lung Association didn't matter. Cigarettes have become extremely expensive (over \$2,500 annually) and have made social pariahs out of many of us. It still didn't matter. I have smoked for decades knowing all of this, but it's time for a change.

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My wife and I are going to try and quit in 2015. After 30 years, it's difficult to say why I smoke anymore; beyond that mental and physical addiction to the nicotine and the process itself, of course. Surprisingly, it's also hard to precisely pinpoint why I want to quit. Maybe it's the health benefits; maybe it's the money to be saved; maybe it's the extra time I will get to spend with friends and family rather than skulking around outside getting in a few drags. Like I said, we all have our reasons.

Regardless of why you want to quit, there is help out there for you. Both my wife and I are trying some form of nicotine replacement which studies show may help chances at being successful. You can always find help through our health plan partners at Blue Cross/Blue Shield or Presbyterian or you can look at what is being done at Smoke Free New Mexico (<http://www.smokefreenm.com/>).

Quit with us! I'll give an update on how it's going in the next newsletter and if you are trying to quit too, feel free to let me know how it's going for you at mark.tyndall@state.nm.us

Good Luck!

Mark Tyndall, Executive Director, NMRHCA

FRUITS & VEGETABLES - GETTING YOUR FIVE A DAY VIEW

Whats the formula for good health? The right answer is five fruits and vegetables each day*. That's because fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins and minerals, so they can improve our health and may reduce the risk of cancer. Try these easy ideas to give your health a high-five:

- Start the day with 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.
- Add sliced bananas or strawberries to your cereal
- Have a salad with lunch
- Eat an apple for an afternoon snack
- Include a vegetable with dinner



When you eat five fruits and vegetables every day, it just adds up to better health.

Want to get more nutrition tips and healthy recipes? Visit the Mayo Clinic** Nutrition Center by logging on to Blue Access for Members at www.bcbs.com.

*National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotions

**The relationship between Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico and Mayo Clinic solely that of independent contractors.

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EAT RIGHT TIP: FILL HALF YOUR PLATE WITH A RAINBOW OF COLORFUL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT MEALS.

A plant-based diet emphasizes vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. The new USDA MyPlate encourages people to fill $\frac{3}{4}$ of their plate with plant food sources. That is $\frac{1}{2}$ fruits and vegetables and $\frac{1}{4}$ whole grains. The other $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate should include a lean protein source from an animal or plant.

The health advantages of a plant-based diet are plentiful. It is typically higher in fiber and healthy mono and polyunsaturated fats, and lower in calories and unhealthy saturated and trans fats. This shift in eating can help reduce risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer, as well as lower blood pressure and manage diabetes.

A plant-based diet also has a lower impact on the environment to a typical American diet. Try these practical tips to ease into eating a more plant-based diet:

- Go meatless on Mondays - for dinner or all day. Get inspired by checking out a vegetarian cook book from the library. Try lentil soup or meatless chili beans.
- Plan your meals around fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Find ways to convert your favorite dishes by cutting down on the amount of meat used in a casserole, stir-fry or stew and add more veggies.
- Snack on red, green, yellow, and orange peppers, carrots, sugar snap peas, broccoli, and cauli-flower.
- Enjoy a breakfast smoothie with vegetables. Check out <http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/green-smoothie> to make a delicious green smoothie.
- For a quick lunch, wrap leftover roasted vegetables and reduced-fat cheese or hummus in a whole grain tortilla.
- Make fruit your dessert. Try a baked apple or slice of banana and top with low fat yogurt and chopped nuts. For a frozen treat, try grapes, or mango or melon chunks.

 **PRESBYTERIAN**
Healthy Advantage



MEMBER RESEARCH SURVEY

The New Mexico Health Care Authority (NMRHCA) plans to conduct a member research survey in the next few weeks. Research & Polling Inc., will be contacting randomly selected participants by telephone to take a brief 10-minute survey in order help NMRHCA better understand the needs of our participants, as well as determine how Wellness and Disease Management Programs might help you receive more effective care. The Board of Directors may use the results of this survey to identify specific needs and shape future policies and plan designs so your thoughtful consideration is important. If you are one of the randomly selected participants, your participation is not mandatory, but would be greatly appreciated.



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8:00AM TO 5:00PM
MONDAY-FRIDAY

PLEASE VISIT US ONLINE
AT WWW.NMRHCA.ORG

CONTACT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS DIRECTLY

BCBSNM	800.788.1792	www.bcbsnm.com
BCBSNM Medicare Advantage	877.299.1008	www.bcbsnm.com
Express Scripts Medicare	800.551.1866	www.express-scripts.com
Express Scripts Non-Medicare	800.501.0987	www.express-scripts.com
Presbyterian Health Plan	888.275.7737	www.phs.org
Presbyterian Medicare Advantage	800.797.5343	www.phs.org
United Healthcare	866.622.8014	www.uhcretiree.com
United Concordia Companies	888.898.0370	www.ucci.com
Delta Dental	877.998.7555	www.deltadentalnm.com
Davis Vision	800.999.5431	www.davisvision.com
Standard Insurance	888.609.9763	www.standard.com/mybenefits/newmexico_rhca