Happy Thanksgiving From EBD

The Employee Benefits Division (EBD) office will be closed:

Thursday, November 28, 2019
&
Friday, November 29, 2019

EBD will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, December 2, 2019.

CATAPULT HEALTH OFFERING WORKSITE CLINICS IN 2020

Catapult Health will once again offer worksite wellness checkups to state and public school employees during the 2020 plan year.

State agencies and public school districts are currently scheduling clinics.

A 30-40 minute worksite checkup through Catapult Health not only provides the participant valuable preventive care; the checkup also completes both the wellness screening and health assessment requirements for the ARBenefits Wellness Program. All at no cost to the participant!

Completing a checkup with Catapult can help identify and understand risk factors. Every patient receives a lab-accurate Personal Health Report, and a customized action plan created with a board-certified Nurse Practitioner.

Those who participate in a checkup through Catapult can also have an annual wellness visit with their own physician fully covered by the Plan. If you have a Primary Care Physician (PCP), Catapult can securely send your results to your doctor.

A schedule of Catapult clinics can be found in the Health Enhancements section at www.ARBenefits.org. The schedule is updated weekly.

Don’t see your agency or school district on the schedule? Your agency/school district HR Department may be in the process of scheduling clinics for 2020.

Schedule your Catapult Health appointment at timeconfirm.com/arbenefits today!

Catapult Health will not complete screenings for members who are pregnant, or who have had a double mastectomy with bilateral lymph node removal. Affected members are encouraged to complete their screening through their own physician.

Don’t let the holidays trigger or stress your chronic conditions

The hustle and bustle of the wintertime holidays are here. The festivities often increase time spent with family and friends and include plenty of parties, shopping and travel. The temptation to reach for quick meals with questionable nutritional value as we rev up our activities is high. Your ARBenefits health plan covers chronic condition management. With support, you can resist food triggers that spike glucose levels and stressors that can cause COPD to flare up. Don’t let a chronic condition sideline you this season.

To learn more, visit New Directions Behavioral Health at NDBH.com or call 1-877-300-9103.
(ASE) 2019 FSA Deadline Approaching

The December 31, 2019 deadline to spend 2019 Flexible Spending Account (FSA) funds is fast approaching.

State employees (ASE), remember that you can roll over up to $500 from your 2019 FSA if you elected a Health Care or Limited Purpose FSA for 2020.

Any amount over $500 left in an FSA account after all 2019 claims have been submitted and substantiated will be forfeited back to the Plan.

Need to spend down your account balance? To avoid losing out on any money that you contributed towards your 2019 FSA, there are ways to spend down your balance.

While you can certainly use your FSA funds for any planned medical, dental or vision service you may have between now and the end of the year, you can also use your FSA to purchase products you may need throughout the year.

FSA eligible products include:
- Contact lens solution,
- Blood pressure monitors,
- Diabetic testing supplies,
- Pregnancy tests,
- Thermometers, and
- Much more!

You can go to www.connectyourcare.com/ARBenefits and click the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) link to access a list of eligible expenses. Keep in mind that some over-the-counter medications and products may require the submission of a prescription from your doctor, a receipt, or both.

You can also shop online at www.FSASTore.com. Every product on the site is an FSA eligible expense.

The website includes information on how employees can purchase over-the-counter products that require a prescription in order to be an FSA eligible expense. Products on the site that require a prescription will have an RX notation.

2019 Great American Smokeout

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. Quitting tobacco isn’t easy, but it can be done!

The American Cancer Society is hosting the Great American Smokeout® Thursday, November 21, 2019.

Research shows that if you pick a quit date in the next 30 days and stick to it, you’ll be more likely to quit for good. So pick your quit date, and as you mark it on your calendar, think about these benefits of quitting:
- 20 minutes after quitting: Your heart rate and blood pressure begin to drop.
- 12 hours after quitting: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting: Your circulation improves, and your lung function increases.
- 1 to 9 months after quitting: Your coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny, hair-like structures in the lungs) regain normal function, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.
- 1 year after quitting: Your excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker’s.
- 5 years after quitting: Your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Your stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2 to 5 years.
- 10 years after quitting: Your lung cancer death rate is about half that of a smoker. The risks of cancer of the larynx and pancreas decrease.
- 15 years after quitting: Your risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker’s.

Visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/smokeout to learn more.
Taking Diabetes to Heart: National Diabetes Month

The month of November is recognized as National Diabetes Month.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is focusing this year on the link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the United States. It can cause blindness, nerve damage, kidney disease, and other health problems if it’s not controlled.

One in 10 Americans have diabetes — that’s more than 30 million people. And another 84 million adults in the United States are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Having diabetes means that you are more likely to develop heart disease, and to have a greater chance of a heart attack or a stroke. This is because over time, high blood glucose from diabetes can damage your blood vessels and the nerves that control your heart. The good news is that the steps you take to manage your diabetes can also help lower your chances of having heart disease or a stroke:

▪ Stop smoking or using other tobacco products.

▪ Manage your A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Ask your health care team what your goals should be.

▪ Develop or maintain healthy lifestyle habits - be more physically active and learn ways to manage stress.

▪ Take medicines as prescribed by your doctor.

All ARBenefits members with type 1 or type 2 diabetes have access to Kannact, the Plan’s Diabetes Management Program. Kannact provides a dedicated coach and easy to use tools to manage your diabetes. The coach is available on your schedule, to help you achieve goals that align with your doctor prescribed plan.

Members can participate in the Kannact program at no extra cost, and those that do, receive testing supplies paid for by the ARBenefits plan. To learn more or to enroll, visit www.kannact.com/arbenefits or call 1-844-279-4153.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

Depending on your age, weight, and other factors, you may be at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Lose weight and keep it off. You may be able to prevent or delay diabetes by losing 5 to 7 percent of your starting weight. For instance, if you weigh 200 pounds, your goal would be to lose about 10 to 14 pounds.

Move more. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days a week. If you have not been active, talk with your health care professional about which activities are best. Start slowly to build up to your goal.

Eat healthy foods most of the time. Eat smaller portions to reduce the number of calories you eat each day and help you lose weight. Choosing foods with less fat is another way to reduce calories. Drink water instead of sweetened beverages.

Ask your health care professional about what other changes you can make to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Most often, your best chance for preventing type 2 diabetes is to make lifestyle changes that work for you long term.
You’re familiar with the symptoms of stress -- a pounding heart, increased perspiration, tight neck and shoulder muscles, anxiety and fear. But you may not know how to prevent or relieve these symptoms. Stress can be triggered by events, ideas, memories, emotions or failed expectations. The following actions can help you counteract the negative effects of stress, according to wellness experts:

**Exercise:** A regular workout can release pent-up frustrations. Experts recommend getting 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. Choose any aerobic activity: walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, stair climbing or step aerobics.

**Keep communicating:** One of the best ways to fight stress is to discuss your problems with a friend or relative, or write in a journal. Our immune systems get a boost when our feelings are released. It may even lead to a solution to your problem.

**Pay attention to your diet and habits:** A diet of wholesome, healthful foods can help stabilize your moods. Consuming caffeine, sugar, alcohol, nicotine and prescription or illegal drugs can increase your stress, making coping more difficult.

**Make time for laughter and fun:** Surround yourself with happy people who like to laugh. Let the child in you come out, and you’ll find laughter is one of the best stress remedies.

**Immerse yourself in a favorite activity or hobby:** Give yourself a block of time to focus on a task or activity instead of on the problems in your life. Gardening, carpentry, sewing, working with clay, painting and drawing are good choices.

**Use a variety of relaxation techniques:** Deep-breathing exercises, progressive relaxation, visualization, creative imagery, yoga, meditation or listening to relaxation tapes can help.

**Live in the present:** Many causes of your stress probably come from thinking about the past or worrying about the future. If you can plant yourself firmly in the present, you can leave worries behind and focus on enjoying the moment.

Whatever your source (or sources) of stress are, your free EAP can help you overcome them. Visit ndbh.com with your company passcode (ARBenefits) to take a stress assessment to identify what’s keeping you up at night and give you tips to tackling your worries and woes.

Whether it’s financial struggles, legal issues, relationship challenges or any number of other stressors, the EAP can help you with counseling, consultations, referrals and behavioral health resources. Call or visit our website to learn more.

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**NEW DIRECTIONS**

Call the Helpline
1-877-300-9103
Available 24x7

Online
www.NDBH.com

▶ Select the Log In icon;
▶ In the Individuals and Families tab select Employee Assistance Program;
▶ Enter company code ARBenefits.

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ARBenefits complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-877-815-1017x1.

Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-877-815-1017x1.