

STATEHOUSE OBSERVER



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Nebraska WeSave Program Scheduled to Launch on March 8, 2010

A Letter from the Director:

March 8, 2010 is the scheduled launch date of the Nebraska WeSave Program. The Nebraska WeSave program is a free employee discount program for State of Nebraska Employees. Along with many national and online vendors, WeSave also collaborates with local Nebraska vendors to provide discounts to a variety of services and products.

Employees can register to participate in the Nebraska WeSave program by visiting the following website at www.wesave.com and click on the "Welcome Nebraska Employee Discount Program" logo located on the right side of the screen.

After signing up for your WeSave membership, a verification email will be sent to the personal email address you have provided. In order to complete the activation process, please remember to open this email and follow the quick step to verify your registration and activate your account.

All employees who sign up by Friday, March 5, will be eligible to win a \$350 home improvement gift card.

After activating your Nebraska WeSave

membership, you are encouraged to recommend local vendors that you would like to see be part of the program. You may suggest a vendor by logging on to the Nebraska WeSave website at www.wesave.com and either selecting the "Help Us Help You" link and

completing the recommendation form, or by selecting the "Request a Merchant" link.

The "Request a Merchant" link will allow you to print a merchant request form that you may take to a local business. Provide the business the form and, if they elect to enroll in the program, a \$10 donation from WeSave will be made in your name to the Nebraska State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign.

In the next few weeks, you will be



Governor Heineman presents Beth Boal, Office of the Chief Information Officer, with a 37" LCD Panasonic Television on Monday, February 1. All employees who signed up for the Nebraska WeSave by January 22nd were eligible to win the TV.

receiving more information about the Nebraska WeSave program. If you have any questions concerning activating your Nebraska WeSave membership, please contact Stacey Dvorak at stacey.dvorak@nebraska.gov.

Sincerely,

Carlos Castillo Jr, Director
Administrative Services

***Please note: Participation in the Employee Discount Program should be done only on personal time.*



Timing was Everything: “A choice of personal wellness over costly medications”

Article provided by Administrative Services - Employee Benefits

Prior to enrolling in the Wellness PPO medical plan, Paul Norrid, Corrections, smoked over a pack of cigarettes a day and also ate whatever was easiest to fix, with no consideration for nutrition. Paul says, “I ate very little fruit and vegetables with the exception of maybe once per week. If it was easiest to drive through and grab a burger and fries, that’s what I did.”

Upon visiting Paul’s doctor for back pain, they ran some other tests while he was there and found that he had high blood pressure, high triglycerides, and also discovered that he was borderline diabetic. “When I found out I had these medical conditions, it wasn’t a shock to me. It was something that my doctor said could easily be fixed with diet and exercise.”

Luckily for Paul, the timing was perfect. “I had already told my doctor about the State of Nebraska employee wellness program, and she thought it was wonderful that I was planning to participate. If not for already planning to participate in the wellness program, I probably would have struggled mentally with that news and would

probably be taking several different medications each day.”

Upon participating in the wellnessoptions program, Paul changed his diet and began exercising. “I make it a point to eat more fruit, vegetables, and whole grains. I eat almost no processed foods, with very little fast food. My 6 year old daughter and I ride bikes together almost every day. Even on days when I don’t want to, it’s hard to tell your daughter that you don’t want to go with her when she looks forward to the time together.” Paul received support and assistance from Angela, his Health Coach (choosing smoking cessation, aerobic exercise, and stress

management focus areas), in addition to ‘actively’ participating in the Walk this Way program as he approaches 1 million total steps.

As far as how Paul’s lifestyle changes have impacted his quality of life, Paul says, “I feel at least 10 years younger. I feel like I can take on any challenge without worrying about whether I will be able to complete it or not. It’s also nice to be able to walk up a flight of stairs or walk across the parking lot without feeling winded. In addition, being in better shape has given me the ability to manage stress better. My relationship with my wife has improved greatly. She thinks I am a nicer person and that is probably the thing I am most proud of. I even see my children choosing the healthy fruits and snacks that I am now buying instead of the sugary snacks that used to be around the house.”



further information on the smoking cessation prescription benefit, view the wellness website (www.liveforlife.net/hfit/wellnessoptions) within the wellnessoptions section (left toolbar) under ‘Smoking Cessation Rx.’

Saving The Best for Last

By the way, with the combination of diet and exercise, Paul has been able to lose over 35 pounds in 3 months. Paul has also quit smoking with the assistance of the smoking cessation prescription benefit with the Wellness PPO plan. “I have not smoked for over 4 months and have no cravings what-

“... participating in the wellnessoptions program resulted in improving many other health issues which I didn’t even know was possible when I signed up for the program.”

The smoking cessation prescription benefit was the main reason Paul signed up for the Wellness PPO Medical plan. The Wellness PPO Medical plan covers a wide range of age and gender appropriate screenings at 100%, including generic diabetic prescriptions at a reduced co-pay. State of Nebraska employees and spouses covered in the Wellness PPO medical plan are also eligible to obtain the approved smoking cessation prescriptions at no cost. “I was planning to mainly use the smoking cessation benefit, but participating in the wellnessoptions program resulted in improving many other health issues that I didn’t even know was possible when I signed up for the program.” For

soever.” And for the back pain which started this whole experience – the pain went away after losing the first 10 pounds and he has not had any pain since!

Shared Responsibility for Personal Health

“My experience is a perfect example of how lifestyle changes through the help and support of the wellnessoptions program helped me save money on prescriptions that I was able to avoid. This also saves the State of Nebraska money with medical expenses, which will help us all as we try to control the rise of healthcare costs.”

Smoking Cessation Benefit “A Big Attraction To The Wellness PPO Medical Plan”

Article provided by Administrative Services - Employee Benefits

Many State of Nebraska employees have voiced that the main reason that they enrolled in the Wellness PPO is because of the smoking cessation benefit. State of Nebraska employees covered in the Wellness PPO medical plan are eligible for a combination of health coaching and prescription smoking cessation support. This benefit is available at no cost to the employee upon following the two steps described below.

Plan Offerings:

- Wellness PPO Plan participants are eligible to receive one (1) course of tobacco cessation prescription medications for up to 12 weeks, within a rolling 12 month period, at no cost. There is a lifetime limit of three (3) courses of treatment.
- Prescriptions are available through either retail pharmacy fill/pick-up OR home delivery via mail order
- Smoking cessation prescriptions

available include the following:

- Chantix
- Generic Zyban
- Nicotine Transdermal Patches

Note: this benefit only covers the cost of the listed prescription drugs and not any over the counter products.

Here's how it works:

Step 1: The employee interested in quitting smoking must enroll in the EMPOWERED Lifestyle Management Coaching program and select the 'smoking cessation' as a Focus Area. This can be accomplished by enrolling one of the following ways:

- Go to www.liveforlife.net/hfit/wellnessoptions and click on the “My Coach” link on the left toolbar and then click on “Sign Me Up” to begin the online Coaching Enrollment Wizard.
- Upon visiting with your EMPOWERED Coach by telephone, enroll and select ‘smoking cessation’ as your Focus Area.

If you haven't already received a call from a HealthFitness Coach, you can self-enroll into the EMPOWERED Lifestyle Management Coaching program by calling 1-866-956-4285 (select Option 2).

Step 2: The participant should discuss the best smoking cessation therapy option with their personal physician, and obtain a prescription (if applicable). Prescriptions are available to fill within 7-14 days after a participant has enrolled into the EMPOWERED program.

Approved Wellness PPO Program

EMPOWERED Lifestyle Management Coaching is an approved program towards qualifying for enrollment into the Wellness PPO Plan for the next plan year (2010/2011). Completion criteria: Enroll by calling 1-866-956-4285 option 2 and have at least three contacts with your health coach via phone and/or the wellnessoptions message board ('My Coach' toolbar selection) before March 31, 2010.

Therefore, in order to apply the smoking cessation prescription benefit towards achieving the Wellness PPO criteria, three contacts with an EMPOWERED Health Coach are required.

Attention Spouses!

Even though employees only are eligible to participate in the EMPOWERED Lifestyle Management Coaching program this year, spouses enrolled in the Wellness PPO are still eligible to receive the smoking cessation prescription support at no cost. Interested spouses should obtain a prescription from their physician and contact Mike Wanetka, Wellness Coordinator – State of Nebraska at 402-471-4703 for processing of the request. Prescriptions will be available to fill within 7-14 days.

For further information on the smoking cessation benefit, Wellness PPO program criteria, wellness program descriptions and several employee success stories, view www.liveforlife.net/hfit/wellnessoptions within the wellnessoptions section (left toolbar) or call Mike Wanetka, Wellness Coordinator – State of Nebraska at 402-471-4703.

NOTE: Participation is to be done on personal time, and is in no way to be considered part of or arising out of employment for the purposes of workers' compensation or for any other purpose. Approved activities during work hours are allowed only for completing Open Enrollment, the Health Assessment and on-site Biometric Screening.

WeSave Discount Savings Program
"Save Big. Save Often. Save Now!"
SAVE ON FOOD! SAVE ON LODGING! SAVE ON VACATIONS! SAVE ON CELLULAR SERVICE!
SAVE ON EVERYDAY PURCHASES!

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State of Nebraska Governor 'Walks the Talk' With Active Senior Leadership

Article provided by Administrative Services - Employee Benefits



Active, visible senior management support for the employee wellness program, wellnessoptions, is serving to be a critical lever to affect employee behavior. Governor Dave Heineman is leading by example and effectively

driving the initiative through a variety of ways:

- He actively participates in Walk this Way®, a walking program, challenges direct reports to keep up with his step totals, leads group walks, and had challenged state employees to achieve 360,000 steps through the program before March 31, 2010. To date, approximately 40 percent of enrolled employees have met or exceeded their distance goal, including the Governor. More than 500 state employees have reached 1 million steps, including 60 that have achieved over 2 million steps.
- He recognizes employee life style achievements and Walk This Way successes through a "Wellness Wall of Fame"

posted on the wellness website. Wall of Fame participants describe the impact of wellnessoptions on their health and can have their picture taken with the Governor. One Wall of Famer, for example, lost 70 pounds and was able to stop taking medicine for high cholesterol and high blood pressure, thanks in part to participation in Walk This Way.

- Governor Heineman speaks highly of the wellness program at speaking engagements, highlighting the importance of the program to manage health care costs.

For further information on wellnessoptions, view www.liveforlife.net/hfit/wellnessoptions.

The Hatch Act and its Application to Employees of the Executive Branch of Nebraska State Government

The Hatch Act applies to executive branch state employees who are principally employed in connection with programs financed in whole or in part by loans or grants made by the United States or a federal agency. Employees who work for educational or research institutions which are supported in whole or in part by a State or political subdivision of the State are not covered by the provisions of the Hatch Act.

An employee's conduct is also subject to the laws of the state and the regulations of the employing agency. Additionally, employees should be aware that the prohibitions of the Hatch Act are not affected by state or local laws.

Covered state employees may:

- run for public office in nonpartisan elections
- campaign for and hold office in political clubs and organizations
- actively campaign for candidates for public office in-

- He recognizes employee life style achievements and Walk This Way successes through a "Wellness Wall of Fame"
- He recognizes employee life style achievements and Walk This Way successes through a "Wellness Wall of Fame"
- contribute money to political organizations and attend political fundraising functions

Covered state and local employees may not:

- be candidates for public office in a partisan election
- use official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the results of an election or nomination
- directly or indirectly coerce contributions from subordinates in support of a political party or candidate

If the Merit Systems Protection Board finds that the violation warrants dismissal from employment, the employing agency must either remove the employee or forfeit a portion of the federal assistance equal to two years salary of the employee. If the Board finds the violation does not warrant

the employee's removal, no penalty is imposed.

Source: This document is an excerpt from information produced by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. See http://www.osc.gov/ha_state.htm.

Chapter 17 of the Classified System Personnel Rules also contains additional information regarding political activities.

The Statehouse Observer is also available online at: <http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/observer/>

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