



HEALTH TRUST NEWS

SERVING THE PARTICIPANTS OF
THE ASEA/AFSCME LOCAL 52
HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Love Yourself, Love Your Heart	1
Shedding Some Light on SAD	2
Members Open ASEA Health Trust to Public Sector Unions	2
Cancer Patients Have a Friend.....	3
Healthy Reminders	3
New PPO for Orthopedic Services.....	4

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mike Williams, Chairman
 Jacob Lauten
 Shawn Staker
 Terry Roth
 Chelsea Sieh
 Brittany Staker

Love Yourself, Love Your Heart TAKE ACTION NOW TO PREVENT CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE LATER

Cardiovascular disease is a leading killer of Americans—but *most forms of this disease are preventable.*

Many factors can increase your risk, including what you eat, your weight, your activity level, your heredity, and your age and gender. You can't control everything, but you can take steps to reduce your risk:

- Don't smoke or use tobacco products.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, and choose low-fat, low-cholesterol, low-salt foods.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day.
- Keep your cholesterol levels in normal ranges (have them checked every five years).
- Control your blood pressure (have it checked regularly).
- Drink alcohol in moderation, if you drink.
- If you have diabetes, control your blood sugar.

The Disease Management Program (through Optum) can help you take steps to better health, if you have coronary artery disease. The program provides information and one-on-one guidance to give extra support in addition to a doctor's care.

Participation in the Disease Management Program is confidential, voluntary and available at no cost to you. (The program also helps people with asthma, chronic

obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart failure, diabetes or musculoskeletal pain). Learn more at aseahealth.org, click **Benefits**, then **Disease Management**.

UNDERSTANDING HEART DISEASES

“Cardiovascular disease” refers to many conditions that affect the heart itself or the blood vessels throughout your body. Here are the most common conditions:

- **High blood pressure (or “hypertension”):** Affects one in three American adults. It is called “the silent killer” because there are no symptoms, so get your blood pressure checked regularly.
- **High cholesterol:** Affects one in three Americans, both men and women, of all ages. There are no symptoms; a simple blood test measures cholesterol levels.
- **Atherosclerosis:** This is a slow, progressive disease that may start in childhood. There are no symptoms until an artery is blocked.
- **Coronary artery disease (CAD):** The most common type of heart disease, and the leading cause of death in the U.S. for men and women. Symptoms include chest pain and shortness of breath.
- **Heart attack:** This is a life-threatening emergency. Call 9-1-1 when warning signs occur: chest pain, discomfort in other areas of the upper body, shortness of breath, sudden dizziness, nausea or sweating.

Shedding Some Light on SAD

WINTER ISN'T A WONDERLAND FOR EVERYONE



Every winter, about one in 10 Alaskans experiences a unique kind of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD). It is brought on by shorter days and decreased sunlight during winter, which can disrupt the body's sleep-wake rhythm and cause a hormone imbalance in melatonin (which affects sleep) and serotonin (which affects mood). People with SAD also may produce less Vitamin D (which may affect serotonin).

Sufferers have symptoms that start in October/November and go away by March/April. Signs of SAD include difficulty performing regular work tasks and interacting with people, along with one or more of these symptoms:

- Sadness, anxiety and irritability
- Tiredness or wanting to sleep more
- Decreased energy level
- Weight gain or increased appetite
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased desire to be alone

Women are more likely to have SAD than men, but men may have more severe symptoms. It occurs more often in young people (18-30 years old) and is less likely in older adults.

Even if you don't have SAD, the dark days of winter may have an effect on you. Here are some strategies to reduce these symptoms:

- Spend some time outside every day, even when it's cloudy
- Use a light therapy box when daylight hours begin to shorten
- Eat a well-balanced diet, even when you crave starchy and sweet foods
- Exercise at least 30 minutes, three times a week
- Stay involved in your regular activities throughout the winter

HOW YOUR HEALTH PLAN HELPS YOU

If you're struggling with some of these symptoms, you can talk to a professional counselor through the LifeWorks Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which gives you up six free counseling sessions per issue, per year. You can also access reliable health information online. Learn more:

- Online at lifeworks.com (user ID = ase; password = eap; case sensitive)

For Your Information

ASEA HEALTH TRUST OPENS TO PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS

ASEA Health Trust members overwhelmingly approved an amendment to the Trust agreement, allowing expansion of the Board of Trustees to accommodate representation from other unions who may join our Trust.

Recently, other public sector unions have approached our Health Trust to ask if their participants could bargain into our plan. They see how our trust has been able to control costs, while offering a high level of benefits and reasonable employee contribution rates. The advantage for ASEA members is that the Health Trust can spread fixed costs among more people, reducing our per-employee administrative costs, as well as spread the risks over a larger group.

The Board of Trustees thanks all of the members who considered this proposal, and who voted. Watch for future updates regarding other public sector union plans that may be joining our Health Trust.

- Call 877-234-5151 (toll-free), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you think you have SAD, see your physician for an assessment. Your doctor may prescribe light therapy, prescription medication or Vitamin D supplements, as well as lifestyle changes to minimize symptoms. Your Health Plan also covers mental health services; preauthorization is required for the best benefit coverage. Please refer to your Benefits Plan Booklet for more information.

Cancer Patients Have a Friend at ARH

NURSE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM SUPPORTS PATIENTS THROUGHOUT TREATMENT

Alaska Regional Hospital's Oncology Nurse Navigator program connects cancer patients with a caring, knowledgeable nurse, who walks with them through every step of their treatment—at no additional cost to the patient.

The program began in January 2018 serving breast cancer patients; now the hospital is expanding it to include other types of cancer.

The program's Nurse Navigator, Amber Setlock, RN, BSN, calls patients soon after they are diagnosed to let them know about the program and how she can help. "Cancer is an overwhelming diagnosis," she says. "Most people don't know what they need to do. That's where I come in."

Patients can choose how much help they want. "I can be someone they can call with questions, to an advocate who attends doctor appointments with them, to a friend who sits with them during chemo treatments," she says.



As ARH's Nurse Navigator, Amber works closely with physicians and care teams, giving her the ability to be her patients' advocate. "I am able to voice the patients' concerns and help empower them to be more involved in their own care," she explains.

Amber moved to Alaska temporarily in 2016 ... but loved it so much she stayed.

Her background as an oncology nurse gives her insight into the challenges of cancer patients. "Cancer is a difficult illness that doesn't always end well, but I love getting to know the patients and their families and helping them through this challenging time in their lives."

NURSE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM SERVICES

If you have been diagnosed with cancer, the Nurse Navigator Program can help. Your Nurse Navigator can:

- Schedule and coordinate your appointments with medical and radiation oncologists, surgeons, radiologists, etc.
- Attend appointments with you and help you better understand your treatment plan
- Answer your questions and provide information about your health
- Act as your advocate, voicing your concerns to doctors and the care team

If you or someone you know could benefit from the Nurse Navigator program at ARH, please call the ARH Cancer Center at 907-264-1431.

Healthy Reminders

ONLINE TOOLS HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR BENEFITS

Wondering how to take advantage of benefits you haven't used lately (or ever)? It only takes a couple of minutes to get a quick overview on the Health Trust website.

Go to aseahealth.org, click **Benefits** at the top of the home page, then choose from the list of services, such as:

- **Find a Preferred Provider:** Click on the **PPO Checklist** to learn how you can avoid paying thousands of dollars in out-of-network penalties.

- **Telemedicine for Non-Urgent Medical Care:** See a quick guide on how to use Teladoc.
- **Option for Elective and Non-urgent Surgery Outside of Alaska:** Get an overview of BridgeHealth and how to get started.

You'll also find overviews on the Employee Assistance Program, the Disease Management Program, Preventive Care and much more.

Where to Go for Answers

GET KEY CONTACT INFORMATION ONLINE

The Health Trust website puts benefit information at your fingertips. And if you're looking for the phone number or website of a service provider (like Zenith or Aetna), it has that, too. Go to the Health Trust website at www.aseahealth.org and under Support, click Key Provider Contacts.

Note: Not everyone has access to email, so the Health Trust mails this newsletter to ensure that all participants receive it.

Health Trust News provides general information about the ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 Health Benefits Trust. For more information, please refer to the Benefits Plan Booklet available on the Health Trust website or call Zenith. In the event of conflicting information, Plan documents and Plan Booklet will govern.



ASEA/AFSCME Local 52
Health Benefits Trust
111 W. Cataldo, Suite 220
Spokane, WA 99201

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE
PAID
ANCHORAGE, AK
PERMIT NO. 69

New PPO for Orthopedic Services

DISCOUNTED RATES SAVE YOU MONEY



Through our partnership with the Pacific Health Coalition, the Trust has contracted with Anchorage Fracture & Orthopedic Clinic/Alaska Medical Alliance (AFOC/AMA) as a new PPO provider for orthopedic services within the Municipality of Anchorage.

Orthopedic services care for the musculoskeletal system, which includes bones, joints, ligaments, tendons and muscles. Examples of conditions that may require orthopedic care include:

- Pain, injuries and surgeries of the back, neck, shoulder, elbow, hand, knee or foot
- Fractures of bones or joints; joint replacements

- Soft-tissue injuries of muscles, ligaments or tendons
- Arthritis, bursitis, fibromyalgia, osteoporosis and scoliosis

Beginning immediately, you will receive substantial discounts on AFOC/AMA services, which saves money for both you and for the Trust. You are not required to use AFOC/AMA; there are no penalties if you use a different orthopedic provider within the Municipality of Anchorage for services that AFOC/AMA provides. But as our preferred provider, they offer the most favorable pricing.

Anchorage Fracture & Orthopedic Clinic has served Anchorage and the surrounding area for about 50 years. Go to afoc.com for more information or to schedule an appointment. Or, call 907-563-3145.