

# SMART LIVING

*Public Education*  
HEALTH TRUST

A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION HEALTH TRUST

Rx

## TRUSTEE ELECTION RESULTS

The Public Education Health Trust (PEHT) extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the candidates who participated in the recent Board of Trustees election. PEHT members have elected Monica Southworth and re-elected Jessica Cook to serve on the board, filling seats B and G, respectively.



*Jessica Cook*



*Monica Southworth*

Jessica Cook, a dedicated middle school language arts teacher who has served as a Trustee since 2015, will continue in her role representing Seat G. Monica Southworth, a seasoned Research and Bargaining Specialist with over 10 years of experience in health insurance benefits, will bring her expertise to Seat B.

Both will serve three-year terms, starting January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027. **PEHT is excited to welcome their continued contributions in supporting the health and wellness of public education professionals.**



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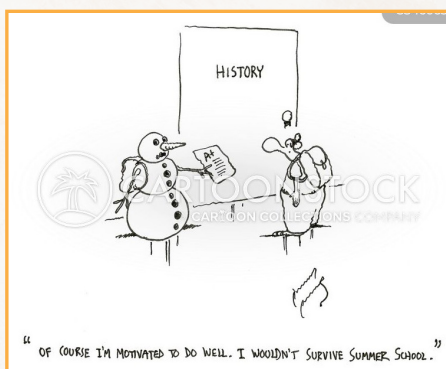
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## UNLOCK NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAVEL BENEFITS WITH PRE-APPROVAL

Benefits for non-emergency medical travel may be payable for transportation by commercial airline (coach class only, with at least a 14-day advanced fare) or ferry from the place where the illness or injury occurred to the nearest area where necessary professional treatment can be obtained, unless the plan administrator finds a longer trip is necessary.

For reimbursement consideration, commercial airline flights may only be scheduled for departure 1-2 days in advance of the first appointment or 1-2 days after the last appointment related to the condition being treated. Consideration for additional days may be given upon approval by the plan administrator.

All non-emergency commercial travel must be pre-approved by the plan administrator (or their designate) using the "Public Education Health Trust Non-Emergency Medical Travel Request Form" or no benefits will be provided. The form can be found at [pehtak.com/forms](https://pehtak.com/forms).

Contact the Health Trust by phone. In Anchorage call (907) 274-7526; outside of Anchorage call (888) 685-7526. Business hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (AKST).

### TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

Transportation benefits in any one calendar year will be limited to two round trips.

Transportation benefits apply only to the illness or conditions covered under this plan. They do not apply to dental care benefits, vision services, routine care or preventive care exams unless approved by the plan administrator.

A local physician must certify that needed services are not available locally. Transportation benefits for any foreign healthcare will not be covered, including Canadian healthcare.

Transportation benefits will not be given for diagnostic or second-opinion diagnosis unless diagnostic services cannot be provided locally and are deemed medically necessary by the plan administrator. The physician must provide written certification or detailed medical documentation of the existing condition in advance of the trip.

Non-emergency transportation charges will only be allowed for a patient who is a covered person, except for the following circumstances:

- If the patient is a covered person under 18 years of age, then the transportation charges of a parent or legal guardian accompanying the child will also be allowed.
- If the patient is a covered person over age 18 and has a mental disorder or physical disability that requires the assistance of a caretaker post-procedurally or during travel, the transportation charges of a parent, legal guardian or assigned caretaker accompanying the patient will also be allowed.

After the travel has occurred, a "Public Education Health Trust Non-Emergency Medical Travel Completed Form" must be submitted with the boarding passes and the receipts of the travel, signed off by the attending physician, or no benefits will be provided. All information must be sent to EBMS.

## MAINTAIN IN-NETWORK COVERAGE WHILE TRAVELING

We hope you never need medical attention when you are on the road for vacation or traveling on a business trip. But, when you are traveling and require medical attention, remember that you can find options for in-network providers so that your expenses don't pile up.

Through our partnership with Aetna, PEHT members can search for in-network options in an online directory found at [aetna.com/asa](https://aetna.com/asa). You will find a list of in-network providers who can meet your medical-care needs when you are out of town.



Don't let seasonal respiratory viruses such as the flu, COVID-19 and RSV get in the way of enjoying this fall and winter. All three of these viruses can infect anyone. But they pose a higher risk of severe illness for older people, people with chronic health conditions and young children. Anyone over age 6 months should get the flu and COVID-19 vaccines while only certain people are eligible for an RSV vaccine.

HERE ARE THE 3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR A HEALTHY YEAR:

1. COVID-19, the flu and RSV are all respiratory illnesses that are expected to be on the rise in the fall and winter.
2. Getting vaccinated against these viruses can help protect you and your loved ones from getting very sick.
3. You can talk to your doctor now to make a plan for getting vaccines this season and staying healthy.

You can find levels of virus in your area at: [cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses)

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT VACCINES

Vaccines may not prevent illness fully. But if you get a vaccine, you may not get as sick. This season, there are vaccines designed to prevent serious illness from influenza (flu), COVID-19 and RSV — the trifecta of respiratory viruses — are all available. If eligible, you could get all shots at the same time, in a single appointment. The best time to get vaccines is in October.

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR ALL THREE VACCINES BUT YOU MAY WONDER IF YOU SHOULD GET ALL THREE SHOTS. HERE IS A GUIDE TO FDA AND CDC-APPROVED VACCINES.

TYPE OF SHOT	CHILDREN*	PREGNANT WOMEN	ADULTS	OLDER ADULTS 60+*
FLU SHOT	6 months - 8 years: One or two doses, depends on previous vaccine status	One dose	One dose	One dose
COVID-19 VACCINE	6 months - 4 years: one to three doses, depends on which vaccine and previous vaccine status	One dose	5 years and older: One dose	One dose
RSV VACCINE	No to vaccine. Yes to monoclonal antibody in certain cases.	One dose at 32-26 weeks gestational age	No	One dose, age 75 and older. Age 60-74 if you are at high risk



STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU GET SICK WITH FLU, COVID-19 OR RSV

If you feel sick, talk to your provider about COVID-19, flu, and RSV and how to feel better.

You may feel the same symptoms for other illnesses. So, your doctor may get you tested for COVID-19,RSV or flu. A test can help determine safe next steps to feel better and prevent more infection.

Besides getting a vaccine, your doctor may prescribe treatments for illness due to COVID-19 and the flu if:

- You should seek treatment early.
- You have a high risk for severe illness.



FLU

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness. It infects the nose, throat and sometimes the lungs. Most people with the flu recover on their own. However, some people get very sick and may need treatment in a hospital.



COVID-19

COVID-19 can spread quickly. Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms. But some people become very ill. Others, including those with minor or no symptoms, will develop Post-COVID Conditions — also called “Long COVID.”



RSV

Respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Most people recover in a week or two. RSV can be serious for babies or older adults.

# MANAGING THE FLU

## WHAT IS THE FLU?

The flu is an illness caused by the influenza virus. The virus infects your nose, throat and lungs. Most people who get the flu feel better within a week. In some people, the flu may lead to ear or lung infection.

The flu virus passes from person to person. When someone with the flu coughs, sneezes or talks, the virus spreads through the air. You can also get the flu by touching an object with the flu virus on it and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose. If you have the flu, you may pass the virus to someone else before you even start to feel sick. You can spread the flu up to seven days after you become sick.

## WHAT ARE FLU SYMPTOMS?

If you have the flu, you may experience:

- Fatigue and weakness
- Fever and/or chills
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat and/or cough

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET THE FLU?

- Try to stay home and avoid spreading the flu to others. You should stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever ends
- Drink plenty of water and other clear liquids to prevent dehydration
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about taking over-the-counter medications for your symptoms

If you get the flu and have a medical condition such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease, call your doctor right away. The flu may make these conditions worse. You should also contact your doctor if you're very sick or worried about your illness.

## WHO SHOULD GET THE FLU VACCINE?

The flu vaccine is recommended for individuals 6 months of age and older. Talk to your doctor about the flu vaccine. It's especially important to speak to your doctor about getting the flu vaccine if you are:

- Pregnant
- Younger than 5 years old
- Older than 60 years old
- Diagnosed with certain chronic medical conditions
- Diagnosed with a weakened immune system from disease or medicines
- Living in a nursing home or long-term care home

## DOES THE FLU SHOT TREAT COVID-19?

No. The flu shot does not treat or prevent COVID-19. There are additional vaccines available for COVID-19.

## WHEN SHOULD I GET THE FLU SHOT?

It is generally recommended to get the annual flu vaccine sometime in September or October.

### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FLU AND THE FLU SHOT?

 [cdc.gov/flu/prevent](https://cdc.gov/flu/prevent)

 [cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm](https://cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm)

# GROUP FITNESS FOR WORKOUT SUCCESS

**Teladoc**  
HEALTH

**We've heard them all. There's strength in numbers. Together we're stronger. Teamwork makes the dream work. We may sweat, but together, we shine.**

Making regular physical activity a priority may be challenging. There might be hurdles even before you start. You have to make the time, choose the activity, find a place to do it, get the gear and so on. This can feel like a lot.

There is one thing that can make it easier — enlisting a buddy or joining a group. In practical terms, working out with others holds us accountable. You are more likely to show up, follow through and stay motivated. Working out in a group elevates mood and lowers stress. It also makes exercising fun and social, so it becomes even better for your body and mind.<sup>1</sup>

## EXERCISE QUANTITY AND QUALITY ARE HIGHER WHEN WORKING OUT IN A GROUP.<sup>1</sup>

### ENLIST A BUDDY

*Get moving with a partner.*

- Schedule walking meetings with a coworker.
- Grab a neighbor or family member for a morning or evening stroll.
- Sign up for a dance class with a like-minded friend as your partner.
- Walk while you talk on the phone. Long-distance buddies can still help motivate you.

### STRONGER TOGETHER

Develop a community of supporters by choosing a group activity to work on your fitness goals. *There are many options, like:*

- Classes at your local gym or community center. Consider yoga, Zumba, spinning and more.
- Join a sports league, like pickleball, bowling, volleyball or tennis. Groups like these get together regularly, sometimes even daily.
- Train for a competition. Whether it's a charity walk, a bike race, a fun run or a marathon, look for a group of like-minded friends through local clubs or online. You can push each other to new heights.

## WHETHER WORKING OUT WITH 1 OR 100, GETTING ACTIVE IS IMPORTANT TO REACHING YOUR HEALTH GOALS.

Before you start any new exercise routine, talk to your doctor to make sure it's safe.

**LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP SUPPORT YOU ON YOUR WELLNESS JOURNEY.**

To sign up or learn more, go to [Teladoc.com](https://Teladoc.com).





# SLEEP TIGHT, ALASKANS!

## How to Keep Your Circadian Rhythm in Sync This Winter

Here we are, in the thick of long, dark winter days. If you've noticed your sleep schedule going a bit haywire, you're not alone. With minimal daylight, your body's natural rhythm — your circadian clock — might be craving more cozy bedtime. But that doesn't always mean you're getting quality sleep. In fact, consistently oversleeping can lead to some serious health concerns.

### WHY MAINTAINING YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM IS KEY

Our bodies rely on light exposure to regulate circadian rhythms, which are like internal clocks that tell us when to sleep and when to wake. In Alaska's long, dark winters, it's easy for this rhythm to fall out of sync. When your internal clock is off, it can affect everything from your mood and energy levels to your digestion and immune function. Maintaining a healthy sleep cycle will keep your body operating at its best.

### THE HIDDEN RISKS OF OVERSLEEPING

While getting a little extra sleep during these darker months can feel comforting, regularly clocking in more than nine hours of sleep could be a red flag. Oversleeping has been associated with a variety of health problems, including an increased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and even, in some instances, cognitive decline.

### SOAK UP MORNING LIGHT (EVEN WHEN IT'S SCARCE)

We know it's tempting to sleep in when it's dark until noon, but keeping a regular sleep schedule is key. Set a consistent bedtime and wake-up time, even on weekends. It'll help your body stay in rhythm, which means better energy and less grogginess during the day.

And, sure, sunlight is a bit of a rare gem during these months, but when it does appear, grab it! Open those blinds, step outside for a brisk walk or invest in a light therapy lamp to give your brain the cues it needs to wake up. Your body's internal clock relies on light to set the stage for a productive day, and this little trick helps kick melatonin production back into gear at the right time.

### DITCH THE SCREENS, EMBRACE THE CALM

Binge-watching might be tempting when the evenings are endless, but too much screen time before bed can trick your brain into thinking it's still daytime. Cut down on the tech an hour before bed or invest in some blue light-blocking glasses if you absolutely need that Netflix fix.

Certainly, winter in Alaska can be tough, but your sleep doesn't have to be. With a few adjustments, you'll be sleeping soundly through the darkest months and ready to seize the day(light) when it returns. Sweet dreams, from PEHT!

## JOIN THE PEHT TURKEY TROT STEP CHALLENGE!

**Vitality**

Staying active during the holiday season can be challenging, but making time to get your steps in can offer significant mental health benefits.

Walking boosts endorphins, which help reduce stress, improve mood and combat feelings of anxiety or holiday overwhelm.

Even short walks can clear your mind, increase focus and give you a moment of calm in the midst of a busy season. Plus, getting outside for fresh air or even stepping away for a break indoors can help maintain a sense of routine and well-being during a time when schedules are often disrupted.

Join this challenge and aim to capture a minimum of 200,000 total steps (6,666 average daily steps) during the start of a busy holiday season.

**Challenge Dates:** Nov 1 - Nov 30

**Incentive:** Capture at least 200,000 total steps and earn 250 bonus points

**Ensure you have a compatible app or device connected:**

- From your Power of Vitality dashboard click your profile icon > select apps and devices > select the platform you wish to connect > follow the prompts and ensure you allow all data to be shared to Vitality.
  - We recommend members open and refresh their app at least once a week to ensure data is syncing.

Challenge data may take 48 hours to sync.



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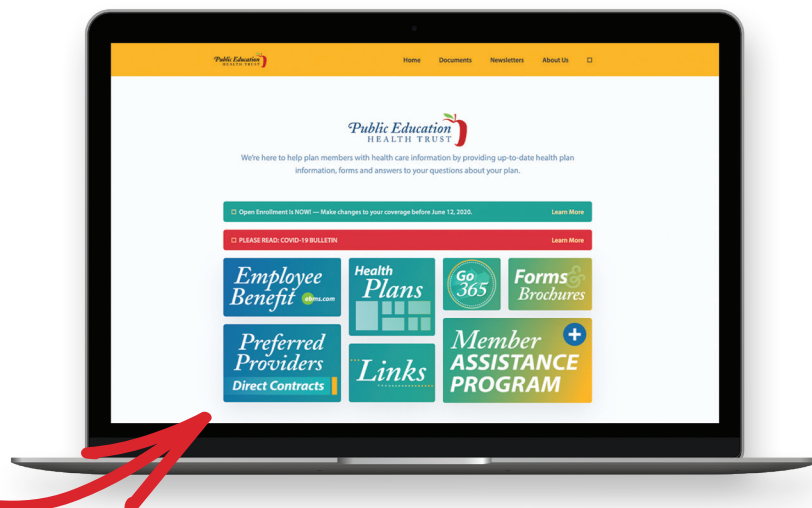
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The PEHT website is your central hub  
for accessing important documents,  
helpful links and much more.

VISIT **PEHTAK.COM**  
TO EXPLORE AND  
LEARN MORE!



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