

SMART LIVING



A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION HEALTH TRUST

TRUSTEE ELECTION RESULTS

The two open board seats have been filled by **Laura Mulgrew** and **Karen Morrison** for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2023.



Laura, an educator with the Juneau School District, will begin her second term as a PEHT Trustee.



Director of Finance for Petersburg School District, **Karen Morrison**, will begin her first term as a Trustee.

See page 5 of the newsletter to learn more about Laura and Karen, and please join us in congratulating the Trustees!



IT'S A NEW GO365 PLAN YEAR!!

Reminder: Your Go365 program year renewed on October 1; therefore, you automatically reverted to Blue Status.

To move into a higher Status, earn more Points and Bucks for rewards and take advantage of what Go365® has to offer, do one of the following:

1. Complete at least one section of the health assessment online or on the Go365 App
2. Get a biometric screening
3. Log a verified workout (connect a compatible device)
4. Sign in to the Go365 app to ensure your device is syncing

Need more reasons? Depending on how you get started in the new program year, you can:

1. Earn 250 bonus Points for completing the full health assessment by December 30.
2. Earn 500 bonus Points for the first time you ever complete the full health assessment in your lifetime.
3. Earn 750 Points for the first verified workout of the new program year.
4. Earn 500 bonus Points for the first time you ever log a verified workout in your lifetime.

DON'T DELAY AND GET OUT OF BLUE TODAY!

Now that you've gotten started with Go365, let us guide you through suggested activities that will boost you to Silver Status and earn BIG with Go365!

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Walk 8,000 steps for 30 days	Earn 240 Go365 Points and Bucks
Exceed 50 weekly workout points x 4 weeks	Earn 200 Go365 Bonus Points and Bucks
Health assessment (complete all six categories)	Earn 500 Go365 Points and Bucks
Completing health assessment for first time	Earn 500 Go365 Points and Bucks
Complete your biometric screening	Earn up to 2,000 Go365 Points and Bucks
Healthy in range biometric results	Earn up to 2,000 Go365 Points and Bucks
TOTAL	5,440 Go365 Points 5,440 Go365 Bucks

BENEFITS OF YOUR BIOMETRIC SCREENING

- Knowing your numbers and potential health risk factors
- Unlock personalized recommended activities
- Earn up to 4,000 Go365 Points and Bucks

BENEFITS OF YOUR HEALTH ASSESSMENT

- Unlock Go365 age
- Unlock personalized recommended activities
- Earn up to 1,250 Go365 Points and Bucks

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

With the cold, flu and other illnesses circulating in our communities, it's more important than ever to stay healthy.

The flu shot is your best defense against getting sick from the flu and reducing the spread of illness to family, friends and students.

Every flu season is a little different and the illness can affect people differently. Getting your flu shot can prevent severe complications and reduce the spread of illness. Find a convenient location near you to get your flu shot at a Providence ExpressCare or Urgent Care clinic, or your primary care doctor's office. Download the Providence app (providence.org/services/providence-app) or visit providence.org/lp/flu-shots to find walk-in locations or set an appointment for your flu shot.

BE D-TERMINED TO HAVE A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER WINTER!

If there's one thing Alaskans know about, it's how to prepare for winter... wax your skis, swap out your tires and double the salmon stash in your freezer.

But this year, as the daylight hours continue to shorten, let's take a minute to talk about some the basic health risks associated with this season and talk about some easy measures we can all take to improve our physical and mental health.

Whether you're experiencing your first Alaskan winter or 40th, it's good to remember that the lack of sunlight can cause real health issues.

ENTER VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is a hormone produced by the skin when exposed to sunlight, and it plays an important role in both physical and mental health. When people experience low levels of vitamin D, it is regularly reported their tolerance and resiliency to the things in life that create irritation, frustration or depression are felt to be much more intense. But it doesn't end there, vitamin D deficiency can have major physical consequences as well.

Not only does vitamin D help your body use calcium, regulate the immune system and ward off disease — but more and more research suggests vitamin D is a serious heart-helper. This is because of vitamin D's ability to reduce oxidative stress — a physiological process thought to encourage aging and cell damage. Vitamin D also may help decrease levels of parathyroid hormones that damage blood vessels. Additionally, studies show if you have high blood pressure, atherosclerosis or heart disease, getting enough vitamin D may be a safeguard against some of the damage that comes with those conditions.

Convinced, yet?

We are too! And we have easy tips to make sure you get enough vitamin D this winter.

HEALTHY EATING FOR THE SEASON

In addition to making sure you eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, be sure to make foods rich in vitamin D a staple in your diet. Egg yolks, salmon, tuna, shiitake and button mushrooms are a few good examples, and making a few changes can go a long way to staying healthy this winter.

EXERCISE AND FRESH AIR

A study by Harvard School of Public Health (hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/chomistek-exercise-vitamin-d-heart-risk/) suggests that exercise also can play an important role in increasing vitamin D levels in adults. They found that three or more hours a week of vigorous exercise — such as running, jogging or skiing — can reduce the risk of heart attack by 22%. But they also found that those who exercised vigorously have higher levels of vitamin D as well as higher levels of HDL (good) cholesterol.

VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTS

Finally, there are some good supplements on the market and they have been proven to be effective in boosting vitamin D levels in many individuals. But there some precautions people must take. As we've mentioned, vitamin D is important for strong bones and contributes to overall good health; however, because it can stay in the body for a long time, getting too much can be counterproductive. This is why it's important for Alaskans to talk with their doctor to determine whether they should be tested for vitamin D deficiency and work with their healthcare team to decide an appropriate dosage if supplements are deemed necessary.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAVEL BENEFITS?

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.

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.-5 p.m. (AKDT).

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.

KEY FORMULARY AND UTILIZATION UPDATES STARTING JAN. 1, 2023

THERAPEUTIC CLASS	MEDICATION	TIER PLACEMENT	PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES
High Blood Pressure	nebivolol	Tier 1 to Excluded	atenolol, bisoprolol, metoprolol, carvedilol
High Blood Pressure	clonidine patch	Tier 1 to Excluded	clonidine tab
High Blood Pressure	diltiazem cap ER, diltiazem ER tab	Tier 1 to Excluded	diltiazem ER cap
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Quillichew ER®	Tier 3 to Excluded	amphetamine-dextroamphetamine IR, dexamethylphenidate IR/ER, dextroamphetamine IR/ER, methylphenidate IR/ER, Adderall XR, Azstarys®, Vyvanse®**
	Mydayis®		
	Zenzedi®		
	Daytrana®		
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	methylphenidate tab 72mg ER	Tier 1 to Excluded	Methylphenidate tab 10, 18, 27, 36 and 54mg ER
Anti-infective agents	Xifaxan® tab 200mg	Tier 3 to Excluded	Check with your doctor.
Antineoplastic agents	Rubraca®	Tier 2 to Excluded	Lynparza®, Zejula
	Talzenna®	Tier 3 to Excluded	Lynparza®
Seizure Disorders	Vimpat®**	Tier 3 to Excluded	lacosamide solution
Hyperphosphatemia	Auryxia®	Tier 3 to Excluded	calcium acetate, lanthanum carbonate, sevelamer, Velphoro
Glaucoma	Combigan®	Tier 2 to Excluded	brimonidine - timolol ophth soln 0.2-0.5%
Overactive Bladder	Toviaz®	Tier 3 to Excluded	fesoterodine, Myrbetriq
Chrons Disease, ulcerative colitis	Pentasa®	Tier 3 to Excluded	mesalamine
Antidepressant agents	paroxetine cap	Tier 1 to Excluded	"paroxetine tab"
Immunological agents — Drugs to protect your body from a disease system stimulation or suppression	Enbrel®	Tier 3 to Tier 2	

***Drug of concern** - Continuation of therapy will be allowed for current members utilizing this medication due to the nature of the disease state

HEALTH CARE REFORM (HCR) UPDATE

Starting Jan. 1, 2023, male condoms will be added to the list of covered medications on the HCR Preventive Medication List.

Aspirin products used for blood clot prevention will be removed from the list of covered medications on the HCR Preventative Medication List.

STEP THERAPY CHANGES

GLP-1 agonists will require prior authorization to manage off-label use. The existing step therapy will be retired.

Example: Ozempic® will require prior authorization.

If you are affected by these formulary or utilization management changes, you will get a letter in the mail by Nov. 1, 2022.

LIVING WITH DIABETES

Diabetes is one of the top 5 chronic conditions in the United States. More than 37 million Americans live with diabetes and 8.5 million don't know they have it.¹ Poorly controlled diabetes is linked to more serious conditions such as cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, dialysis, blindness and amputation — conditions that greatly diminish quality of life.

LEARN HOW TO MANAGE YOUR DIABETES

Although diabetes has no cure, you can take steps to manage the disease and live a long and healthy life.²

- Work with your health care team to learn more about the disease and develop a self-care plan.
- Maintain healthy levels of blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Quit smoking.
- Eat a well-balanced diet high in fiber and lower in calories, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and salt.
- Drink water instead of soda and juice.
- Make physical activity a part of your daily routine.
- Check your blood glucose level each day.
- Take your medication as directed.

COPING WITH THE DISEASE

Figuring out your "new normal" of living with diabetes can be overwhelming. That's why it's common for people to experience stress, anger and depression. Going through these emotions is a normal part of the journey but learning how to manage them is the key to a healthy life.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Diabetes Statistics Report website. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/data/statistics-report/index.html>. Accessed June 10, 2022.

² Managing Diabetes. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes>



**YOU MAY NOW PURCHASE
COVID-19 TEST KITS
WITH \$0 COPAY AT
CARR'S STORES**

Carr's stores are now in network. Get up to 8 COVID-19 at-home test kits for free using your Optum Rx insurance.

INTRODUCING TRUSTEE, KAREN MORRISON!

Karen is the Director of Finance for Petersburg School District and begins her role as a PEHT trustee on January 1.

She has served on several boards throughout the years and has always chosen organizations that she feels offer real value to the people they serve and live their missions. She says that PEHT resonates with her because she has first-hand experience in seeing the value it provides and support it has offered her in her life and her personal health journey. But it's not just about her, she says she sees this daily for PEHT members within the Petersburg School District.

Karen adds, "I believe that if you feel strongly about an issue or in this case, an organization, it is important to participate. I am excited to learn even more about the organization and the services it provides to our membership and do what I can to make sure our members are aware of these services that are provided. If there are gaps, I try to find solutions for our members while understanding that it is a balancing act of sustainability for the Trust and providing good quality services at reasonable costs for our members."

When Karen's not busy at work for the School District, she loves spending time with family and friends, traveling, hiking Southeast Alaska, reading and sewing... and as a side note she's a huge fan of PEHT's Go365 program!

INTRODUCING TRUSTEE, LAURA MULGREW!

Laura Mulgrew has worked for the Juneau School District since 1993 in various roles, including as a substitute teacher, a classified employee and as a special education teacher.

She has served as a member of the Alaska Education Challenge Safety and Well-Being committee and is currently on the board of the Juneau Education Association. This is Laura's second term as a Trustee.

"I am committed to providing affordable and quality health care for public education employees," said Laura. "I want to hear from members about their needs, concerns, challenges and successes with our plans and understand how PEHT is doing in terms of addressing member's needs."

Laura advocates for safe and healthy schools for students and staff as well as mutual respect amongst all. She believes it is the responsibility of educators to develop relationships with students that will provide them the opportunity to reach their highest levels of achievement, academically and socially / emotionally.

In her free time, Laura enjoys spending time with family and traveling. She thoroughly enjoys movies and social opportunities with friends.

RELIEVING STRESS IN THE MOMENT

Are you stressed? We all are at some point in the day. Work life, home life and trying to fit it all into life can leave you gasping for breath.

How are you breathing right now? Are your breaths slow and deep, or short and shallow? It's not surprising to hear that deep breathing is a proven tactic to relieve stress. Taking breaks to practice deep breathing may be tough. However, it's worth it to slow down. Try it for a moment, tap into your breath and give yourself a tool that allows you to find your focus—whenever, wherever.

GIVE IT A TRY

First, let's experiment. No matter where you are, take this moment to focus on your breath. If you can, sit down and close your eyes.

1. Fill your lungs with air. Slowly count to 4 as you breathe in.
2. Hold your breath for another 4 counts.
3. Then release the air over another 4 counts, exhaling just as slowly as you inhaled.
4. Try this for several rounds of breath.

CHECK IN AFTERWARD

When you've finished, check in with yourself. Ask yourself:

- How am I breathing now?
- How do I feel?
- Do I notice any different sensations in my body or my mind?

CHANGE IT UP

If you have trouble slowing down your breathing at first, try some of these old tricks:

- Gently close one nostril with a finger while you breathe. This will halve your air supply in and out, forcing you to inhale and exhale more slowly.
- Try lying flat on your back. This position we normally reserve for sleep can naturally signal your brain to slow down your respiration.
- Just like a sleeping baby's belly rises and falls with each breath, try breathing deep into your belly. This activates your vagus nerve, telling your body that everything is going to be OK.

DID YOU KNOW?

Teladoc virtual visits are offered to you and your family members with medical coverage through your medical plan. To sign up or learn more, go to [Teladoc.com/signup](https://www.teladoc.com/signup).



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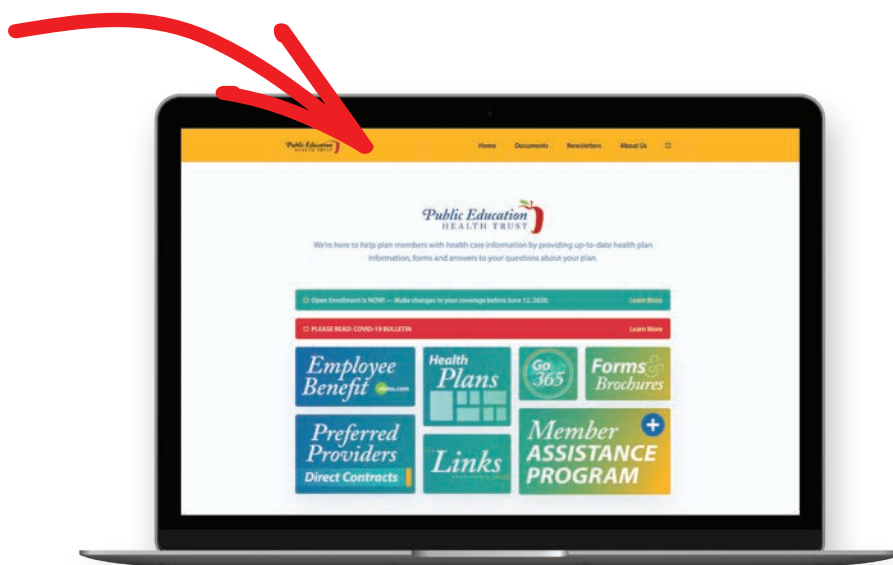
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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER WINNER:
**KATIE
SWANSON**