

SMART LIVING



A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION HEALTH TRUST

TRUSTEE ELECTION RESULTS

Effective January 1, 2024, the three open board seats have been filled.



Shelby Beck



Tom Klaaymeyer

Shelby Beck of Craig City School District and Tom Klaaymeyer of Anchorage School District will take on seats C and F, respectively, for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2024.

Dan Polta of Denali Borough School District will fill Seat D for the remaining duration of its term, which concludes on December 31, 2025.



Thank you to those who submitted nominations! Please join us in congratulating our newest Trustees!



CELEBRATING RHONDA PROWELL-KITTER

A Remarkable Journey of Dedication Spanning 25 Years with PEHT



members. Rhonda's passion is evident in her unwavering commitment to educating members about their benefits and prioritizing the best reimbursements for them.

BEYOND THE DOLLARS AND CENTS

At PEHT, Rhonda firmly believes that members are not mere statistics or dollar signs. Every member is a unique individual with their own needs and challenges. This perspective sets PEHT apart from many other insurance companies. And for Rhonda, the best days are those when she is able to assist a member who is worried about a claim, or a recent diagnosis. PEHT members are often very thankful, and the office receives heartfelt cards, freshly baked goodies, or expressions of gratitude.

Dealing with the intricacies of politics and bureaucracy is no easy feat, but Rhonda and her team remain steadfast in their mission. They are dedicated to supporting everyone in the public education system, from the great custodians to the skilled bus drivers to the amazing teachers and school nurses to the administrators (and everyone in between)!

A FAMILY-CENTRIC HEART

Beyond her professional life, Rhonda's personal life shines just as brightly. She and her wife, Jen, have built a loving and expanding family. Recently, they adopted their 5-year-old grandson, Dayton, who has added immeasurable joy to their lives. Rhonda takes great pride in teaching Dayton life skills, from swimming to skiing, ensuring he grows up to be dynamic and confident. Family time is paramount to Rhonda. Rhonda's son Mitch and his husband Shalem along with their son Porter add to the richness of Rhonda's life. Their home is filled with warmth, laughter and a sense of unity that reflects Rhonda's dedication to both her work and her loved ones.

In 1976, Rhonda Prowell-Kitter embarked on a journey to the great Alaskan frontier when her father was transferred with the Air Force from Eglin AFB, Florida to Elmendorf AFB. Anchorage quickly became her home, where she embraced the local school district and pursued her education at UAA. Her path eventually led her to the world of finance and accounting, laying the foundation for her rewarding career at PEHT.

A CHAMPION OF COMPLEXITY

Rhonda joined PEHT in 1998 as a consultant with a specific role — "Plan Accountant." Over time, she ascended the ranks to become the Chief Financial Officer and Plan Administrator. Her mission? Simplifying the complex realms of insurance and healthcare for PEHT members along with trustees who are deeply committed to public education employees.

Navigating the intricate landscape of insurance can be a daunting experience, often leaving individuals scared and frustrated. Rhonda and her dedicated team at PEHT step in to guide, support and collaborate with providers, ensuring members receive the care they need. PEHT, being a self-insured insurance provider, places its primary focus on its



JOSH ANDREWS – BOARD CHAIR, PUBLIC EDUCATION HEALTH TRUST

“As much as she would like to think differently, at some point during the past 25 years, Rhonda Prowell-Kitter became the face of the Public Education Health Trust.

Ms. Prowell-Kitter has dedicated herself to the operation of the Trust and has insisted on a personalized and compassionate “servant-like” attitude from her staff and vendors. The impact of this attitude is felt on a daily basis by each participant who reaches out to the Trust office.

While PEHT is a member-driven and member-governed organization, Ms. Prowell-Kitter has provided important guidance and information to both new trustees as they learn their roles, as well as to experienced trustees who ask deeper questions in a quest to keep up with the very dynamic world of health benefits.

For the past 25 years, Ms. Prowell-Kitter has maintained laser focus on the goal of the Trust — to “maximize member benefits at the least cost.” She has saved the Trust (and thereby school districts) millions of dollars through her tireless efforts negotiating private contracts with providers and pushing back during vendor negotiations, reminding them that PEHT serves public educators and school district personnel. Among her many cost-saving initiatives includes negotiating a contract with Providence Hospital to open a series of express care clinics in Anchorage that charge members a flat copayment of \$25. Members also now enjoy access to telemedicine via Teladoc, a service Ms. Prowell-Kitter brought to the attention of the trustees that has saved the Trust millions of dollars since its adoption. As an industry leader, PEHT was also the first health insurance in the state to offer access to telehealth!

Simply stated, Rhonda has earned her status as the face of the trust. It is a warm, welcoming, caring and trusting face that we are proud to stand behind and support. Thank you, Rhonda, for your 25 years of exemplary service both to the Public Education Health Trust and to the employees of public schools across the state.”

DAN MYERS – VP, CLIENT EXPERIENCE, EBMS

“Congratulations, Rhonda, on 25 amazing years. Professional and compassionate, your partnership has been a true joy. At EBMS, we have a mantra to “put the member first, and everything will work out,” and there is no one that exemplifies that more than you. The Trust and its members are lucky to have you, and I am thankful for the opportunity to work with you. Here’s to another 25!”

ALEX SCHOTT – CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, EBMS

“I’ve really enjoyed working with Rhonda over the past few years and have a lot of respect for her. She is always very clear and concise in her communications, which always results in a clear understanding. As a fellow Financial Officer, I truly appreciate the way Rhonda approaches her responsibilities to the plan from that perspective and is able to balance that with a member-centric focus from a service standpoint.”

BRENDAN HANLEY – RELATIONSHIP MANAGER, EBMS

“I have worked with Rhonda on and off for most of my 23 years with EBMS, and I can say with confidence I have had no better partner and client. Successfully managing all financial aspects of a health plan is a gargantuan task. Ensuring that the experience of plan members as they navigate the difficult, confusing and often frightening journey through the healthcare and benefits worlds can be even more of a challenge. Rhonda has done a phenomenal job in handling both of these challenges with a level of commitment that is not often seen. Congratulations on 25 years!”

**THANK YOU, RHONDA! YOU'RE NOT JUST AN INVALUABLE
ASSET TO ALL OF US AT PEHT; YOU'RE A BEACON OF
PASSION, COMPASSION AND COMMITMENT IN THE FIELD
OF INSURANCE AND HEALTHCARE. WE LOVE YOU!**

MAINTAIN IN-NETWORK COVERAGE WHILE TRAVELING

 aetna™



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. You will find a list of in-network providers who can meet your medical-care needs when you are out of town.

EXPERT HELP WITH BREASTFEEDING YOUR NEW BABY IS NOW JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY!

Jennifer Aist Lactation Services, LLC is proud to partner with PEHT to provide lactation care across Alaska through home and virtual visits.

Services include:

- Prenatal breastfeeding education tailored just to you
- Help after delivery to ensure breastfeeding goes well
- Customized pumping plans including flange fitting
- And more!

Welcoming a new member into the family is an exciting and transformative experience. It's a time filled with joy, love and new beginnings. It can also be a period of challenges, especially for new mothers navigating the intricacies of breastfeeding. Jennifer Aist Lactation Services, LLC is committed to easing your way.

To schedule your appointment, just call or message (907) 602-2974.



CONQUER STRESS TO STAY HEALTHY

Navigating cold and flu season is complicated. No one enjoys being sick. You want your loved ones to stay healthy too. The key to avoiding illness is taking care of yourself in different ways.

In broad terms, when your body is stressed, it focuses on dealing with that. The result is that the hormones released because of stress suppress your immune system.¹ This can make you more susceptible to illness.

You can keep yourself healthy by doing two things — reducing stress and taking steps to help boost your immune system. The good news is there are many actions that do both.

Here are some ways to improve your overall health and hopefully keep sickness away.

REDUCE STRESS

- **Remember to breathe.** Relax and pay attention to your breathing. This will calm you down in stressful moments.
- **Process.** Release your thoughts and feelings through journaling or talking with friends or a therapist.
- **Find fun.** Do activities that make you happy. Ask a friend to join for added fun.
- **Move.** Physical activity helps enhance a sense of well-being and reduces negative feelings.²
- **Rest.** Limit caffeine, alcohol and screen time before bedtime to help you get a good night's sleep.³

BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

- **Cut out processed, refined foods.** These include hot dogs, sausages, white bread and pastries, refined sugars (cane sugar, brown sugar, molasses), cream, butter, shortening, fast food and fried foods.⁴
- **Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.** Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats.⁴
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water and other calorie-free beverages like green tea. Try to limit alcohol and avoid sodas and other sweetened beverages.⁴

Adopting these healthy habits can help reduce your stress levels, paying off far beyond cold and flu season.

Teladoc Health virtual visits are offered to you and your covered dependents through your plan benefits.

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

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/stress>

² <https://www.apa.org/topics/exercise-fitness/stress>

³ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/202212/8-essential-tips-combat-stress>

⁴ <https://www.arthritis.org/health-wellness/healthy-living/nutrition/foods-to-limit/8-food-ingredients-that-can-cause-inflammation>

PROVIDENCE OFFERS ALASKANS EXCEPTIONAL SURGERY CARE CLOSE TO HOME

At Providence Alaska Medical Center (PAMC), we aim to be Alaska's leader in surgical services by retaining top surgeons and investing in cutting-edge technologies. When you choose us for your surgery or other clinical procedure, you're choosing a team of knowledgeable caregivers and specialists who dedicate their lives to helping you be well.

PAMC is an award-winning trauma center, named the best hospital in Anchorage by the U.S. News & World Report 2023-24 Best Hospitals rankings. We are nationally recognized for our surgery services, including back surgery, neurosurgery, orthopedics and adult cardiac surgery program, which recently earned the highest rating possible from The Society of Thoracic Surgeons and places PAMC among the most elite hospitals for cardiac surgery in the nation.

Our surgeons perform a range of traditional and minimally invasive procedures to diagnose and treat a wide variety of conditions, including:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular conditions
- Gastroenterology disorders
- Kidney conditions
- Lung conditions
- Neurological disorders
- Orthopedic conditions and injuries
- Traumatic injuries

From the moment your procedure is scheduled through recovery, we want every interaction with us to be easy and leave you feeling confident. Our excellent nurses, anesthesiologists and surgeons work collaboratively to deliver whole-person, comprehensive care.

Whether you require a same-day outpatient procedure or a multispecialty operation, talk with your provider about choosing PAMC for your surgical needs.

For more information, visit [providence.org/alaska](https://www.providence.org/alaska).

Starting January 1, 2024, you'll see changes to your pharmacy benefit coverage. Here are highlights to changes in insulin and drugs no longer covered. You will find a complete pharmacy benefit change online at pehtak.com/notices/january-1-2024-prescription-changes.

NEW OPTIONS FOR AFFORDABLE INSULIN

In addition to Humalog, Humulin, Lantus, Lyumjev, and Toujeo, your plan will now add (8) insulin products: Admelog, Apidra, Basaglar, Fiasp, Insulin Lispro, Novolin, Novolog and Rezvoglar. All of the above insulin products will move to a Tier 1 copay. This means most members will pay \$35 a month or less for insulin.

DRUGS NO LONGER COVERED

To the right is a partial list of the medications that will no longer be covered starting January 1, 2024. When there are similar medications available for the same condition, higher-cost options are not always covered. Talk to your doctor about how these changes might impact you. See the chart for some other options that may work for you.

DRUG CATEGORY	DRUGS NO LONGER COVERED	MED ALTERNATIVE
ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER	ADDERALL XR	Amphetamine-dextroamphetamine er cap
ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER	VYVANSE	lisdexamfetamine, amphetamine-dextroamphetamine IR/ER, dexamethylphenidate ER/IR, dextroamphetamine IR/SR, methylphenidate ER/IR
HORMONAL - MEN'S HEALTH	XYOSTED	testosterone cypionate, testosterone enanthate
INFLAMMATORY BOWEL	PENTASA	mesalamine dr cap 400mg, mesalamine dr tab 800mg, 1.2gm, APRISO CAP
INFLAMMATORY BOWEL	LIALDA	mesalamine dr tab 1.2gm, APRISO CAP
RESPIRATORY/ASTHMA OR OTHER LUNG CONDITIONS	ADVAIR DISKUS	ADVAIR HFA, BREO ELLIPTA INH, SYMBICORT AER
RESPIRATORY/ASTHMA OR OTHER LUNG CONDITIONS	FLOVENT DISKUS	ARNUITY ELLIPTA, QVAR REDIHALER AER
RESPIRATORY/ASTHMA OR OTHER LUNG CONDITIONS	FLOVENT HFA	ARNUITY ELLIPTA, QVAR REDIHALER AER
RESPIRATORY/ASTHMA OR OTHER LUNG CONDITIONS	PULMICORT FLEXHALER	ARNUITY ELLIPTA, QVAR REDIHALER AER

GET A FLU SHOT AT NO COST TO YOU

Millions of people get influenza (flu) every year. While it may be common, seasonal flu is a potentially serious disease. The flu can make long-lasting health problems worse. Flu vaccination is an important preventive tool for people with certain chronic health conditions. Flu vaccines have been associated with reduced hospitalizations for those who are chronically ill.

EASY ACCESS TO FLU SHOTS

Flu shots can be obtained on a walk-in basis. Show our member ID card before getting your flu shot. Your flu shot is covered at \$0 when you use a network pharmacy.

Here is a list of major retail chain pharmacies in our network. This is not a complete list. Sign in to optumrx.com for more information or call the number on the back of your member ID card.

- Carrs Pharmacy
- Safeway Pharmacy
- Costco
- Walgreens Pharmacy
- CVS Pharmacy
- Walmart Pharmacy
- Fred Meyer
- Rite Aid

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY AT THE PHARMACY

When your doctor prescribes a medication that can resolve a health issue, it can be a relief — yet medication costs can also add up, even if you have prescription coverage. These tips may help lower your prescription drug costs.

HERE ARE TIPS TO PREVENT ANY SURPRISES AT THE PHARMACY:

- 1. TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR TO USE REAL-TIME BENEFITS CHECK (PRECHECK MYSCRIPT®).** This tool helps doctors check medication coverage and costs before they write a prescription. This makes it easy to compare drug prices, view drug alternatives and helps to:
 - Save time
 - Check if a prior authorization (PA) is needed
 - Request a PA and receive results quickly
- 2. CHOOSE A NETWORK PHARMACY.** If you have prescription coverage, look for pharmacies that are within your insurance provider's network. Otherwise, you might have to pay the full retail price for your prescriptions. Visit optumrx.com>Member tools>pharmacy locator.
- 3. CHECK INTO HOME DELIVERY OPTIONS.** You'll save time on trips to the pharmacy — and you may save money too. In many cases you can order up to a 3-month supply. Visit optumrx.com to enroll.



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This publication was created and sent to you by EBMS on behalf of the Public Education Health Trust.

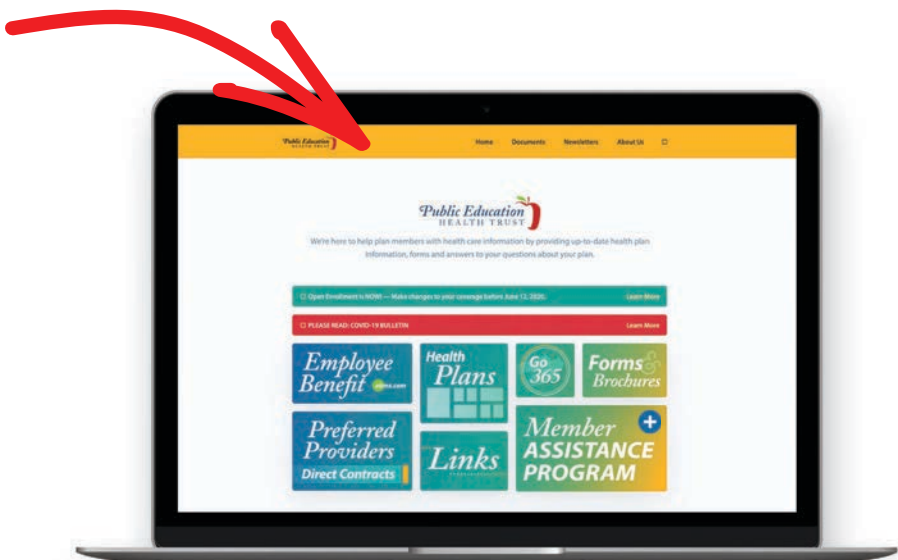
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Visit pehtak.com to access important documents, links and more. While you're there, be on the hunt for the link to be entered to WIN \$50! (Where's that link? Here's a hint: don't miss the important "notices" at pehtak.com.)



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SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER WINNER:
DANIEL TUTTLE