

Employee Benefits Bureau NEWSLETTER



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April Health Observances

Alcohol Awareness
Irritable Bowel
Syndrome
(IBS) Awareness
Nat'l Autism Awareness
National Child Abuse
Prevention
National Donate Life
National Minority Health
Oral Cancer Awareness

GOOD MORNING QUOTES

*"It's so easy to be grateful
for a flower, for a bug,
for a beautiful day."*

- LOUIE SCHWARTZBERG -



Help For SoNM Employees In These Challenging Times



My Stress Tools is an online suite of stress management and resilience-building resources which includes:

- Training Videos
- Meditation
- Relaxation Music
- Stress Tests
- A Journaling Feature
- and much more!

My Stress Tools help you understand the root causes of your stress and give you the help you need to dramatically reduce your stress and build your resilience.

During these unprecedented times, the Employee Benefit Bureau would like to provide some helpful resources to support the health, safety, and wellness of our employees. Working with The Solutions Group, the SoNM EAP provide, we've created a list of resources we would like to share that can help support the mental well-being of our employees and their families during this complicated time.



Resources and materials to help improve one's well-being:

- To register visit My Stress Tools: <https://mystresstools.com/registration/tsg-NM>
- To learn how StressStop works: <https://vimeo.com/291304178>
- Managing Stress in Difficult Times: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/6707334695879970443>
- Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring the Corona virus: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>
- Parents Who Are Now Homeschooling Your Child – We care about you too! Attached is a great link to help educate and entertain your student (and you!) when you are out of ideas! Please remember to take care of yourself parents: <https://www.mybenefitsnm.com/Documents/TSG-Resources-Education-Homeschooling.pdf>
- Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-cov/about/coping.html>
- Taking Care of Your Emotional Health: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>
- Helping Children Cope with Emergencies: <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>
- For parents, prioritizing your own well-being benefits your whole family: <https://childmind.org/article/self-care-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>
- ...and much more! To take a look at all EAP has to offer: www.mybenefitsnm.com/EmployeeAssistancePlan.htm

Employee Benefit Reminders

Make Sure Your Benefits Are Ready When You Need Them

Employees elect benefits for protection of an injury or illness by enrolling in Medical Insurance and/or Disability coverage to help during this common life event. While it's important to take care of ourselves during an injury or illness, it is also important to make sure elected benefits are properly set up and maintained so they will continue working correctly when they are needed the most. Please keep in mind that benefit premium payments must be kept up to date if an employee is out on leave, or claiming disability. Taking a moment to review elected benefits will ensure they are entered correctly, and will help avoid any interruption of benefits. Below are some helpful tips to confirm Medical and Disability premium payments are current, and how to apply for the Disability coverage benefit offered by the SoNM.

Premium Payments

- Log into SHARE
- Go to Payroll window
- Tap on each pay advise (listed by date, most recent first)
- Confirm deductions for all elected benefits are shown in the "Before/After-Tax Deductions" section.

Applying for Disability

- Confirm 12 consecutive months of Disability premiums have been paid
- Read the Disability Policy, found at: <https://www.mybenefitsnm.com/Documents/Disability-Policy-01.15.2020-Fillable-Forms.pdf>
- Fill out the Disability Claim Form (see link below), then contact HR Rep. <https://www.mybenefitsnm.com/Documents/Acknowledgements FormsFillable.pdf>

Self-Pay premiums during COVID-19

In order to help keep our employees safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Employee Benefits Bureau will accept employee's personal checks for Self-Pay premium payments. Self-pay members will be responsible for any return-check fee (\$35) due to insufficient funds.

Employees must continue to submit Self-Pay Premiums to Human Resource (HR) Representatives; this will ensure HR Reps will have all the records needed to track employee payments efficiently. **Note: All Payments must be made payable to the Risk Management Division.**

LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP): Employees on LWOP are responsible for paying 100% of the gross premium (both employee AND employer portion) of all elected health benefit coverages. Premium payment is due no later than the Friday following the end of the pay period.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FML): If an employee is on both LWOP and FML, then the employee is responsible for paying only employee share of the gross premium of all elected health benefit coverages. Employees are given a 30-day grace period from the end of each pay period to make that payment. Failure to submit payment within 30-days from the end of each pay period will result in loss of benefit coverage. Please review the "Self-Pay Premium Situations" section of the RMD Administrative Guide found at www.mybenefitsnm.com/Forms, Guidelines, and Policies.

DISABILITY: This includes employees receiving Disability benefits while on a LWOP status. Employees on Short-Term Disability must continue to pay their disability premium to be eligible for Disability benefits. Employee is required to pay premium due for all other benefits. Once an employee has been approved and is receiving Long-Term benefits, Disability premiums are waived, but benefit premium payments must continue to be paid.

Reminder: Once on Long Term Disability and approved for SSID or PERA, employee is responsible for repayment of any over-payment received.

HR Corner

Employee Benefit Premium Deductions

In order to determine if employee's benefit premiums have been deducted, HR Reps can run the following Query: NMS_BN_DEDUCTIONS_NOT_TAKEN (Deductions Not Taken Report), which will show if employees owe any Benefit Premiums. This query should be run Wednesday or Thursday following payroll.

Self-Pay Premiums During COVID-19

Please utilize the updated Leave Without PAY (LWOP) Benefit Premium Transmittal Form for members currently paying Self-Pay premiums. Members must also sign the COVID-19 State of Emergency Acknowledgement Form.

Original Acknowledgement Form goes to employee for their records. Place a copy in employee's personnel records, and submit a copy, with the Transmittal Form (link below) and payment, to Risk Management Division.

<https://www.mybenefitsnm.com/Documents/Transmittal-Form-3-20-20-COVID-19-Memorendum-Final.pdf>

EBB-HR Meeting

The Employee Benefits Bureau will continue with our **Tuesday HR Meeting**, with the next meeting scheduled for **April 21st**. The information that will be covered is **Refund Requests, EAP, and Medical Benefits**. If you are unable to attend the live webinar, you can go to www.mybenefitsnm.com. All HR webinars are recorded and archived for your review and reference. HR's, please watch your inbox for the registration link.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Stay far enough away from others to avoid and slow the spreading of a virus. Read the activity examples below for things to avoid and what you can do instead during social distancing

Source: WebMD.com, APA.org



Sometimes social distancing can cause feelings of depression, anxiety, and frustration. If you feel like you need help overcoming these feelings, contact EAP at 1.855.231.7737, or your medical provider.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE SoNM MEDICAL CARRIERS **PRESBYTERIAN** Health Plan, Inc.**Presbyterian Health Plan announces no cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing and video visits**

To help prevent community spread and ensure access to care, Presbyterian Health Plan is suspending cost-sharing on COVID-19 tests for its SoNM health plan members, ensuring affordability is not a barrier to the individuals who are recommended for testing by their doctor or a public health authority.

“Once it is determined by a medical professional that a COVID-19 test should occur, we want to ensure that our members have no financial barriers for that test,” said Brandon Fryar, president, Presbyterian Health Plan. “In addition, should a member have symptoms, we want them to get care as soon as possible in their home through a free video visit – allowing for immediate access to care and preventing community spread.”

Presbyterian Health Plan members can get access to video visits by visiting <https://www.phs.org/tools-resources/member/video-visit/Pages/default.aspx>.

“It is important that the community understands their options and that free testing and care is available,” said Fryar.

About Presbyterian Healthcare Services

Presbyterian Healthcare Services exists to improve the health of patients, members and the communities we serve. Presbyterian is a locally owned, not-for-profit healthcare system of nine hospitals, a statewide health plan and a growing multi-specialty medical group. Founded in New Mexico in 1908, it is the state’s largest private employer with more than 13,000 employees.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS:

Seek help or call your healthcare provider for medical advice if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing.

Source: www.cdc.gov



**BlueCross BlueShield
of New Mexico**

Blue Cross Blue Shield announces no cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing and video visits

In times of uncertainty, your habits can ground you. There has never been a better time to upgrade your self-care:

- Reduce sugar intake, eat more whole foods – greens, veggies, lean protein, clean water
- Move your body frequently, enjoy the sun and spring
- Rest more. Keep a consistent sleep and rise time
- Practice physical distancing and social embracing – call the people that matter and those that live alone
- Turn off fear-based media, read a book, or be creative

When feeling restless, get up and move. When feeling overwhelmed, practice a minute of mindfulness or deep breathing. When the world seems uncontrollable, focus on what you can control.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield offers online and telephonic tools such as:

Well onTarget:

- *Self-Management Programs*
- *Interactive: Manage Stress, Nutrition, Sleep, Financially Fit, Blood Pressure*
- *Educational: Preventive Health, Chronic Conditions, Managing Metabolic Syndrome*
- *Mental wellbeing support topics: children stress/depression, elderly stress/depression, Covid-19*
- *Explore Cards – videos, podcasts, articles*
- *Personal Challenges: Resources and information on physical activity, nutrition, relaxation techniques, and financial wellness.*

24/7 Nurseline: Resource for members, **especially those not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms**, to relieve the burden on the health care system (e.g., ERs, Urgent Care, doctors). Staffed by registered nurses, the 24/7 Nurseline provides answers to general health questions and guides members to their primary care physician, urgent care center, the ER or other care as necessary. There is also an audio library of more than 1,000 health topics. Help can be reached by calling the Health Advocate number on the back of your insurance card.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, Presbyterian Health Plan and Blue Cross Blue Shield of NM encourage members to visit:

- **New Mexico Department of Health:** <https://nmhealth.org/about/erd/ideb/ncov/> or <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **World Health Organization:** <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- **855-600-3453 NM Dept. of Health COVID-19 hotline**

Staying Healthy and Calm During Stressful Times

Learning to stay calm in times of stress will not only have immediate soothing effects; it can also, over time, lead a happier, healthier life.

FOCUS ON WHAT IS IN YOUR CONTROL. Follow everyday preventive actions to keep you and your family healthy. Keep informed, but avoid excessive exposure to mass media and social media.

MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY AMIDST CHANGE. If you are working an adjusted schedule or teleworking, continue to maintain a regular sleep cycle. Adapt your exercise routine to a home workout.

REMAIN IN THE PRESENT. If you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened – and may never happen – tune into the sights, sounds, tastes, and other sensory experiences in your immediate moment. Log into [MystressTools](#), your FREE online resilience-building resources, which includes Relaxation Music, Guided Meditations and mindfulness tools.

STAY CONNECTED. Talk to family and trusted friends about what you are feeling. While heeding social distancing, be careful not to completely isolate. Connect with friends and loved ones by reaching out via phone call, text, or video communication.

GET SUPPORT. If you or any family member is feeling particularly anxious or could benefit from an objective ear, reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for added professional assistance.

Available any time, any day, your EAP is a free, confidential benefit. Your EAP benefit offers 3 FREE sessions to help you and yours balance work, family, and personal life issues. Call us 24/7 at [855.231.7737](tel:855.231.7737) for your confidential session.

For many more wonderful resources from our EAP provider for this and many other needs, please visit the EAP Benefit page of our website: www.mybenefitsnm.com

COVID-19 RESOURCES FREE LIVE WEBINARS *Managing Stress in Difficult Times*

Human beings like certainty. We are hard-wired to want to know what is happening when and to notice things that feel threatening to us. When things feel uncertain or when we don't generally feel safe, it's normal to feel stressed," says Doreen Marshall, Ph.D., a psychologist who partners with the National Council for Behavioral Health and an expert on suicide prevention and stress reduction. Currently, many of us are worrying about COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus. We feel "under the gun" to do even more with less as public fear and anxiety continue to rise. How do we manage our anxiety? What can we do to help ourselves remain calm and centered amidst panic and uncertainty? This webinar will focus on answering those questions and learning ways to de-stress. All are welcome to attend.

Please register for the session that works best for your schedule.

SESSION
10 - April 29, 2020 | 9:00 - 10:00 AM

REGISTER

For more useful webinars, please take a look at what your Employee Assistance Program benefit has to offer: <https://www.solutionsbiz.com/SONM/Pages/Recorded-Webinars.aspx>





**STAY WELL
HEALTH CENTER**
Serving SoNM/LPB Employees
Covered under a SoNM
Employee Medical Plan

We have begun implementing virtual and telephone visits that will allow you to access care from one of our providers without coming into the health center. We will still see patients in the center if necessary, but our goal is to mitigate exposure to patients and staff and allow people access to care from the safety of their home.

- 1) Any scheduled in-office visits will be converted to virtual or phone encounters if applicable (some patients may require in office visits), with a phone call a day prior to scheduled appointment.
- 2) Sick or same day visits will be scheduled in the same manner.
- 3) Virtual visits require an email address, access to a computer/laptop with a camera. Link for video visit will be sent to email provided.
- 4) At time of appointment, you will sign on to Microsoft Teams calendar invite emailed to you.
- 5) Telephonic encounters will receive a call from the health center at time of appointment.

Please note that we are not testing for COVID-19 virus in the health center. Patients will be triaged when calling to determine what best course of action needs to be taken.

Call **827.2485** to schedule your virtual/telephonic appointment today.

A Message from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NM

Most of our lives have been impacted by COVID-19 over the last few weeks, and we hope you are all staying safe and healthy. Times of change bring a lot of uncertainty; however, your health and wellbeing equally remain our top priority at Blue Cross and Blue Shield as we continue to care for our members. We understand that many are facing challenges due to the stress of the pandemic that has impacted all of us in many ways. We wanted to provide you with some available resources that can assist in the weeks ahead. Listed below are four podcasts with tips to stay active and committed to your wellbeing goals during this time of social distancing.

Available Resources:

- Stay calm and protect your mental health by [Finding Your Balance](#) while quarantined.
- [Tips for Healthy Fridge & Pantry](#) – Ideas for preparing healthy meals with foods you have on hand.
- Try these [Relaxation Techniques](#) to keep stress at a minimum and reduce its effects on your life.
- Take steps to [Limit Tobacco Use](#) during the pandemic.

While this may not be the 2020 vision you had in mind, your wellbeing goals can remain on track. We encourage you to listen to these podcasts and share with your friends and family.

As always, please visit our website at:

<https://www.bcbsnm.com/covid-19.html> for frequently updated information.

Stay healthy and well!



**BlueCross BlueShield
of New Mexico**

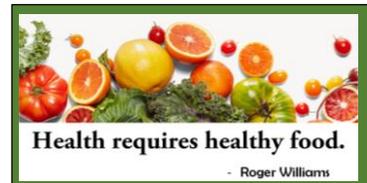
An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Stuffed Baked Potatoes for Breakfast

Topping baked potatoes with all your family's favorite things can be a big hit, and easy too!

- Pierce potatoes with a fork and bake potatoes at 425° until tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool slightly.
- Make a lengthwise cut to open the potato, but don't cut all the way through. Pinch the ends to expose the flesh.
- Top potatoes with some pesto, spinach (or sautéed fresh/frozen veggie) eggs, salsa, red/green chili, sausage, bacon --- the possibilities are endless, and delicious!

This is an easy way to make everyone happy with a healthy, easy breakfast (or any meal), and with items already in your pantry and fridge!



Stay Safe New Mexico!