



# WELLNESS WORKS

## *around the state*

MAINE MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH TRUST

SPRING 2012

### What Do You Think? Simple Newsletter Survey

If someone says they are “all ears,” they are very interested in hearing about something. Do you have something to tell us about this newsletter? We want to hear from YOU! The Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees is considering some updates to the quarterly *Wellness Works Around the State* newsletter and would like your input.

**One way we reach out to our thousands of members and their families to share information and to assist in improving their health is through this newsletter. We would like your help in making this publication as good as it can be.**

In order to help us be sure we are providing useful information to you and your family, please take a few minutes to preview a quick survey on page 2. We want to know about you, how often you read the newsletter, what are your favorite features, and more. There are four easy ways to reach us. Please choose the easiest way for you to tell us what you think.

- **Online.** Go to [www.mmeht.org](http://www.mmeht.org) and click on “What’s New” and select “Newsletter Survey”
- **Phone.** Call MMEHT at 1-800-852-8300 and mention you would like to do the survey and our Service Representatives will be pleased to ask you the questions and record your answers.
- **Email.** Scan and email the completed survey to [wellness@memun.org](mailto:wellness@memun.org)
- **Fax.** Fax the completed survey to (207) 624-0166.

Please be sure to contact us by May 15 in order to be eligible for a drawing for a MMEHT Wellness Works back pack and water bottle. We look forward to hearing from you.

There’s lots of people in this world who spend so much time watching their health that they haven’t the time to enjoy it.

~Josh Billings



### Health Care Reform Update

Recently, the federal health care reform law, also known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), is in the news. PPACA was originally signed into law on March 23, 2010. Now two years old, this law is complex in both scale and scope of changes and has a long phase-in period through 2018. For more information, please visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

Since 2010, the Health Trust has implemented more than 100 medical plan document amendments required by PPACA. These included expanded coverage for adult children to age 26, removal of lifetime dollar limits, and expanded preventive care with no cost sharing.

Recently, at the end of March, the US Supreme Court heard arguments regarding the constitutionality of some parts of the law. A Supreme Court decision is expected in the summer of 2012.

In the midst of uncertainty, the Trust continues to conduct ongoing strategy discussions and to refine future direction. In the short-term, the Trust will continue to address and implement any necessary compliance requirements of the Act.

### Spring 2012

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# What Do You Think?

## Wellness Works Around The State Newsletter Survey

### Choose the easiest way for you to submit this survey to us.

- ◆ **Online.** Go to [www.mmeht.org](http://www.mmeht.org) and click on "What's New" and select "Newsletter Survey"
- ◆ **Phone.** Call MMEHT at 1-800-852-8300 and we will ask you the questions and record your answers.
- ◆ **Email.** Complete the survey and scan and email it to [wellness@memun.org](mailto:wellness@memun.org)
- ◆ **Fax.** Complete the survey and fax it to (207) 624-0166.

### 1) Tell Us About You

Are you an  employee  retiree  spouse

What City/Town do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2) Tell Us How Often You Read The Newsletter

The newsletter is mailed to your home 4 times a year.

Is that  just enough  not enough  too often

Do you read it regularly?  yes  no

### 3) Tell Us How The Newsletter Looks To You

Is our newsletter  easy to read  hard to read

Is the print size  just right  too small  too large

Do you like the artwork and graphics?  just right  time for an update

### 4) Tell Us What You Think About These Regular Features

**Health Promotion Articles** (Example: "Tick Alert – Protect Yourself!")

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Trustee Officer and MMEHT Staff Changes**

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Benefits** (Medical, EAP, Dental, Vision, Disease Mgmt)

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Personal Success Stories** (Diabetes Program Graduates)

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Important Plan Changes and Information** (usually in different color paper in center of newsletter)

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Nutrition and Exercise and Recipe Tips**

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Quarterly Check-Up Feature** (Example: "Allergies")

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Participating Employer Wellness Highlights** (Example: Yarmouth Police Department – Fit for Duty and Fit for Life)

Helpful

Not Helpful

**Newsletter Search Contest**

Helpful

Not Helpful

### 5) What can we include or remove to make the newsletter more helpful to you?

**Include:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Remove:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please share any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding the quarterly newsletter.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for participating in this survey. We appreciate your input.**

Please enter my name in a drawing for a MMEHT Wellness Works backpack and water bottle.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Changing Your Primary Care Physician

When is the last time you really looked at your medical ID card? Many of the Health Trust medical plans require that you choose a primary care physician (PCP) that participates in Anthem's network of in-state physicians. The PCP is responsible for coordinating your medical care and referring you to specialists as needed. Please read some common questions and answers below that will help you receive the highest level of benefits on your medical plan.

**Q1. How do I be sure my PCP is correctly printed on my identification card?**

**A1.** Please remember to list the name of your PCP on your enrollment form.

**Q2. What if I want or need to change my PCP?**


**A2.** If your PCP leaves the area, or you would like to see a different PCP, please call the Health Trust to initiate that change. It is not up to the physician's office to make that change for you. If you see a different PCP without notifying the Health Trust, your claims could be denied or paid at a lower benefit level.

**Q3. How come I just received a letter from Anthem notifying me that my PCP is no longer in the network?**

**A3.** Sometimes providers retire or change medical practices. When that happens, you may receive a letter that your PCP is no longer in the network. You will need to select a new PCP and call the Health Trust or fill out a new form to make the change.

**Q4. I have been with my PCP for years, how do I find information regarding other PCPs?**

**A4.** It is important that you find a PCP you feel comfortable with – someone who will be a partner in your care. When you look for a PCP, think about what's important to you. How far are you willing to travel to see your PCP? Do you prefer seeing a woman or a man? What special training would you like your PCP to have?



You have the power to choose your Primary Care Provider, ask questions, and live a healthy life. You are your best health care provider. To learn more, go to [www.GetBetterMaine.org](http://www.GetBetterMaine.org)

The **Get Better Maine** consumer engagement campaign was designed to help Maine people address some of the most common problems they have had with the health care system, such as fragmented care and miscommunication, and encourage them to take the following steps:

- Look for a Primary Care Provider (PCP) who is right for you and your family.
- Learn all you can about your health and how community programs can help you.
- Live a long and healthy life by taking an active role in your care.

Please take the time to look at your identification card and those of your covered family members to see if the PCP listed on the card is the physician you are currently seeing. If it is not, please select a new PCP and call a Health Trust Service Representative at 1-800-852-8300, Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm. You may also contact us at [htservice@memun.org](mailto:htservice@memun.org). We will be happy to help you make the change.

## Anthem EAP Offers Free Services

Life is not always easy. When the going gets tough, Anthem Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is one place you can turn to for help from caring, experienced professionals. This program is available to employees whose employer offers a Trust medical plan. Employees on the medical plan received a tri-fold brochure with a wallet card in an Anthem envelope in March.

Anthem EAP offers free information and advice to help solve a wide range of problems – from relationship and family concerns, anxiety, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, stress, grief and even financial, legal, child care and elder care issues. Anthem EAP offers a multitude of services to employees and dependents:

- Free confidential telephone help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Free face-to-face counseling sessions (up to 3 per issue)
- Free on-line resources with major headings in parenting, aging, balancing, thriving, working, and living with subtopics under each.
- Free on-line services including:
  - ✦ Free Identify Theft Protection program
  - ✦ Free Commonly Requested Legal Forms such as wills and powers of attorney
  - ✦ Free Smoking Cessation (Live Tobacco Free) program
- Free on-line seminars. Upcoming in May: *The Best Summer Ever*. Learn strategies to create a rich and rewarding summer experience for your child.

To find the services that are right for you, feel free to visit [www.anthemEAP.com](http://www.anthemEAP.com) for a 10 minute orientation video or call Anthem EAP directly **1-800-647-9151**. You may also contact Health Trust Member Service at 1-800-852-8300 or email to [htservice@memun.org](mailto:htservice@memun.org) or visit our website at [www.mmeht.org](http://www.mmeht.org) and click on "What's New" for a link to Anthem EAP.

# Tick Alert – Protect Yourself!

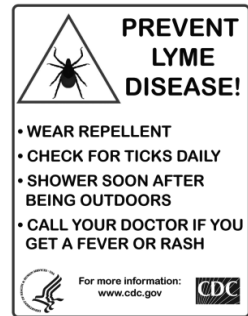
**TICK ALERT!** This year's unusually warm winter and early spring mean ticks have become active earlier than usual. A longer tick season is bad news for humans and animals because ticks carry bacteria that spread disease. The biggest problem in Maine is the deer tick, which spreads Lyme disease in humans and pets. Adult ticks are active and looking to feed earlier, and lack of snow has meant it's easier for them to find a host, be it a deer, dog or human.

**What is Lyme Disease?** Lyme disease has become an increasingly common disease in Maine as a result of a growing deer tick population. Lyme disease is transmitted by an infected deer tick and can cause symptoms including, fever, headache, fatigue and a characteristic bulls-eye rash. If caught early, Lyme disease can be successfully treated with antibiotics. If it is left untreated or undiagnosed, the infection can spread to the joints, heart, and nervous system. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has put together an informative website on Lyme disease, which you can access at [www.cdc.gov/lyme](http://www.cdc.gov/lyme)

**Protect Yourself!** Using the right insect repellent and other preventative actions can discourage ticks, mosquitoes, and other biting insects from landing on you. Repellents are available to protect you from insects and give you the length of protection you need, based on your planned activity. Want to know more about what insect repellent will work best for you and your unique situation? The Environmental Protection Agency has created an interactive website to help you choose a repellent that is right for you, visit <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/index.cfm>

There are many people who are nervous about the chemicals found in pesticides and insect repellents and rightly so! Everyone should be aware of the health and safety precautions when using any form of pesticide. For this reason, the Environmental Protection Agency has created a clearinghouse of fact sheets that contain general and chemical-specific information on pesticides. You can access these fact sheets at [www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets)

Looking for someone to come do the work for you? The Maine Board of Pesticide Control keeps an up-to-date list of licensed companies offering tick and mosquito control services. So when the biting gets to be too much, look one of these companies up to help you out! A complete list can be found at [www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/public/mosquito\\_control\\_list.htm](http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/public/mosquito_control_list.htm)



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## Choose Fish and Poultry for a Longer Life

You may have seen it on the evening news or read about it in the paper, but yet another study has linked red-meat consumption with increased mortality risk, while documenting that substituting fish, poultry or other protein sources could help you live longer. Harvard researchers looked at data from two large studies of 83,644 women and 37,698 men, among whom 23,926 deaths were recorded during the study period. One serving a day of red meat was associated with a 12% greater chance of dying, while a serving of processed meat such as bacon or sausage was linked to a 20% greater mortality risk.

This does not mean that everyone should suddenly become vegetarian, but simply replacing one daily serving of red meat with fish, poultry, nuts, legumes, low-fat dairy or whole grains was associated with a reduction in the risk of death from 7% to 19%. The greatest benefit came from substituting nuts for red meat. How about trying ground turkey instead of ground beef? See page 7 for a yummy recipe. Try it, you might like it!

*Source: Archives of Internal Medicine*



# Busy Parents Making Time for Exercise

As the weather starts to warm up and we get the urge to go outside, busy parents may find it hard to actually get out of the house and be active! Even though you may be spending the entire day chasing around kids, most caregivers get much less exercise than the recommended 30-60 minutes most days of the week – unless you are able to squeeze an actual workout into your day. The difference between chasing the kids around or picking up after them all day and actually getting in a workout is your heart rate. In order to reap the best benefits from exercise, it is important to get your heart rate elevated and keep it that way for a minimum of 10 minutes at a time. A study conducted at Central College in Pella, Iowa found that among moms with kids under six, most thought they got an hour of heart-healthy activity every day. However, when their activity was tracked and monitored, most of them got less than 15 minutes! So if you are a busy parent, how can you get more exercise?

- **Schedule your workouts** and put them on the calendar, just like any other appointment. Studies show that people who make a commitment to exercise are more likely to do it.
- **Make it work.** In other words, find a gym that offers childcare, exercise during your lunch hour, or trade off with your spouse or another busy parent for childcare and workout times. For instance, one will workout in the morning while the other watches the kids, and then at night it flip flops – both sides benefit!
- **Make play time with your children more active.** Dance, run, play tag or push the little ones in a stroller while you get your feet moving.
- **Make exercise a family affair.** Take classes together, organize family bike rides, or just find activities that you like to do as a group. Not only will you be helping yourself stay fit, but you'll also get your kids into a lifelong habit of physical activity that will boost their health too!

*Source: MSNBC*

## Tanning Booths and Skin Cancer

May is Melanoma Awareness Month. Melanoma is the most dangerous and fatal form of skin cancer that exists and we are seeing rates of melanoma increase in both Maine and across the country. With proms, formals and bathing suit weather right around the corner, many people are shocked at how pale their skin has gotten over these past few winter months and feel the need to “pre-tan” or “get a base coat” so they don’t burn when they go out in the sun. However, even with all the attention paid to tanning beds and booths in recent year, many people don’t realize the dangers of tanning. The truth is **tanning booths are far more risky than sun exposure**. They emit up to 15 times more ultraviolet (UV) radiation than the sun. Each year, over 2.5 million teens use tanning booths, including 35% of girls age 17! In fact, many teens begin the cycle of tanning as early as the age 13!

### Plain and simple – Avoid tanning booths.

Tanning booths emit mostly UVA rays, which penetrate to the dermal-epidermal junction of the skin, where they can damage your cells’ DNA at precisely the place where most melanomas begin. This causes abnormal cells to begin to grow that can cause melanoma- the deadliest form of skin cancer. Tanning booths also emit some UVB rays, which increases your chances of getting melanomas as well as other types of skin cancer (basal cells and squamous cells).

### Some Facts of Tanning:

1. The World Health Organization has determined that UV rays from tanning beds cause cancer.
2. People who use tanning beds once a month before the age of 35 increase their melanoma risk by 75%.
3. Melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, kills one person every 50 minutes. It is the second most common cancer for young adults aged 15-29 years old. Rates for melanoma are increasing faster than nearly all other cancers.
4. It doesn’t take a sunburn – tan skin is damaged skin.
5. For most people, 5-10 minutes of unprotected sun 2-3 times a week is enough to help your skin make Vitamin D, which is essential for your health. Getting more sun won’t increase your Vitamin D level, but it will increase your risk of skin cancer. Vitamin D also comes from orange juice, milk, fish, and supplements.



There is nothing wrong with pale skin...in fact in generations past it was a much sought after look! However, if you want to look tan, try a self-tanning product, but be sure to also use sunscreen with SPF 30 as most self tanners do not provide any sun protection. For more information on teens and tanning or skin cancer, visit the Melanoma Foundation of New England at [www.mfne.org](http://www.mfne.org).

*Source: Melanoma Foundation of New England*



# Quarterly Check-up: Allergies

On-Call is a medical self-care program for members of the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust. It helps individuals to assess a variety of health concerns by answering three basic questions:

- *Is this a medical emergency?*
- *Should I see or call my doctor?*
- *Can I treat myself at home and if so, how?*

## **The 2012 spring quarter On-Call topic is Allergies:**

Allergic rhinitis (hay fever) is the most common respiratory allergy and is your body's response to an inhaled substance that causes an allergic reaction. For most people, allergy season can be a period of minor discomfort. But for others, pollen, dust, and animal dander can cause significant physical problems and be a year-round challenge. Among adults, dust (especially dust mites), animal dander, molds, feathers, and pollen are the most common allergens. Among infants, animal dander and dust are the most common allergens.

In cases of severe allergy, professional medical consultation is recommended to determine the actual substances that cause the allergic reaction. Skin or blood tests may help determine the specific allergen. In some cases, hypo-sensitization injections help people with allergies become less sensitive to the allergen. Most people who have mild to moderate hay fever can follow the home care procedures listed. Whenever possible, avoiding the known allergens is the best course of action.

### **Signs and Symptoms:**

- Runny nose, sneezing.
- Watery, itchy eyes.
- Wheezing.
- Stuffy head, clogged sinuses, headache.
- Throat irritation, from postnasal drip.

### **Talk with Your Doctor if:**

- You have difficulty breathing or severe wheezing.
- Nasal discharge is green or yellow.
- You would like more effective relief from your allergy symptoms than you are getting with Home care.
- Your symptoms are getting worse.

### **Medication:**

- Antihistamines may help relieve your symptoms. Use with caution; read the labels.
- Nasal decongestants for stuffy head (don't use them for more than three days).
- Do not give antihistamines or decongestions to children without consulting the doctor first.
- Cough drops will soothe your throat if it's irritated by postnasal drip.

### **Note Well:**

- Blow your nose gently to clear mucus. Do not blow hard, which may cause an ear infection or bloody nose.
- If cutting the lawn, gardening, dusting, or vacuuming aggravates your symptoms, wear an air-filtering mask while doing those chores.
- If you're allergic to molds, consider using an air conditioner with an electrostatic filter during the summer or damp weather.

### **Rest:**

- You may need more rest when an allergic reaction strikes.

### **Prevention:**

- If possible, avoid contact with allergens that you know will bother you.
- Keep house pets out of bedrooms.
- Try to keep your pet clean and groomed.
- Dust allergy can be reduced by wrapping your pillows and mattresses in special covers and washing sheets weekly in hot water (at least 130F).
- Consider using a portable air filter in your bedroom.

*Source: Well Informed 2008*

# Yarmouth Police Department Fit For Duty and Fit For Life

This winter, after attending an on-site MMEHT wellness class, Police Chief, Michael Morrill approached Trust educator, Danielle Yale, with the idea of creating a program specifically targeted to the on-duty and off-duty demands of law enforcement personnel. With many law enforcement personnel throughout the state of Maine, the Trust wellness team thought it was a great idea!

To start, the MMEHT *Wellness Works* team conducted extensive research to identify the unique challenges and training demands faced by law enforcement personnel. Chief Morrill recognized the need for more detailed instruction and helped identify many key topics and objectives. Topics ranged from the fitness status of police officers to shift work demands and nutritional needs of those working rotating and sporadic time frames. The objectives of the program were ideally related to a holistic approach to wellness both off-duty and on-duty. One objective was to provide useful information to assist officers in creating a lifestyle that supports all components of health and wellness throughout the year. Another objective was to prepare officers for their yearly physical agility testing.

The end result was an education program titled “Are You Fit For Duty?” This course provides information and instruction on many topics including health, functional fitness (assessment, weight training, stretching), nutritional needs and balanced diet for shift work, and life and stress management. The reoccurring message in the class is “Being Fit for Duty Means Being Fit for Life.”

At the training session in Yarmouth conducted by Trust *Wellness Works* health educators, Danielle Yale and Abby DiPasquale, police officers listened intently, shared ideas, suggestions, and welcomed the customized information and instruction. The program was very well received by the attendees.

We commend the Yarmouth Police Department for their dedication and commitment to health and wellness. For Yarmouth police officers, being fit for duty means being fit for life which supports the safety and health of the community. Well done Yarmouth Police Department!

If you are interested in offering the “Are You Fit for Duty?” program for first responders at your worksite, please contact Danielle Yale at [dyale@memun.org](mailto:dyale@memun.org).

*A grant from Wellness Works, the health education and promotion program of Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust, provides the necessary funding to help offset the cost of worksite wellness initiatives. If you would like more information on how to get a Wellness Program started at your worksite, please contact MMEHT Health Promotion Manager, Anne Charles at 1-800-852-8300 or via e-mail at [acharles@memun.org](mailto:acharles@memun.org).*



## If the Shoe Fits...

Wear it, but did you know that about one out of four adults wears the wrong-size shoes? Feet grow longer and wider with every passing decade, especially if you gain weight, so your shoe size at age 60 will almost certainly be larger than it was at age 40. With age, your feet lose padding, flatten and are more susceptible to problems that can be worsened by too-tight shoes.

Stop in to your local shoe store to have your feet measured. Your feet may thank you.

*Source: University of California, Berkeley  
Wellness Letter, April 2012*



## Sweet Potato Shepherd's Pie

Oven: 400 degrees

Ingredients:

4 large sweet potatoes, boiled, drained and mashed (season with salt and pepper to your taste)  
1 large sweet onion, chopped  
2 lbs. of lean ground turkey  
2 tablespoons of chili powder  
1 large package of frozen mixed vegetables (corn, peas, carrots, green beans), completely thawed

Start by cooking the sweet potatoes as instructed in the ingredients list. While these are cooking, start the chopped onion in a skillet that has been sprayed with a non-stick oil. Cook until slightly brown. Add the ground turkey and cook until there is no pink, stirring and chopping to create a 'crumble' effect. Drain the fat and mix the chili powder into the turkey for flavoring.

Using a 13x9 baking dish, put in turkey mixture first, vegetables next and top with the mashed sweet potatoes. It's better if the potato is not smooth on top, it will help the potato to brown and crisp a bit, adding more flavor. Bake for about 45 minutes to heat the vegetables and brown the top. Enjoy!



## WELLNESS WORKS

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### Newsletter Search Contest

Do you want a chance to win a Wellness Works gym bag? Take a few minutes and answer the following questions (all answers can be found in articles in this newsletter). Send the answers along with your name, address and phone number to: Wellness Works, 60 Community Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330. You can also e-mail your answers to us at: [wellness@memun.org](mailto:wellness@memun.org). Entries must be received by May 25, 2012. One winner will be drawn at random.

Congratulations to Sandra Mitchell, an employee from the Town of Strong, who won the Winter Newsletter Search Contest!

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer (or former employer, if you are a retiree): \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are three signs of allergies? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why is the 2012 tick season going to be earlier than usual? \_\_\_\_\_
3. List two healthy food alternatives to red meat: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is melanoma? \_\_\_\_\_

