TO BE FORWARDED TO ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES:

American Heart Month Celebrates Great Strides

Death rates from heart disease have fallen significantly since Lyndon B. Johnson signed Proclamation 3566 declaring February American Heart Month to raise awareness and educate the public about our nation’s No. 1 killer, heart disease in 1964.

But the fight is far from over. Heart disease is still the No. 1 killer of Americans and North Dakotans, taking more lives than all forms of cancer combined. With 80 percent of cardiac events being preventable, this February the American Heart Association is urging North Dakotans to focus on their health and learn how to prevent heart disease, especially blood pressure.

Death rates contributed to high blood pressure are on the rise. Over 150,000 North Dakotans are being monitored or treated for high blood pressure. Only 75% have their blood pressure under control. The impact is concerning given 72% of all ND stroke cases and 69% of people who have a first heart attack are identified with high blood pressure of 140/90 or higher.

The good news is that reducing average population systolic blood pressure only 12-13 mmHg could reduce stroke by 37% and deaths from cardiovascular disease by 25%.

Learn your risk: Do you know your blood pressure? Have a discussion with your health professional, including what is your blood pressure goal and what are the best ways to reach your goal.

Take Action: If you are on a medication plan, remember that your medication is important to control and maintain your blood pressure. Never stop treatment on your own.

Whether your blood pressure is high or normal (normal is less than 120 mm HG systolic and less than 80 mm Hg diastolic or < 120/80) lifestyle modifications here provide a great heart-healthy living plan for all of us.

These lifestyle changes may reduce your blood pressure:

- Eating a heart-healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables which includes reducing sodium;
- Enjoy regular physical activity
- Maintaining a healthy weight
✓ Manage stress
✓ Limit alcohol
✓ Avoid tobacco smoke and tobacco products

Tools and Resources:

www.heart.org/hbp
www.heart.org/mylifecheck
www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure
www.millionhearts.hhs.gov

- Information provided by the American Heart Association

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All Members should consult their personal physician before beginning any exercise or weight loss program. Prior to seeking additional services, please refer to your “Certificate of Insurance & Summary Plan Description” for a list of covered services, limitations, and exclusions.