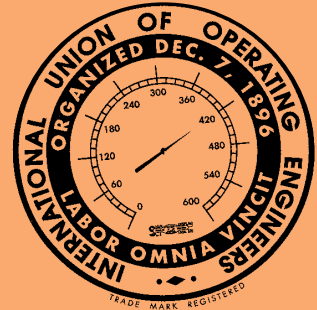


APRIL 2008

HealthLine

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 4
HEALTH & WELFARE PLAN



Dear Health & Welfare Participant:

THE TRUSTEES ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE TWO BENEFIT ENHANCEMENTS to the Health & Welfare Plan: a reduction in hours required for basic eligibility, and the addition of a Back Program component to Best Doctors.

ELIGIBILITY RULE

Beginning with calendar year 2008, participants enrolled through Local 4 will need only 1,000 hours to be insured under the basic rule for the eligibility period effective March 1, 2009 through February 28, 2010. The 1,500-hour rule requirement for Local 4D and the 500-hour rule for the supplemental coverage rule have not changed.

BEST DOCTORS BACK PROGRAM

Best Doctors has expanded the types of medical conditions it will be reviewing for Local 4 Health & Welfare participants to include both acute and chronic back conditions. Using the experience they have developed through their Best Doctors

Occupational Health Institute, they have developed a network of Best Doctors whose data shows that they have consistently better results than other physicians treating similar types of back conditions.

The new Back Program will help Local 4 participants get the best care possible, while Best Doctors serves as an advocate for participants needing this type of care by working as a single point of contact and helping to arrange appointments with the appropriate type of medical specialist. If you think you could benefit from this program, contact Best Doctors at **1-866-904-0910**.

Sincerely,
Your Board of Trustees

Louis G. Rasetta, Chairman	IUOE LOCAL 4
Rodney Gillespie	Louis G. Rasetta, Business Manager
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Also, see page 8 regarding coverage for Smoking Cessation medications and information about our Privacy Policy.

HARVARD HEALTH TIP

A Canadian study of low back pain compared massage therapy with soft-tissue manipulation, exercise, and a sham laser therapy. **Subjects who received massage therapy had less pain and better physical function than those receiving other forms of treatment.**

Source: Harvard Health Publications • www.health.harvard.edu



HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SMOKING-CESSATION AIDS?

1. Most medications that ease withdrawal symptoms do so by replacing some of the nicotine smokers formerly got from tobacco.
 True False
2. With nicotine gum, nicotine is released whenever users start chewing the gum.
 True False
3. Zyban, a prescription antidepressant, helps ex-smokers cope with anxiety, cravings, and other withdrawal symptoms.
 True False
4. It's safe to smoke while using nicotine-replacement therapy.
 True False
5. Combining a nicotine-replacement method with counseling can significantly increase your chance of quitting successfully.
 True False

ANSWERS

1. True—smokers use such drugs in smaller and smaller amounts for a few months, then finally stop using them. 2. True. 3. True—Zyban does not put more nicotine into your body. With Zyban, you continue to smoke when you first start taking the medication, eventually reaching a quit-date, and taking the drug for a period of time after quitting. Studies have shown treatment with Zyban reduced cravings for cigarettes among smokers trying to quit. 4. False—you could overdose on nicotine. 5. True.

UP IN SMOKE

Nicotine dependence is the most common form of chemical dependence in the U.S., **and research suggests nicotine is as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol.** Quitting tobacco is difficult and often requires several attempts; however, in 2006 an estimated 45.7 million American adults were former smokers.

PHONE SUPPORT FOR Quitting Smoking



MOST AMERICANS WHO SMOKE WANT TO QUIT, and getting encouragement by phone can help them reach that goal.

A recent study published in *The Cochrane Library* found smokers who got at least three phone calls from a quit-smoking counselor were more likely to be smoke-free for at least six months, compared with those who got no such phone calls.

The following online cessation resources offer phone follow-up support and other services.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

www.cancer.org

Click on “Guide to Quitting Smoking” under “Find It Fast,” then click on “Find a Quitline or Other Support.”

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION

www.lungusa.org

Search for “Smoking Cessation Support.” The American Lung Association’s online smoking-cessation program, “Freedom From Smoking Online,” is conducted in six modules that can be accessed online

after registering for the free program.

The modules help you determine your readiness to quit smoking and teach stress management/relaxation techniques, specific plans to help you cope with trigger situations, and long-term strategies for maintaining a smoke-free lifestyle.

SMOKEFREE.GOV

www.smokefree.gov

Click on “Talk to an Expert” for assistance from the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Visitors are directed to NCI’s Smoking Quitline, **877-448-7848**, which offers proactive counseling by trained personnel; and an instant messaging live-chat service.

TOBACCOFREE.ORG

www.tobaccofree.org

This site offers lots of cessation support, including directions to call **800-784-8669** for free online phone support from a trained counselor. Visitors who click on “quitting tips” can find a choice of free services, including self-help materials, a referral list of programs in their communities, and one-on-one counseling over the phone.

Your local hospital may have quit-smoking phone support. See your phone book for information.

Mending the Mind: What You Need to Know About Mental Illness

EVERY YEAR, UP TO 54 MILLION AMERICANS SUFFER from a diagnosable mental disorder that interferes with their ability to function in their daily lives.

Yet only 8 million people seek treatment. Those who fail to get the help they need often do so because they don't recognize the symptoms or feel they should be able to "handle their emotions" on their own. The unfortunate result can be a worsening of symptoms and, in some cases, suicide.

The term "mental illness" or "mental health problem" encompasses numerous disorders. Some of the more common mental health problems include depression, anxiety and panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Substance abuse is considered a mental health problem, as well.

Often, mental health problems arise from heredity, changes in brain chemistry, and responses to traumatic events or abusive environments. In other words, a mental illness isn't the fault of the person who's suffering.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Learning the symptoms of mental illness can help you seek treatment for yourself or a loved one.

- **Feeling sad, burned out, or useless.** Everyone feels down from time to time, but if that emotion continues for more than two weeks and is accompanied by feelings of guilt and hopelessness, it could be an indication of depression.

The persistence and severity of such emotions distinguish depression from normal sadness and mood changes.

Other symptoms that characterize depression are sleep problems, loss of self-esteem, and an inability to feel pleasure in formerly enjoyable activities.

- **Ongoing worries and fears.** People who suffer with unrealistic or excessive anxiety and worry about life circumstances could have an anxiety disorder.
- **Sudden, intense apprehension, fear, or panic.** Heart palpitations, chest pain, smothering sensations, dizziness, trembling, and faintness can be signs of panic disorder.
- **Unexplained physical symptoms.** Ongoing physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches, and chronic pain with no explicit cause, can indicate emotional upset or stress overload.
- **Chronic fatigue and lack of energy.** Feeling too tired to do the things you used to love can be a sign of emotional distress or depression.
- **Avoiding other people.** Spending all your time alone instead of with friends or family could be a sign of stress or a social phobia.

People who experience emotional disorders don't have to suffer without help. It's possible to mend the mind through therapies and support services. Don't be afraid to ask for help. It's a sign of strength, not weakness.

To learn more: Mental Health America, www.nmha.org.

MEN AND DEPRESSION

Men often experience depression differently than women and may have different ways of coping with the symptoms. **Men are more likely than women to turn to alcohol or drugs when they are depressed, or become frustrated, discouraged, irritable, angry, and sometimes abusive.** Some men throw themselves into their work to avoid talking about their depression with family or friends, or engage in reckless, risky behavior.



Allergy Alert!

THE FIRST HINTS OF SPRING can be unwelcome for people who have allergies. Trees bud and plants bloom—and that means their pollen will fill the air and keep you from enjoying the outdoors. To get the most out of the season, you'll need to plan ahead.

This checklist can help you get ready:

- **Keep pollen at bay.** Run your air conditioner to keep pollen out of your home as much as possible, or purchase a portable air filter. Remember to change the filter according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Freshen up.** Change your clothes and take a shower after being outside to further cut pollen exposure.
- **Watch the clock.** Plan outdoor activities before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m., when pollen counts are usually lower.
- **Choose wisely.** Watch the forecast and plan outdoor activities for days when humidity is lower and winds are light. This can help reduce your pollen exposure.
- **Ease off of lawn care.** Ask a family member to cut your lawn, or hire someone.

- **Use your dryer.** Clothes, sheets, and towels dried on a clothesline may smell nice, but they can trap pollen.

If you're following these tips but still suffering, there's no need to spend the spring stockpiling tissues. Talk with your doctor. He or she may recommend one or more medications that can help keep your symptoms under control.

Most allergy medications fall into three categories:

1. **Antihistamines**, which can reduce itchy, runny noses and sneezing
2. **Antihistamines combined with decongestants**, which help reduce nasal congestion
3. **Leukotriene antagonists**, which can help prevent the body from developing many allergy symptoms

Your doctor may recommend either an over-the-counter or a prescription drug, depending on the severity of your symptoms and how long they last. He or she also will want to make sure your allergy medication doesn't interfere with any other medications you may be taking or affect other conditions you may have.

Some allergy medications can make you drowsy. If you try one that does, talk with your doctor about a substitute. You don't have to put up with medication side effects—or with sniffles and sneezes.

To learn more: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, www.aaaai.org

ALLERGIES AROUND

In the U.S. an estimated 50 million people suffer from allergies. **Allergies are the fifth leading chronic disease in the U.S. among all ages**, and the third common chronic disease among children under 18 years old. A recent nationwide survey found that more than half of all U.S. citizens test positive to one or more allergens.

BAG IT: HOW TO GROCERY SHOP for Weight Loss

WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO LOSE WEIGHT, the foods you put in your grocery cart can make or break your efforts. It's a simple case of supply and demand—cutting your demand for high-calorie food by reducing your supply.

Bringing food into your home that supports your goal is one of the essential keys to weight loss. Many Americans are overweight because they have too much high-calorie food too often. Making it less available by not buying it can help cut calories and drop pounds.

These shopping strategies can help.

- **Stock up on fresh fruits and vegetables.** Fresh produce is low in calories and, with a few exceptions (avocados and olives), virtually fat-free. Adding two to three servings of fruit and vegetables to every meal can fill you up, leaving less room for higher-fat, higher-calorie foods.

Try to keep salad greens, apples, bananas, carrots, grapes, grapefruit, oranges, tomatoes, and other produce your family likes on hand.

- **Buy snacks in portion-controlled units,** such as 100-calorie cookie packs or ½ cup containers of pudding.

If you're inclined to fill a soup bowl with ice cream when serving yourself from a larger container, buy frozen desserts in convenient ½ cup containers instead of in ½ gallon sizes.

Likewise, having 100-calorie packages of pretzels, chips, or popcorn on hand keeps you from the temptation

of eating handful after handful from a 1-pound bag.

- **Purchase prepped low-calorie food.** For example, buy fresh pineapple or melon chunks from your grocery's salad bar and store them in clear plastic containers at eye level in the fridge. Making weight-friendly choices as easy to reach for as cookies and candy can help make them a healthy habit.
- **Become a label reader.** There's no substitute for reading and comparing labels of similar products.
- **Avoid the cookie and snack aisles.** Not walking down the aisles lined with baked goods, snacks, and cake and cookie mixes reduces the temptation to toss them into your cart.
- **Put more value on healthy choices.** Many of us think nothing of paying \$4 for a cup of coffee every morning but won't pay \$3.99 for blueberries, which are packed with nutrients.

Stocking up on healthy, low-fat, high-fiber foods is key to any weight-loss plan because you can't eat what you don't have in your cupboard or fridge. By limiting your household choices to healthy, lower-calorie foods, you'll be well on your way to a healthy weight.

To learn more: American Dietetic Association: www.eatright.org.





IS YOUR MEDICATION **Working for You?**

IF A DOCTOR HAS PRESCRIBED A MEDICATION FOR YOU, take a moment to ask: Is this drug really right for me? And am I taking it effectively?

Medications are serious business and should never be taken lightly. Prescription drugs can be lifesaving or life-enhancing, but if not used properly, they can be the exact opposite.

To help ensure your treatment is safe and effective, ask your doctor or pharmacist the following questions whenever you're prescribed a medication.

Q: How should I take this drug?

A: Most Americans—nearly three out of four—aren't taking their medications correctly, according to a recent National Community Pharmacists Association survey of 1,000 people. Some never bother to fill their prescriptions, others stop taking a drug without getting their doctors' OK, and still others don't follow label instructions.

Q: How will I know it's working?

A: Often, a routine health screening can clearly show if the drug you're taking is effective.

For example, a blood sugar test can show if a diabetes medication is working; a cholesterol test can tell you about your cholesterol medication; an eye exam can reveal if a glaucoma drug is working.

With certain other drugs, such as pain medications, only the person who takes it can know for sure. People also may have varied responses to muscle relaxants, antibiotics, or antihistamines.

If your symptoms aren't improving, be sure to let your doctor or pharmacist know so the treatment can be adjusted, if necessary.

Q: If I feel better, should I stop taking the medication?

A: Feeling better is what we all want—that's the goal. But if starting to feel better is the only assessment of whether you should take your medication, not taking it could be a dangerous mistake.

Some drugs—no problem. If allergy symptoms get better, you may do just fine without the antihistamine. However, some drugs can cause serious problems if you stop taking them too soon, for example, antibiotics and cholesterol, diabetes, and blood pressure medications.

In some cases, going off a drug abruptly can cause serious short-term problems, as well. For example, blood pressure can actually shoot higher than it was before treatment if you stop taking your blood pressure medication abruptly.

When in doubt, check with your doctor or pharmacist before stopping a medication.

Q: Is this drug really right for me?

A: If you've been taking a particular drug for years to treat a chronic condition, it could be time for you to review your prescription with your health care provider. There may be a newer drug that's more effective, has fewer side effects, or can substitute for multiple drugs.

By using medications as prescribed and communicating with your doctor or pharmacist, you'll increase the odds that you'll get healthy or stay healthy.

To learn more: MedlinePlus, www.medlineplus.gov, click on "Drugs and Supplements"

TOOLS FOR CHANGE

Go for the Goal

In a garden, you plant seeds, nurture them, and trust that the plants will reach your goal of growing strong and healthy. You can use the same process to plan your strategy for making healthy lifestyle changes. Follow these steps:

- **Set realistic goals.** Taking small steps toward a larger goal will put you in a better position to succeed. For example, if you need to lose weight, plan to lose no more than ½ to 2 pounds a week.
- **Put your goals in writing.** Describe each goal in detail—the more detail, the better. For example, rather than stating, “I want to cut back on calories,” write down exactly how many calories you plan to cut and how you will accomplish that every day.
- **Make a detailed plan.** Decide what you must do to nurture your goals, and determine the tools and training you’ll need. Ask yourself, “What can I do tomorrow to get closer to my goal?” Then list three things and schedule time to do them.
- **Pay attention to your progress.** Keep track of your past goals and progress, such as pounds lost or exercise goals attained. After all your hard work, it’s important to recognize how far you have come.

GET A NEW Fitness Attitude

YOU’VE BEEN DOING THE SAME OLD TIRED GYM ROUTINE FOR MONTHS. You’ve fallen off the fitness wagon due to injury or a hectic work schedule and want to get back in the swing. You’ve been exercising regularly but can’t muster the enthusiasm to increase your workout’s intensity so you’ll progress.

Sound familiar? If so, it’s time for a motivation makeover.

The following strategies help inspire you to maintain fitness motivation—whether you’re an elite athlete or a couch potato trying to get into shape.

PERSONALIZE YOUR GOAL

If you’re starting a new workout routine or want to jump-start an old one, begin by identifying a highly motivating objective.

Your goal doesn’t have to be huge, but it has to be specific.

For example, make it your mission to participate in an upcoming fitness event in your community that you’ll need to train for, such as a walk-a-thon, a 10K road race, or a century run.

Fitness events are motivating because you know you have to show up somewhere, other people are going to be there, and you may even have to pay

an entry fee. It’s encouraging and inspiring to take on a significant goal and have other people present while it’s taking place.

COMMIT TO AN HOUR A DAY

Most people can get themselves in decent shape by exercising for an hour five days a week with two days off for rest. Sound like a lot?

If you’re committed to your goal, you can find a way to fit in an hour’s worth of exercise, no matter how busy you are. The key is to make time by blocking out exercise increments in your day planner, just as you would a business meeting.

Still, kids will get sick and crises will arise, in which case you’ll need an exercise plan B.

Maybe you can’t get to the gym like you planned, but that doesn’t mean you can’t take a power walk on your lunch hour.

JOIN WITH OTHERS

Make yourself accountable to someone, such as a personal trainer, a friend, your spouse, or even your children.

Don’t keep your fitness goal a secret. If no one else knows about it, it’s easier to slide back into old behavior.



Smoking Cessation Benefit

In the October 2007 issue of *HealthLine*, the Plan announced the addition of a prescription drug benefit for coverage of prescription drugs to assist with smoking cessation. Drugs such as Chantix and Zyban are now covered at the non-formulary copay and limited to three 30-day fills at retail or one 90-day fill at mail service.

As there has been limited use of this benefit, we are announcing it again. Given the high cost of cigarette smoking, from both a wellness and financial point of view, there is no better time to quit than now.

Our Commitment to Your Privacy

Maintaining your privacy has always been one of our top priorities. Unless specifically allowed by law, or to ensure that you receive your health plan benefits, we do not collect or release information without your permission.

Our privacy policies are documented in your Summary Plan Document and on our Web site at www.local4funds.org. If you prefer to have a copy of our Privacy Notice mailed to you, call the Fund Office at **1-888-486-3524** or contact us via email.

April is National Autism Awareness Month, sponsored by the Autism Society of America in Bethesda, Md. For more information about diagnosis and treatment of autism, visit them at www.autism-society.org.



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QUESTIONS & Answers

IS IT TRUE THAT A GLASS OF WINE BEFORE BEDTIME MAY KEEP ME FROM GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP?

Yes, it's true—even though you may feel sleepy after drinking wine or another alcoholic beverage. Scientists say alcohol disrupts the balance of certain chemicals in the brain that control sleep and wakefulness. Alcohol helps you fall into a light sleep quickly. But then you remain there, instead of entering into a deeper, more restful stage of sleep. This means you may awaken easily and frequently throughout the night. And once you wake up, you may stay awake.

To prevent these problems, avoid alcohol—and other stimulants, such as caffeine and tobacco—for a few hours before bedtime.

WILL BECOMING A VEGETARIAN HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT?

It can, as long as you make healthy food choices. Cutting meat from your diet can be a good way to lower your daily calories and eat more fiber-rich foods, which help keep hunger under control. Studies show vegetarians tend to weigh less than meat eaters—and they have a lower risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes.

To lose weight, you must balance your diet with a variety of nutritious foods, including plenty of whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. A fit and healthy vegetarian gets enough protein and good fats from beans, nuts, seeds, dairy products, and eggs.

Keep in mind that a vegetarian diet is not automatically low in fat. Consuming a lot of dairy products may add too much saturated fat from milk, cream, and cheeses. And while unsaturated fat, such as olive and canola oils, tends to be heart healthy, it still contains as many calories per tablespoon as butter and can lead to weight gain if you consume too much.