How to start a MESSA wellness program at your school
MESSA Health Resources Contact Page

MESSA Health Promotion Department
800.292.4910
healthpromotions@messa.org

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MESSA Condition Specific Case Management support programs
Asthma Case Management Program
Diabetes Case Management Program
Cardiovascular Case Management Program
  - Coronary Artery Disease
  - Hypertension
Healthy Expectations
800.336.0022

Medical Case Management and Cancer Care Program
800.441.4626

MESSA NurseLine (24 hours per day, 7 days per week)
800.414.2014
Dear Participant,

At MESSA we care about wellness. MESSA is committed to empowering people to live long and live well. That’s why we have created this Worksite Wellness Toolkit for your use.

The two leading causes of death in the United States for both men and women are cardiovascular disease and cancer. The good news is that cardiovascular disease and most cancers are preventable. Healthy lifestyle choices and early detection can save your life. If you arm yourself with knowledge about health, wellness, diet and prevention, and put that knowledge into action, you can reduce your risks for cardiovascular disease and cancer dramatically!

Healthy individuals create healthy worksites and healthy worksites create healthy individuals. By using this toolkit to help design your own worksite wellness program, you and your colleagues will be healthier and you and your students will have a culture that promotes healthy lifestyles.

Improving your health is ultimately your responsibility, but we know that a supportive culture makes it easier. Use your MESSA resources to help reduce your risks by making healthy changes in your life. Be there for yourself. And remember that MESSA is there for you, too.

Julia Spalding, M.D.
MESSA Medical Director
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This toolkit is not intended to replace medical advice or treatment from a participant’s health care provider. It is intended to assist participants in lowering the risk factors of illness, disease and injury by promoting wellness.
1. HOW TO START YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM

The MESSA Worksite Wellness Toolkit was developed as a free guide to help education employees take control of unhealthy lifestyles and reduce risk factors. It was designed to be like an instruction book or recipe to assist in creating and customizing worksite wellness programs. The Worksite Wellness Toolkit is a collection of suggestions and resources for this process.

A short version or recipe for creating a school wellness program might look something like this:

**How to Create a School Employee Wellness Program**

1. Choose a Wellness Leader
2. Select a Wellness Committee
3. Survey Your Members
4. Encourage Everyone to Take a Health Risk Assessment
5. Sponsor a Health Fair in Your School
6. Provide Wellness Activities, Events and Campaigns Designed to Educate and Assist Members in Adopting Healthy Lifestyles and Reducing Health Risks
7. Evaluate the Success of Your Wellness Program

The longer and more detailed recipe is contained in the rest of this guide. It is not necessary to follow all of the instructions or complete every step. Instead the MESSA Worksite Wellness Toolkit should be a resource for creating a wellness program individualized to suit the needs of each group or district.*

The Worksite Wellness Toolkit references many MESSA resources that are available at no cost to MESSA members or districts. The wellness program that is created may be used to serve the non-MESSA employees in school districts as well.

*Use of the words “school” and “district” should be considered generic terminology. This toolkit is applicable for use by representatives from K-12, ISDs, colleges, universities and other educational institutions with MESSA benefits.

**Good luck and remember to make it fun!**
CHOOSE A WELLNESS LEADER

To begin, identify a **wellness champion** in your district as the **wellness leader** of your program. The school employee wellness leader should be an employee of the district with a strong interest in health, physical fitness and wellness. This employee may be a teacher, support person, administrator or other member of the school staff.

The wellness leader should have good writing skills as well as organization, management and budgeting abilities. The wellness leader will share and delegate wellness program tasks and responsibilities with the wellness committee.

**Wellness Leader Suggestions**

1. Coordinate the development, implementation and evaluation of the employee wellness program.
2. Represent the district’s employee wellness program on other wellness governing boards such as the Coordinated School Health Committee and County ISD Wellness Council.
3. Communicate with district administrators about the status of the employee wellness program and make recommendations and suggestions for program planning.
4. Report annually to the school board about the status of the employee wellness program.
5. Hold regular (suggest monthly) meetings with the employee wellness committee to implement and evaluate employee wellness activities.
6. Work with the wellness committee to plan a school year calendar of wellness activities, events and promotions.
7. Work with the wellness committee to form a mission statement and collect and process the employee surveys.
8. Delegate tasks appropriately to wellness committee members in planning and arranging health promotion and wellness activities for the employee wellness program.
9. Identify and obtain permission for use of district resources such as tracks, pools, weight rooms and buildings for employee wellness groups and activities.
10. Work with the wellness committee to launch a campaign to encourage employees to take a Health Risk Assessment.
11. Develop and administer the budget. The budget should provide for the operation of the wellness program including funds for prizes, awards and incentives for the members in the wellness program activities.
SELECT A WELLNESS COMMITTEE

THE WELLNESS COMMITTEE

The Wellness Committee should be comprised of members from every building and from the various occupational groups in the district.

If possible, members of the wellness committee should have diverse individual skills and backgrounds. Examples include members with athletic and workout skills, those with nutritional and cooking skills, and members with health education backgrounds.

The wellness leader should recruit volunteers for the wellness committee among the various district buildings and occupational groups. Volunteers should be informed that the wellness committee will need to meet weekly for the first month to start the program and should meet monthly thereafter.

The first responsibilities of the wellness committee should be to produce a mission statement that reflects the goals of the committee to enhance employees’ health and quality of life, and to circulate a survey among the employees about health promotion, and wellness needs and interests.

- Wellness Committee Suggestions

1. Know the wellness committee’s mission and goals and relate the wellness program to those goals.

2. Be an active and enthusiastic advocate of the wellness program. Be a visible participant in the wellness events and activities.

3. Provide information in your building or to your group about upcoming wellness activities using posters, email or word of mouth.

4. Represent your group or building by providing feedback from the employees in your group or building to the wellness committee about the success of wellness activities and events.

5. Learn what other wellness programs are doing; visit worksite health promotion websites and network with school employee wellness leaders in other districts.

6. Identify community allies and resources for your district wellness program.

7. Participate with the wellness committee to plan a school year calendar of monthly health promotion and wellness activities.

8. Communicate regularly with school employees about wellness events and activities via email, newsletters, posters and other means.

9. Identify and arrange for the use of community resources such as parks, pools, tennis courts and walking trails for employee wellness activities.
Wellness Committee Suggestions (continued)

10. Ask for a few minutes on the agenda to promote the use of employee wellness program on professional development days and at association meetings.

11. Schedule employee health fairs, health and fitness presentations, exercise and nutrition groups and other activities.

12. Survey the employees about interest, time constraints and ability to pay a small amount for exercise, nutrition and fitness classes and activities.

13. Identify nutrition, exercise and fitness instructors within the district and the community to provide instruction on activities of interest to the employees.

14. Identify health clubs and fitness centers willing to provide a discount to employees or membership in the facility.

ASK YOUR MESSA HEALTH PROMOTION CONSULTANT TO HELP YOU BEGIN YOUR PROGRAM

This is a good time to ask your MESSA Health Promotion Consultant to visit your district. The Health Promotion Consultant can work with your wellness leader and wellness committee to identify resources and steps to form a vibrant school employee wellness program.

GOALS OF THE WELLNESS PROGRAM

Your new wellness program should include goals that have the greatest potential to make a change in the health status of your participants and improve your health care costs over time. You may wish to include goals that target specific health issues important to your group. We suggest the following goals be included:

1. Keep low risk people low risk

2. Help people with higher health risks make positive changes and improve their health

3. Build and strengthen a “wellness” culture in the school district to promote healthy lifestyles

A major opportunity for reducing healthcare cost is maintenance of low risk status for those already at low risk. Helping low risk people stay low risk is the best way to maximize cost savings in a wellness program. If people never develop lifestyle diseases they experience a better quality of life and their health costs tend to stay low.

Another great opportunity for improving quality of life for employees and maximizing health care savings is to help people move from higher to lower risk status. Helping members change unhealthy lifestyles will improve their health and quality of life, increase longevity and reduce health costs.

The most important goal is to build a culture of wellness in your district. A healthy culture helps
people to maintain their new healthy lifestyles. It is nearly impossible to sustain healthy changes if the culture does not change to support the new lifestyle. District administrators and school employees should agree that building a culture of wellness is an economic strategy to minimize healthcare costs as well as a caring strategy to increase employee well-being.

**Write A Mission Statement**

The purpose of the mission statement is to promote the understanding that the employee wellness program is the result of a shared vision between employees and the district. A shared vision touches individuals on a personal level and they feel inspired by the purpose of the effort.

This shared vision should be communicated in a mission statement for the wellness program. It should be evident that human needs and values are at the core of the mission statement as well as a commitment to the financial integrity of the district. It should be clear that both individual and organizational needs are being addressed, and might state that employees enjoy better health and quality of life as health costs are contained and employee performance is enhanced.

Every school district wellness committee will have their own goals and objectives to be communicated in the mission statement that reflects the vision and values of the members of the district.

The mission statement should be a carefully composed and thoroughly considered declaration of the committee’s best hopes and expectations for the wellness program. It should be a concise statement no longer than a paragraph, and can be as short as a single sentence if it captures the true intent of the program.

*Sample Mission Statements*

1. **Our mission is to empower, encourage and educate staff to attain and maintain healthy bodies and healthy lifestyles.**

2. **The mission of our wellness program is to educate and support co-workers in their quest for better health and optimal quality of life at work and at home. Creating a culture of wellness through personal empowerment is the cornerstone of our program.**
**Survey Your Members**

Beginning a school employee wellness program with a survey about health concerns is an excellent way to stimulate interest in the program as well as to identify areas of need. The survey should seek information about the employee's perception of personal wellness, possible financial or time constraints, and readiness to participate in a wellness program. The survey should also seek information about employee preferences for physical activity and exercise groups as well as weight management and nutrition programs.

You may want to include open ended questions at the end of the survey to invite comments and suggestions from your members. Consider including with the survey a brief explanatory cover letter, signed by the leaders of the union associations and the superintendent, of the cooperative efforts of administration and staff to create a vibrant district wellness program.

*Sample survey included* [See Exhibit 1]

**Write Letters to Your Superintendent and School Board**

The purpose of the letter is to inform the decision makers in your district about the benefits of school employee wellness programs and to enlist their support.

**Write a Press Release About the Wellness Program**

A press release is an ideal way to let the community know about your commitment to improving school employee health and quality of life, controlling health care costs and modeling healthy lifestyles to students.
2. INTRODUCE YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM

- Spark Some Interest in Your New Wellness Program
  Get the attention of your participants with posters, email blasts and mailbox flyers with information about the program.

- Kick Off Your Wellness Program With A Health Fair
  The most logical time to start a school wellness program is in the fall. Another opportunity is when your staff returns to school after the holiday season. Your wellness team can sponsor a health fair featuring:
  
  1. Information tables that feature health topics such as healthy diet, cardiovascular risk factors, cancer screenings, etc.
  2. A MESSA health promotions booth with information on health plans and services available to participants.
  3. A healthy snack refreshment table with healthy foods and beverages and recipe cards for healthy recipes.
  4. An information table on wellness events and activities that will be sponsored by the wellness committee.

- Invite A Guest Speaker from MESSA
  A health professional from MESSA can be available to speak to your group about a variety of health topics from stress control to the science of weight loss. Arrange for a guest speaker on your professional development day or for your health fair. Health presentation videos are also available online at www.messa.org.
3. THE NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM

- **Plan A School Year’s Calendar of Events**
  
  Use the National Health Observance Calendar available online at [www.healthfinder.gov/nho](http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho) to plan a school year calendar of monthly health promotion and wellness events with Health Observance themes that are of interest to your members.

**KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING**

1. Keep member interest strong with weekly online wellness tips and information using your district email system.
2. Use employee bulletin boards for posters and flyers about wellness events and activities.
3. Distribute a monthly wellness newsletter to members with wellness articles and tips placed in employee mail boxes.
4. PUTTING THE GOALS OF YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM INTO ACTION

The wellness committee should provide activities and events that center around a set of objectives designed to:

1. Keep low risk people low risk
2. Help people with higher health risks make positive changes and improve their health
3. Build and strengthen a “wellness” culture in the school district to promote healthy lifestyles

■ Health Campaign Suggestions

- **Encourage a balanced diet that includes more than 5 fruit and vegetable servings per day.** Take advantage of motivational and informative presentations and materials such as posters and flyers to encourage members to increase fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats in their diets. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and certain cancers.

- **Provide education and information about stress management.** Stress management programs are helpful in reducing the impact of stress related illness and disability as well as helping to improve quality of life. The program should include understanding personal stress at the environmental and individual level. Methods to ease or alleviate stressors should be included.

- **Encourage members to be physically active at home and at work.** Provide space for exercise and fitness activities for the employees in the wellness program. As an added benefit, school employees are powerful role models demonstrating to students the benefits in increased health and well-being in choosing an active lifestyle.

- **Encourage members to take advantage of screening and preventive benefits in their health insurance plan.** MESSA offers comprehensive wellness and preventive services for members in their health plans. Contact your MESSA representative for more information.

- **Encourage members to enroll in case management programs offered in their health plan.** MESSA offers management programs for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and asthma. These programs provide members with education and support related to the treatment, management and lifestyle modifications associated with each condition. Call 1.800.336.0022.

- **Provide information on preventing carpal tunnel, neck and back injury and other work related over-use injuries.** Worksite wellness programs can help to reduce occupational injuries by providing stretching and warm-up exercises for employees before they engage in repetitive physical work. The school employee wellness committee can arrange for trainings, seminars and other educational opportunities to help employees avoid injuries resulting in pain and disability.
Health Campaign Suggestions (continued)

- **Help people avoid weight gain as they age.** People tend to gain weight as they age and become less physically active. Caloric needs decrease as well so that we need to eat less and increase activity to maintain weight in healthy ranges.

- **Remove barriers to exercise.** Take away the cost and inconvenience of scheduling workouts by allowing access to district equipment and exercise facilities such as tracks, pools and weight rooms before and after school, evenings and weekends.

- **Offer healthy eating options for staff through district food services.** Provide low calorie, nutrient dense choices such as legumes, lean meat, whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables in place of high calorie processed foods in school cafeterias and vending machines. Discourage the use of vending machines with sugary sodas, high fat snacks and candy items.

- **Offer smoking cessation programs and support groups.** Provide support for your participants undergoing smoking cessation by allowing district space to be used for group meetings and by providing smoking cessation materials and resources.

- **Organize exercise groups such as walking clubs at the workplace.** Group exercise opportunities that are not costly in terms of special equipment or do not require special skills are popular with most members. Walking clubs are particularly attractive because the group can meet on school grounds at convenient times such as before and after school and lunch periods. Members can form several groups in the same district or building, and challenge each other to compete for most miles or minutes walked.

- **Ask your members with special skills to teach a class in their field of interest.** Snow shoe walking, yoga, cross country skiing, Zumba and other group activities are very popular with members. These activities provide opportunities to learn new skills as well as enjoy socializing with colleagues. You can ask your members to pay a small fee for the class to make it more attractive for the person volunteering their time and expertise to teach a class for the wellness program.

- **Identify community resources that will be of interest to your participants.** Arrange for discounted health club fees and costs for tennis and racquet sport facilities. Identify local health and fitness seminars and area fitness challenges such as 5K walk/run events that your participants may wish to attend in groups as part of the district wellness effort.

- **Ask your superintendent and other district administrators to participate in a wellness activity with participants, such as a couch-to-5K walk/run training.** District administrators need wellness and health promotion as much as other employees. A wellness event shared by everyone creates an environment of unity and cooperation in the district that can make a real difference in the workplace.
5. CREATE A CULTURE OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE DISTRICT

Building a wellness culture in the district starts with the superintendent, school administrators and union leaders. To begin a wellness program, district leaders need to establish a commitment to a healthy culture, and communicate that commitment to employees and members. The goal for everyone should be to help employees to improve their health by changing the culture of the worksite to one that encourages healthy lifestyle choices.

Effective wellness programs work to create workplace environments that encourage teamwork and cooperation as well as acknowledging the value inherent in every individual. A dynamic wellness program benefits school employees directly and students by example.
6. MESSA RESOURCES

MESSA Resources are available to your wellness committee to provide tools and resources for members to address their needs for health promotion and chronic condition management. You can select the appropriate tools for your individual members with health issues or use them for campaigns for health promotion for the entire membership.

■ MESSA Health Plan Cancer Screening and Preventive Care Services

Encourage your MESSA members to take advantage of the cancer screenings that are excluded from the yearly deductible, covered in all MESSA plans. Cancer screenings include mammogram, PSA test, colonoscopy and others. Cancers that are discovered early are often much easier to treat or cure. Please see your plan summary for specific information on your MESSA plan.

All MESSA health plans have rich preventive care benefits, including a yearly health maintenance exam, well baby and child care visits, childhood immunizations, wellness related lab and radiology services and much more.

■ MESSA Condition Specific Support Programs

MESSA offers access to specially trained registered nurses for members with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension (see Exhibit 2, Exhibit 3, and Exhibit 4). When they enroll in a case management program, members receive personalized one-on-one support, individualized self management programs, access to educational materials and tips for members to improve their relationships with physicians and providers. The wellness committee should inform members that these programs are available for MESSA members.

■ MESSA Posters for Flu Prevention and Health and Wellness Promotion

MESSA has posters available for our districts, specially designed to appeal to elementary, middle school or high school age students and education employees. These are great to display to help encourage and educate staff and students about how to promote good health. The posters are available free of charge and can be obtained by placing an order online at www.messa.org or by contacting the MESSA Communications Department at 800.292.4910.

Suggestion: Place posters in staff lounges, hallways, classrooms, children’s restrooms, and food preparation areas.
**MESSA Medical Case Management**

MESSA offers this unique program for members experiencing a catastrophic illness or injury. The Medical Case Management program provides specially trained nurses to work with members and their families to help return the patient to the highest quality of life and ensure the right care at the right time. Participation is voluntary. *(See Exhibit 5)*

**MESSA’s Medical Case Management also offers a Cancer Care Program** to assist members who are experiencing treatment for cancer. Please refer your members experiencing catastrophic medical problems or members with cancer diagnoses to MESSA Medical Case Management at 800.441.4626 for more information.

**MESSA Healthy Expectations Program**

This program offers individualized support to expectant mothers. When a mom-to-be enrolls in the program, she will be screened for risk factors for high risk pregnancy. If any factors are identified, a Healthy Expectations nurse will contact her and offer additional assistance. She will also receive two excellent reference books on pregnancy, birth, childcare, and information on health guidelines for pregnant women. Please ask your members who are expecting babies to call MESSA for this prenatal education program. *(See Exhibit 6)*

**MESSA NurseLine: 800.414.2014**

MESSA NurseLine is a 24-hour, 7 day-per-week health information phone line staffed by registered nurses trained to answer medical questions and offer guidance. When you call NurseLine you can speak with a registered nurse who will listen to your questions and discuss your health concerns with you. The NurseLine is not a 911 service and is not intended to replace medical care given by your doctor or other qualified medical professional. *(See Exhibit 7)*

*Suggestion: Distribute flyers during flu months or during times that illness is going around in the building. Distribute refrigerator magnets with the NurseLine number for all members to use at home.*

**Health Education Flyers**

We provide six colorful health education flyers you can download and print for your members. Each details a common health concern and explains the medical condition, risk factors, diagnostic x-ray and lab numbers, symptoms and prevention. The following health concerns are addressed:
• Blood Sugar (Exhibit 8)
• Cholesterol (Exhibit 9)
• Bone Health (Exhibit 10)
• Cancer Screening (Exhibit 11)
• High Blood Pressure (Exhibit 12)
• Framingham Chart for 10 year heart attack risk (Exhibit 13)

The information is designed to educate adults about cardiovascular risk factors, cancer screening and bone health and is available online at www.messa.org.

For more information on a variety of health topics go to www.messa.org and look in the Health Resources area.

■ Blue Cross Online Visits

All MESSA plans cover online doctor visits when you need convenient, affordable care for minor, nonemergency illnesses such as a cold, sinus infection, sprain or rash. Visit bcbsmonlinevisits.com.

■ MESSA Health Promotion Campaign

• Adult Health Maintenance Exam and Preventive Screenings (Exhibit 25)
• Condition Specific Case Management (Exhibit 26)
• Emergency Services Education (Exhibit 27)
• Generic Drug Utilization (Exhibit 28)
• Stress Management (Exhibit 29)
7. OTHER RESOURCES

Taking good care of your mental health is just as important to maintaining overall wellness as taking good care of your physical health.

Many of the things you do to take care of your physical health – such as healthy eating, physical activity and getting adequate sleep – also benefit your emotional health. And, just as you would talk with your physician about any physical problems you may have, you should talk with your doctor about any mental health questions or concerns, including stress, depression and substance abuse.

There’s a lot of information on the Internet, but here are some resources we consider reliable:

- Mental Health America, a national mental health advocacy group, offers 10 tips for living well; connecting with others tops the list. Check out the rest of the list here.
- The American Psychological Association online help center offers brochures, links to recent news articles and more. One brochure is called “The Road to Resilience,” and offers suggestions to develop and use a personal strategy for enhancing resilience, especially in the face of challenging life circumstances. Click here to learn more.
- Perhaps you have a family member who’s been diagnosed with a mental illness. The Cleveland Clinic offers tips to help individuals cope with the stigma of a mental illness. Read more here.
- The National Health Observance Calendar provides a very useful listing of monthly recognized health observances. Health Observances are days, weeks or months devoted to promoting particular health concerns. Examples include National Wear Red Day each February to highlight women’s heart health, and April 18th of each year is designated as National Healthy Kids Day. You can use this calendar for monthly themes for your wellness program. The Health Observance Calendar with contact information and materials is available online at www.healthfinder.gov/nho. Use this valuable resource to help plan your program.
8. WELLNESS AND HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- **No Weight Gain Holiday Challenge**
  The average American gains 2 to 7 pounds over the holiday season beginning with Thanksgiving and ending with the Super Bowl. The No Weight Gain Holiday Challenge motivates members to restrict weight gain to 2 pounds or less over this period of time. *(See Exhibit 15)*

- **Go Red for Women—Wear Red On Friday**
  This national health observance is the first Friday of February and is intended to empower women with information about heart disease. Still often thought of as a man’s disease, heart disease is responsible for almost a half million deaths in American women every year. Everyone wears red on this day to show support and to educate and empower women everywhere to take steps to avoid heart disease. *(See Exhibit 16)*

- **Biggest loser competitions**
  Biggest loser competitions are popular among groups of employees who all have a goal of personal weight loss. Typically members are charged a fee to participate in the competition. The money collected is used to provide cash prizes for the biggest male, female and team loser. This competition requires witnessed weigh-ins for the first and last week. **NOTE: Although these competitions tend to be popular with members, there are problems associated with rapid weight loss and ability to maintain the new weight. If your group chooses to have this competition we recommend members sign an affidavit that they will not use surgical means, medications or supplements, or hold the committee responsible for health problems inherent in rapid weight loss.**

- **Losing It At Work or Weigh Cool Club**
  Another approach to a weight loss group is to establish a weekly lunch time or after school meeting for co-workers to join together for conversation and support about their own individual weight loss/maintenance plan. You may want to think of a clever name for the group such as Losing it at Work. *(See Exhibit 17)*

- **“Caught Ya” Random Acts of Wellness**
  Members watch each other to spot healthy behaviors. They reward each other with fitness tickets or other small tokens when “caught” doing something healthy that is visible to others, like walking to work, using the stairs, drinking water, sharing a good laugh, etc. The fitness tickets or tokens can be exchanged for small rewards from the wellness committee.

- **New Year’s Resolution Lunches**
The wellness committee can sponsor New Year’s Resolution Lunches where members share their commitments to increase healthy behaviors. The lunches provide an opportunity to provide support for each other and to share information on healthy weight, fitness activities, and finding a buddy to help with the January resolutions.

- **Great American Smokeout**
The third week of each November the American Cancer Society sponsors The Great American Smokeout. The wellness committee can provide meeting space, posters, flyers and other information for members undergoing smoking cessation. Information is available online at [www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/GreatAmericanSmokeout/index](http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/GreatAmericanSmokeout/index). (See Exhibits 18A & 18B)

- **Health Education videos on the MESSA Website**
Educational videos on health topics are available at [www.messa.org](http://www.messa.org). Your wellness committee may want to sponsor a Lunch and Learn event featuring one of the videos. Available topics are “Know Your Numbers” about cardiovascular risk factors and “Burnout or ASD” about chronic stress. Contact your MESSA Health Promotion Consultant for a facilitator’s guide if you would like to lead a group discussion as part of your wellness program.

- **Activity Challenge**
Activity challenges are a great way to get members involved in a walking program. You may wish to start with a weekend step challenge and then try a 10,000 step per day challenge. Your wellness committee can award prizes for activity challenge winners or participants. Watch those pounds come off! (See Exhibit 19)

- **Bike-or-Feet**
Bike-or-Feet is a weekend event for the month of October. The theme is Bike-or-Feet instead of Trick-or-Treat. The event takes place at a park or local walking or hiking trail. Everyone must either walk or ride a bike. Employees are encouraged to bring family members. Healthy snacks and trail maps are offered to participants. (See Exhibit 20)

- **Recipe Challenge**
March is National Nutrition Month. The wellness committee can sponsor a district-wide healthy recipe challenge. Members can vote on the best recipes and winners can receive a prize. (See Exhibit 21)

- **Couch-to-5K Training**
The wellness committee can ask for experienced runners to volunteer to do a Couch-to-5K Training for the wellness program members. The committee and volunteers can map out a
1 mile and 5K training route near the school if feasible or at another location if necessary. A 5 kilometer route is the same as 3.1 miles. Members can begin by walking the 1 mile route one or two times per session. As they increase their exercise capacity they will be able to accomplish nearly the entire 5K route (three times around the 1 mile route.) The training should be offered two or three times per week and members should be encouraged to map out a 5K route at home. The training should end with all participants meeting to do a 5K walk/run offered in the community. (See Exhibit 22)

**Perceived Exertion Scale**

The perceived exertion scale is a tool to help you describe the physical effort required to perform a physical activity such as a Pedometer Challenge. The scale uses numbers from one to nine to rate the difficulty of an activity. A rating of one means no effort. The effort increases with the numbers. A rating of ten means exertion that feels very difficult. The scale also uses a color code system to rate the difficulty of an activity. (See Exhibit 14)
9. THE MESSA HEALTH PROMOTION CONSULTANT

MESSA has a masters-level-prepared nurse working as a Health Promotion Consultant available to help you set up and operate your own group or district wellness program at no cost to you. Please call for an appointment; our Health Promotion Consultant will be happy to come to your location and assist you.

1. Ask your MESSA Health Promotion Consultant to help you plan and implement your wellness program.

2. Ask your Heath Promotion Consultant to collaborate with you, your team and your district administrators in building your wellness program.

3. Ask your Health Promotion Consultant to provide regular updates on wellness campaigns and activities from MESSA.
10. EVALUATE YOUR SCHOOL YEAR OF WELLNESS

It is important to track the progress and success of your wellness program each year. This will provide information needed to allow the wellness committee to make changes in the wellness program to keep employees actively interested and involved. In addition this information will help you direct your efforts in areas most needed by your members. You can also use the information to solicit funds from your administrators or board to keep the wellness program active and vital.

Create a spreadsheet for:

1. Evaluation tools
2. Tracking progress
3. Survey evaluation
4. Participation rates

Please review the sample tracking tool and sample evaluation provided with this program (See Exhibit 23 and Exhibit 24). This is a simple tool designed to help you to document the participation rates and success of your wellness campaigns and activities. Your wellness team may wish to create Excel spreadsheets or other tracking tools suited to your own individual program. We suggest you assign the responsibility of tracking the success of your wellness program to one individual on the wellness team. This member may report to the wellness committee at quarterly or other intervals.

Please Let us Know About the Success of Your Wellness Program!

You can contact your MESSA Health Promotion Consultant for assistance with your school employee wellness program at 1.800.292.4910. You can also contact us by email at healthpromotions@messa.org for advice, suggestions and updates to the MESSA Toolkit.
11. RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Resources

The MESSA Worksite Wellness Toolkit was designed to help school employees achieve a healthier lifestyle and a better quality of life. MESSA’s Toolkit is drawn from the experiences of MESSA’s medical staff and wellness coaches as well as peer-reviewed research and best practices.

The Worksite Wellness Toolkit goals cited in Sections 1 and 4—Goals of the Wellness Program and Putting the Goals of the Wellness Program into Action—are based partly on Dr. Dee Edington’s research in employee wellness. In Zero Trends, Health as a Serious Economic Strategy, Dr. Edington, of the Health Management Research Center at the University of Michigan, proposes that we change our culture of unhealthy lifestyles to keep people from getting sick, rather than waiting for people to get sick and then trying to heal them.

Bibliography


Bibliography (continued)


Great American Smokeout:
www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/GreatAmericanSmokeout/index

Health Topics: www.messa.org, Health Resources


National Health Observance Calendar: www.healthfinder.gov/nho
12. WELLNESS TOOLKIT SUPPORT EXHIBIT REFERENCE

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Employee Wellness Survey

1. Which of the following best describes your interest in health promotion/wellness activities:
   - I do not feel the need for help with my lifestyle or health.
   - I have been thinking about changing some of my health behaviors.
   - I am planning on making a behavior change in the next 30 days.
   - I have made some behavior changes but still have trouble following through.
   - I have had a healthy lifestyle for years.

2. I would rank my personal health/wellness concerns, in order of priority as:
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

3. If wellness activities were offered at school, I would be likely to participate:
   - before school
   - after school
   - during the lunch hour

4. I would be likely to participate in the following activities:
   - a walking program
   - a physical activity program such as ____________________________
   - health nutrition programs
   - other ____________________________

5. I am willing to contribute
   - up to $5 per wellness activity
   - a higher amount for health screenings, such as $______
   - I am not willing to contribute for any wellness activities

6. I am interested in serving on the wellness committee. Please contact me:

   Name ____________________________ phone or email: ____________________________

   Other information: ____________________________

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
MESSA’s Asthma Case Management Program provides one-on-one help for MESSA members and their dependents who wish to effectively manage their asthma-related health issues.

MESSA’s asthma nurse educator, Susan Jahn, R.N., can help you:

- Understand asthma and common asthma triggers
- Learn how to monitor asthma
- Figure out the right questions to ask at doctor visits
- Obtain a written asthma plan from your doctor and help implement that plan, which is integral to controlling asthma throughout the year, saving time and money

MESSA’s program emphasizes education as a major component of managing asthma. By enrolling in the program, you receive asthma education materials, which can help you understand the chronic nature of asthma, guidelines for treatment, and information about MESSA’s asthma benefits.

Along the way, Susan will be available to provide information, encouragement and guidance to help you reach your asthma health goals.

To enroll in MESSA’s Asthma Case Management Program, call 800.336.0022 and select prompt 3 to speak with a nurse educator.
MESSA members and their dependents with diabetes can get personal help through MESSA's Diabetes Case Management Program.

MESSA’s program is based on the latest guidelines from the American Diabetes Association, and is appropriate for individuals with any type of diabetes, including Type 1, Type 2 and gestational.

Members who sign up for the free program will be contacted by Rachelle Twichell, R.N., MESSA’s diabetes nurse educator. Rachelle can provide important information, encouragement and guidance to help you reach your diabetes health goals, including:

- A handbook for partnering with your physician that explains American Diabetes Association guidelines, provides a place to record test results and lists services and supplies covered by MESSA
- Helpful information to help you better communicate with your health care providers
- An assortment of materials to help you learn more about diabetes self-management

Millions of children and adults in the United States have diabetes — and many more have prediabetes and are at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Diabetes can take a toll on your health, according to the American Diabetes Association, leading to heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure, vision loss, nerve damage and more.

Rachelle is here to help you manage your diabetes and reduce the risk of more serious complications.

To learn more about MESSA’s Diabetes Case Management Program, call 800.336.0022 and select prompt 3.
Cardiovascular Case Management Program

Are you at risk of a heart attack or stroke? Are you struggling to control high blood pressure? MESSA’s Cardiovascular Case Management Program can provide you with free personal support from a certified nurse educator.

Our Cardiovascular Case Management Program gives you access to a cardiovascular nurse educator who will provide you with important information, encouragement and guidance to help you reach your cardiovascular health goals. Our nurse educator will work with you to reduce your cardiovascular-related symptoms and improve your overall health and quality of life.

Our cardiovascular nurse educator will help you:

- Know and understand key numbers that affect your cardiovascular health
- Make the changes necessary to living a healthier life
- Communicate your needs and concerns to your health provider
- Recognize complications that can occur with your diagnosis

Personal support for you

Our cardiovascular nurse educator, Cathy Scott-Lynch, R.N., will work directly with you to help develop a personal heart health action plan, including strategies you can use to make better lifestyle choices. You’ll learn how to identify and track your key health risk numbers, including blood pressure, blood sugar, and good and bad cholesterol, with an eye toward risk reduction.

In addition to healthy lifestyle measures, some people may need prescription medications to control blood pressure. Cathy can help you partner with your physician to develop an effective blood pressure management strategy.

And if you’ve already suffered a heart attack or stroke, Cathy will show you how to access specific MESSA benefits, such as cardiac rehabilitation, that can dramatically reduce your risk of suffering another attack.

MESSA members and their dependents are eligible to participate in MESSA’s Cardiovascular Case Management Program. To get started, call Cathy at 800.336.0022 and select prompt 3.
MEDICAL CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PROVIDES MEMBERS WITH SERIOUS ILLNESSES OR INJURIES WITH PERSONAL SUPPORT FROM A REGISTERED NURSE.

Messa’s Medical Case Management program provides members with serious illnesses or injuries with personal support from a registered nurse.

Messa’s nurses work directly with members and their families to ensure they access the right care at the right time and return to their highest quality of life.

The nurses work with members who have had a variety of catastrophic injuries or illnesses, including head injuries, spinal cord injuries, amputations, severe burns, multiple fractures, cancer, ALS, multiple sclerosis, stroke, muscular dystrophy and infants with complex medical issues.

Through our program, our nurses can assist you in navigating the health care system, identifying local resources, and serving as your personal advocate during a difficult and often stressful time.

Messa members can enroll by calling 800.441.4626. Nurse coordinators are available 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to answer questions.
MESSA’s Healthy Expectations

Providing personal support for you and your baby

MESSA’s Healthy Expectations provides support for expectant mothers. When you enroll in Healthy Expectations you will receive a simple health assessment questionnaire to complete and return to us. If any risk factors are identified, a MESSA Healthy Expectations nurse may contact you and offer additional assistance. We will also send you a reference book on pregnancy and birth and a second book containing health guidelines to help you care for your baby.

Important notes:

- MESSA’s Healthy Expectations is not intended to replace qualified medical care given by your doctor or other medical professional.
- For questions about your MESSA benefits, please call MESSA’s Member Service Center at 800.336.0013.
- All inquiries to Healthy Expectations are strictly confidential.

Enroll in MESSA’s Healthy Expectations today by calling 800.336.0013 or sign up online at www.messa.org/HealthyExpectations
Take the worry out of health care.

Ask a registered nurse 24/7

Is this a cold or something more serious?
Should I call our doctor?
Should we go to the emergency room?

MESSA NurseLine: 800.414.2014
QUICK TIP: Add this number to your cell phone now.

Call MESSA NurseLine—a member service offered in partnership with our underwriter, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

NurseLine is a health information phone line staffed around the clock by registered nurses trained to answer medical questions and offer guidance. When you call, a registered nurse will listen to your questions and discuss your health concerns with you. The nurse may provide some at-home health care measures or suggest you contact your personal physician. NurseLine may help you avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and expenses.

NurseLine is not a 911 service and is not intended to replace qualified medical care given by your doctor or other medical professional. If you have an illness or injury that requires immediate attention, please go directly to an emergency room.
Blood Sugar
Early detection is key to managing diabetes

Millions of Americans have Type 2 diabetes and up to one fourth do not know it. In diabetes, glucose (blood sugar) stays in the blood and does not circulate into cells where it is needed to produce energy for the body. Even a minimal elevation of glucose promotes clogging of arteries leading to cardiovascular disease (CVD). Diabetes that is not effectively controlled can lead to heart disease, kidney failure, blindness and amputations.

Early detection
Detecting pre-diabetes helps delay or prevent diabetes. Pre-diabetes is easier to treat. The American Diabetes Association guidelines recommend a fasting blood sugar test once every three years when no risk factors are present and annually if any one risk factor is present. Adults with several risk factors should be screened more regularly.

The most important risk factors are:
1. Obesity – especially with excess abdominal fat*
2. A sedentary lifestyle
3. A family history of diabetes
4. High sugar intake—soda, sweets, processed food

Symptoms
Most people who have Type 2 diabetes have few or no symptoms. However, if you have any of these symptoms, you should talk to your physician about a fasting blood sugar test now.
- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Increased fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurred vision

Know your fasting blood sugar numbers and what they mean
- 70-99 is normal
- 100-125 indicates pre-diabetes
- 126 or higher on two or more tests indicates diabetes
- Damage to arteries and nerves throughout the body starts when fasting blood sugar is greater than 100

Prevention
There is no quick and easy way to prevent diabetes. It involves making lifestyle changes such as exercising, eating healthy and maintaining a healthy weight. Most diabetes is preventable!

Diabetes treatment
There is no cure for diabetes; however, diabetes can often be treated and managed by exercise and diet alone. Some people may require medication, insulin injections and frequent home monitoring of blood sugar levels. A physician should supervise the health care of a person diagnosed with pre-diabetes or diabetes. High blood sugar, high blood pressure and high cholesterol must be aggressively treated and there should be regular checkups on eyes, feet, kidneys and the cardiovascular system.

MESSA’s Diabetes Case Management Program
MESSA sponsors the Diabetes Case Management Program that provides personalized support and educational materials for members with diabetes. If you would like additional information on managing your diabetes, or have questions about our diabetes program, call MESSA Member Education at 800.336.0022, prompt 3, to speak with a MESSA Diabetes Education nurse.

* Excess abdominal fat doubles your risk of cardiovascular disease and is a much more accurate measure of cardiovascular disease than a Body Mass Index chart.

The procedures in this brochure may not be covered by your MESSA health plan. To avoid unexpected costs, contact the MESSA Member Service Center at 800.336.0013 to verify coverage before receiving services. This information is provided to help you make informed health decisions for you and your family. It is not intended to replace your physician’s advice or treatment.
Cholesterol
Making healthy lifestyle choices can improve your cholesterol

Cholesterol is a soft and waxy substance that is a natural component of blood lipids (fats) that is made by your liver from the foods you eat. Our bodies need and use cholesterol to build healthy cells and important hormones. However, too much cholesterol in blood is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, such as heart attack and stroke.

Good cholesterol vs. bad cholesterol
Cholesterol cannot dissolve in your blood. It is transported through the bloodstream by proteins called lipoproteins. LDL (low-density lipoprotein) is the most common lipoprotein. It is referred to as “bad cholesterol” because too much LDL in the blood creates plaque that accumulates on artery walls and can restrict blood flow throughout the body. This is called cardiovascular disease (CVD). When arteries that lead to the heart or brain get blocked, a heart attack or stroke can occur.

HDL (high-density lipoprotein) is a good protein because it removes cholesterol in arteries and helps prevent cardiovascular disease.

Risk factors
Certain factors contribute to excessive amounts of cholesterol deposits in the arteries.

- Having grandparents, parents or siblings with CVD or elevated cholesterol
- Age (Men older than age 45 and women older than age 55)
- Smoking
- Lack of physical activity
- High-fat diet
- Obesity
- Health conditions such as diabetes, or high blood pressure

Know your numbers
Since cholesterol levels have such a profound influence on cardiovascular disease, it is essential for everyone—especially those with risk factors—to have a lipid profile test at least once a year.

1. A lipid profile typically measures four different cholesterol levels.
2. Total cholesterol – a desirable level is less than 200.
3. HDL (good) cholesterol – a desirable HDL level is greater than 50.
4. LDL (bad) cholesterol – a desirable level is less than 100.
5. Triglycerides – a desirable triglyceride level is less than 150.

As you work to achieve and maintain good health, use this guide as a reference to evaluate and manage your lipid profile with the help of your physician.

The following is a guide to classifying lipid profiles (< = less than, > = greater than):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At Risk</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total cholesterol</td>
<td>&gt;240</td>
<td>&lt;200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDL (Good)</td>
<td>&lt;45</td>
<td>&gt;50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDL (Bad)</td>
<td>&gt;160</td>
<td>&lt;100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triglycerides</td>
<td>&gt;400</td>
<td>&lt;150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Improving your numbers
The more risk factors you have for cardiovascular disease, the better your lipid profile needs to be. You can dramatically improve your lipid profile by making healthy lifestyle changes.

- Eat healthy foods. This includes foods low in salt and low in saturated fat. Eat fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Treatment
Take charge of your health by keeping your own records of important numbers such as your lipid profile, blood sugar levels and blood pressure readings.

Depending on your lipid profile results and your risk factors for CVD, your physician may recommend medication to help you reach a desirable lipid profile. Certain medications can dramatically lower LDL cholesterol and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. With or without medication, exercise and a healthy diet are essential to protect your heart and your health.

MESSA’s Cardiovascular Case Management Program
MESSA’s Cardiovascular Case Management Program provides personalized support and educational materials for members with cardiovascular disease.

If you would like additional information on managing cholesterol, or have questions about our cardiovascular program, call MESSA Member Education at 800.336.0022, and select prompt 3, to speak with a MESSA Cardiovascular Education nurse.
Osteoporosis is a condition where the bones are too thin or porous. Bone is continuously remolded and renewed. Bone cells called osteoclasts dissolve bone. Bone cells called osteoblasts build new bone. Osteoporosis occurs when bone dissolves faster than new bone is formed.

Osteoporosis is not a condition limited to aging women. It is increasing among men and younger women, mainly as a result of unhealthy lifestyle choices. Ten million Americans have osteoporosis. Another 20 million have low bone density (called osteopenia) that makes them more susceptible to broken bones. Osteoporosis and osteopenia cause a significant number of fractures.

- At least 1.5 million women and a half million men will suffer a bone fracture each year.
- Half of all women and one in eight men will have at least one fracture after age 50.
- One out of every six women will suffer a hip fracture in their lifetime.

Risk factors
- Age—the older you are the higher your risk. This is especially true for women after menopause—but older men are also at risk.
- Sedentary lifestyles
- Gender—women have thinner bones and the sudden drop in estrogen at menopause accelerates bone loss
- Family history—having a parent or a sibling with osteoporosis puts you at greater risk
- Smoking—including second-hand smoke exposure
- Alcohol consumption—in excess of two drinks per day
- Steroids—long term use of steroids like prednisone or steroid inhalers used for asthma
- Thyroid medications—long-term use in excess doses
- Caucasian
- Diet—diets deficient in calcium and/or vitamin D products
- Caffeine, in excess amounts
- Small body frames

Screening tests
Unless appropriate screening is done, osteoporosis can go undetected until bones are so thin that treatment is very difficult. It is much better to have thinning bones detected early before fractures and loss of height occurs. A DEXA (dual energy X-ray absorptiometry) is a painless test that is commonly used to evaluate the thickness of bones. Talk to your physician about a bone density test—especially if you have several risk factors. It is routinely done at age 65.

Prevention
There is no cure for osteoporosis. However, you can improve your bone density or at least stop the progression of thinning bone by doing the following:
- Avoid tobacco smoke exposure
- Eat a healthy diet
- Limit alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks per day
- Perform weight-bearing exercise
- Limit caffeine intake
- Get adequate calcium and vitamin D
- Women and men not at risk should get 1200 mgs (under age 50) and 1500 mgs (after age 50) of calcium daily
- Women and men at risk should consult their health care provider.
- Men and women who do not get adequate amounts of calcium in their diets should consider using a supplement—calcium carbonate or calcium citrate
- Consult your health care provider about your Vitamin D dose. Many people need more than the recommended daily allowance and it is more common that physicians are checking Vitamin D levels and dosing individuals as needed.

Treating osteoporosis
Common treatments for osteoporosis include calcium, vitamin D and sometimes prescription medications. These treatments work best in unison with a healthy diet and exercise. Partner with your physician for guidance on lifestyle changes you may need to make and to determine the best treatment options for you.
Cancer Screening

Talk with your physician about the appropriate cancer screenings for you

Your annual medical exam is the perfect time to get a thorough cancer screening. This flyer explains the latest information on cancer screening to ensure a complete examination and help you get the best use of this valuable time.

Primary prevention

Primary prevention is taking action to prevent cancer. Here are examples of primary prevention to discuss with your physician (if age and gender appropriate).

- A pap smear can detect changes in the cervix before they lead to cancer.
- A colonoscopy can identify precancerous polyps that can be removed.
- A vaccine for young girls and women can prevent cervical cancer.

Do not wait for your annual exam to start practicing other proven prevention strategies like achieving a healthy weight, eating healthy foods, minimizing sun exposure, moderating alcohol consumption and avoiding tobacco smoke exposure.

Secondary prevention

Secondary prevention is taking action to detect cancer early when most cancers are treatable, and often curable. Early detection can also result in safer and easier treatment options and less risky procedures.

Unfortunately, primary and secondary prevention measures are often underutilized. Everyone should have the following exams and tests performed during health examinations:

- a thorough check of your skin, including careful inspection of all moles
- checking your head and neck for lumps
- checking inside your mouth for sores
- tests and procedures according to the chart shown

Your annual medical physical is also an excellent time to learn proper techniques for testicular, breast, head, neck and skin cancer self-examination. When there is a family history, testing should begin at earlier ages than indicated on the chart.

Cancer Screening Guidelines (as of January 2014) as recommended by the American Cancer Society and/or the USPSTF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cancer Site</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Test or Procedure</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>Women, aged &gt; 20 years</td>
<td>Mammography</td>
<td>Begin mammography at age 40-50. Discuss with your doctor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorectal</td>
<td>Men and women, aged &gt; 50 years</td>
<td>Fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or</td>
<td>Annual, starting at age 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible sigmoidoscopy, or</td>
<td>Every 5 years starting at age 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Colonoscopy (preferred as it is primary prevention)</td>
<td>Colonoscopy every 10 years, starting at age 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostate</td>
<td>Men aged &gt; 50 years</td>
<td>Digital rectal examination (DRE) and prostate specific antigen test (PSA)</td>
<td>Discuss with your doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervix</td>
<td>Women, aged &gt; 21 years</td>
<td>Pap test</td>
<td>Starting at age 21, every 3 years if no abnormalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterus</td>
<td>Women at menopause</td>
<td>At the time of menopause, women should be informed about risks and symptoms of endometrial cancer and strongly encouraged to report any unexpected bleeding or spotting to their physicians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>Smokers 55 - 80 years</td>
<td>Annual CT</td>
<td>Not recommended if the person hasn't smoked for 15 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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High Blood Pressure

It’s silent. It’s serious. It’s treatable.
The first step is to know you have it.

High blood pressure (HBP) is when blood circulates through the arteries at a higher pressure than normal. Elevated blood pressure puts stress on your arteries and heart muscle. Over time, this stress can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney damage and heart failure.

Causes and symptoms

In most cases the cause of high blood pressure is unknown and there are no symptoms. This is why high blood pressure is often referred to as the “silent killer.” This is also why monitoring your blood pressure is so important.

To measure blood pressure, an inflatable cuff is positioned around the upper arm. From this point, two measurements are taken:

1. Systolic pressure: Measures the amount of pressure your heart generates when pumping blood out through your arteries. A normal reading is 120.
2. Diastolic pressure: Measures the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats. A normal reading is 80.

Several readings over a period of time are required in order to diagnose HBP. Your physician may suggest home monitoring. Electric monitors are reliable, easy to use and cost anywhere from $50 to $150. If your upper arm measurement is more than 14 inches in circumference, request a large arm cuff for your monitor.

Risk factors

- Age – Blood pressure tends to rise with age. If you’re a male older than 45 or a female older than 55, your risk for HBP is higher.
- Race – African-Americans have a much higher risk of HBP compared to Caucasians.
- Heredity – A family history of HBP greatly increases your risk for HBP.
- Obesity – Excess weight makes your heart work harder and stresses arteries.
- Unhealthy lifestyle habits – Eating too much sodium (salt), drinking too much alcohol, physical inactivity and smoking contribute to HBP.

Prevention and treatment

There are many effective ways to prevent and lower blood pressure without medication. Proven strategies include:

- Healthy foods – Increase daily servings of fruits and vegetables and choose low-fat foods.
- Salt restriction – Avoid foods high in sodium and don’t add salt to food.
- Healthy weight – If you are overweight, even a 10-pound weight loss will lower your blood pressure.
- Exercise – Regular aerobic exercise lowers blood pressure.
- Stop smoking – Smoking significantly increases your risk of HBP and artery damage.
- Limit alcohol – Drinking more than one or two alcoholic beverages a day increases blood pressure.

If you have been diagnosed with hypertension, please consult with your physician to determine if medication is necessary to help you lower and manage your blood pressure.

To learn more about MESSA’s Cardiovascular Case Management Program call our Member Education Department at 800.336.0022, prompt 3. To find out your plan coverage for a blood pressure monitor, please contact our Member Service Center at 800.336.0013.
Framingham Chart
Determine your 10-year risk estimate for a heart attack
Knowing your risk is the first step

Are you at risk of having a stroke or heart attack within the next 10 years? Use these charts to help you determine your risk. When you're ready to calculate your risk, use the Step 7 chart to keep track of your scores. If your score indicates increased risk or if you are concerned about your cardiovascular health, talk with your physician about reducing your risk, making better lifestyle choices, eating a healthier diet, getting more exercise, and potential medications.

### Step 7: Adding up the Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Age</th>
<th>Step 2: LDL or Total Cholesterol</th>
<th>Step 3: HDL Cholesterol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>mg/dl</td>
<td>Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step 8: Determining Heart Attack Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 8: Adding up the Points</th>
<th>Step 9: Compare your risk percentage from Step 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points Total</td>
<td>10-Year Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>9</td>
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### Step 9: Compare Your Risk Percentage from Step 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 9: Compare Your Risk Percentage from Step 8</th>
<th>Step 10: Risk Estimates Derived from Framingham Heart Study</th>
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<td>Age (Years)</td>
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<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>30%</td>
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*Risk estimates were derived from the experience of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's Framingham Heart Study based on a predominantly Caucasian population in Massachusetts, USA.

The procedures in this brochure may not be covered by your MESSA health plan. To avoid unexpected costs, contact the MESSA Member Service Center at 800.336.0013 to verify coverage before receiving services. This information is provided to help you make informed health decisions for you and your family. It is not intended to replace your physician's advice or treatment.
Perceived Exertion Scale

An exertion scale is used to help you measure how intense your exercise feels to you. This scale runs from 1 to 9 and is designed to help you rate your own perceived level of exertion with various activities.

A rating of 1 would be the effort required to sit on a couch. A rating of 9 would describe how you feel while exercising at your own maximal effort.

Most people who work out regularly should exercise at a level between 4 and 8 (moderate to difficult). Beginners should target a level of 3 to start and progress toward 8 as they become more comfortable with activity (light to moderate).

Everyone should see their physician before starting an exercise program, especially those who are over 40 or have a chronic illness or injury. If you experience shortness of breath, chest discomfort, weakness or dizziness while exercising, you should stop and see a physician immediately.

Perceived exertion scale

1. No effort
2. Light effort – barely noticeable
3. Light effort – noticeable exertion, but without discomfort
4. Moderate – increasing exertion, but feel I can continue
5. Moderate – but increasing in difficulty
6. Moderate – feeling fatigue and effort of exertion
7. Mildly difficult – working harder and feel I need to stop within 30 minutes
8. Difficult – working hard and need to slow down or stop within 5-10 minutes
9. Very difficult – at maximum exertion, fatigued and ready to stop

Activity color code for perceived exertion scale ranges

1-3 = Orange – No effort to light effort
4-6 = Green – Moderate Effort
7-9 = Red – Mildly difficult to very difficult
No Weight Gain Holiday Challenge

The average American gains 5-7 pounds over the holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year’s. Most of us attend several parties, events and dinners where we are tempted with high calorie holiday foods and beverages.

The No Weight Gain Holiday Challenge is designed to help avoid putting on those extra pounds this season. The Challenge begins the Monday before Thanksgiving and concludes in early January right after New Year’s Day. The goal is to gain no more than 2 pounds this holiday season.

The challenge works like this:

1. Arrange for a private area for weigh-ins.
2. Everyone must weigh in on the same scale.
3. One wellness committee member should witness the weigh-ins and keep a confidential record of the weights.
4. The first weigh-ins should be within a few days before Thanksgiving.
5. The final weigh-in should be within a few days of the return from the holiday break after New Year’s.
6. Those who do not want a witnessed weigh-in can weigh themselves at home and report their loss or gain only to the wellness committee member. They would not be eligible for the prize drawings.

The wellness committee can send weekly email blasts and distribute flyers with healthy recipes and holiday food tips to members participating in the challenge.

Plan to have a drawing with 3-5 prizes for members after returning from the holiday break. Those who lost weight, stay the same, or gain no more than 2 pounds are eligible to participate in the drawing.

Everyone should use the tracking sheets (included) to help stay aware of their progress in avoiding the Holiday 7 pounds. Be sure and record successes as well as challenges.

Good Luck!

Materials required for the challenge activity:
1. Digital scale for weigh-ins
2. Private room or office for weigh-ins
3. Funds for prizes for drawings

Exertion scale color code for the challenge activity:
Orange – No effort to light effort

Challenge weigh-in record

November Pre-Thanksgiving weight ________________
January Post-New Year’s weight ________________
## Holiday parties and events

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 

## Challenge personal tracking log

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<thead>
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</table>
### WEEK 5
Challenges: 

SUCCESSES: 

### WEEK 6
Challenges: 

SUCCESSES: 

### WEEK 7
Challenges: 

SUCCESSES: 

### WEEK 8
Challenges: 

SUCCESSES: 

### NOTES
National Wear Red Day – Go Red for Women

The first Friday each February has been designated “Go Red for Women.” The American Heart Association encourages everyone to wear red on this day to remind us that heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in this country. The Go Red for Women’s mission is to stop heart disease in our lifetime.

Eighty percent of cardiac events in women could be prevented with lifestyle changes, yet mothers, sisters and friends are dying at the rate of one per minute because they don’t know how to control risk factors. Show your support for all women with a Go Red for Women Observance in your district the first Friday in February each year!

There are many ways to observe go red for women day:

- Tell your members and students to wear red on the first Friday in February
- Sponsor a Go Red for Women luncheon featuring a heart healthy menu in your school
- Set up a “Heart Walk” event in your district
- Encourage your members to tell five women that they want them to live free of heart disease on Go Red for Women Day.
- Sponsor a Women’s Heart Health information booth on Go Red for Women Day
- Ask for a MESSA health professional to give your group a presentation on cardiovascular risk factors and how to reduce them
- Provide red apples for Go Red for Women Day participants

The American Heart Association has great online tools available at www.goredforwomen.org to help you make your Go Red for Women campaign a success. Online you will find a Go Red Day action kit, a Go Red Day fundraising kit, a Go Red newsletter, a brown bag Powerpoint presentation for your group, healthy behaviors flyers and posters, how to sponsor a Heart Walk event information, and much more. MESSA has a Cardiovascular Case Management Program available for members with cardiac health issues or risk factors by calling 800.336.0022.

Materials required for Go Red for Women Day

- Posters and flyers available at www.goredforwomen.org
- A room with a screen or wall appropriate for projecting, and a power strip and electrical outlets for the MESSA presentation
- Red dress pins for members available by contacting the American Heart Association
- A table or booth to display cardiovascular risk education materials, flyers and posters
- Red apples and a large serving bowl

Exertion scale color code for Go Red for Women Activity

1-3 = Orange – No effort to light effort for most activities
4-6 = Green – Moderate effort for Heart Walk
**Weigh Cool Club**

An effective way to help your members control their weight is to start a work place diet support group. The group should be led by a member with some experience with weight loss and maintenance. Select a meeting time that most members can make during working hours such as before school, immediately after school, or lunch time. Encourage members to bring healthy lunches or snacks if the meeting occurs at a meal time.

A scale is provided but weigh-in is optional. Members are not required to share their weight or their losses or gains, although they can do so if they wish. Members are encouraged to share their challenges and successes with weight loss and maintenance, the goal is to provide support and camaraderie for people working on weight issues.

The focus of the group is to encourage people to adopt healthy eating patterns and to increase physical activity. The Mayo Website provides an excellent resource for diet and exercise information. Ask your members to consider using Mayo’s online My Weight Solution program. This is an interactive program based on Mayo’s Healthy Weight Pyramid. The program features a tracking system to graphically record weight changes, calculators for Body Mass Index, charts for exercise and calories burned and more. There are healthy recipes that include diabetes exchange values and sodium contents for Dash dieters. They Mayo online My Fitness Solution program has interactive trackers and training for Cardio, Strength, Flexibility and Balance, the four areas of fitness. Mayo can help you design and track your own fitness program and offers Fit Tips to help keep you motivated and informed.

A fun option that can be added is the Weigh Cool Raffle. Members are asked to contribute five dollars at a designated starting point. Afterward they earn a raffle ticket for each meeting they attend. Raffle tickets can be awarded for maintaining weight, losing pounds or bringing a healthy recipe to share. At the end of the time period the raffle tickets are placed in a hat and winners drawn for cash prizes.

Your group may choose to vote on another name for the club that seems humorous, more personal or more descriptive of the members. Some previous groups have been called:

- Losing it at Work
- The Thin Agains
- The Wannabees
- The Dieting Divas

Remember to keep the emphasis of the group on support and affirmation of healthy eating and exercise patterns. Keep it fun, positive and non-competitive. Welcome to the club and Good Luck!

**Materials required for weigh cool club activity**

- A digital scale (Weight Watchers’ scale can be purchased for under $30)
- Journals and tracking sheets to record challenges and successes
- Raffle Tickets

**Exertion scale color code for weigh cool club activity**

1-3 = Orange – no effort to minimal for group meetings or slower paced walking
4-6 = Green – moderate effort required for faster paced walking programs and other moderate activities
7-9 = Red – mildly difficult to very difficult for jogging, running, cycling or other more intense activities
Great American Smokeout Challenge

Every year in the third week of November the American Cancer Society holds “The Great American Smokeout.” This well-known activity challenges smokers to make a plan to quit on the designated day close to Thanksgiving each year.

You can help smokers greatly reduce their cancer and heart disease risks and really changes their lives by having a “Great American Smokeout” campaign in your district.

All participants can participate in the Great American Smokeout by pledging to:
1. Go smoke free for the entire 24 hours of the Great American Smokeout Day
2. Quit smoking forever on Great American Smokeout Day
3. Adopt a quitter, to be their support person on Great American Smokeout Day

Your wellness committee can have a variety of events to support quitters on Great American Smokeout Day.

Some suggested activities are:

1. Great American Smokeout Turkey Raffle – Distribute raffle tickets to quitters and supporters of quitters on Great American Smokeout Day. Most people like to get a free turkey close to Thanksgiving. You may also consider raffling off a tofu turkey for vegetarian quitters and supporters.
2. Host a 5K Turkey Trot Run/Walk Event in honor of Great American Smokeout Day. You may want to promote the 5K Great American Smokeout Turkey Trot a few months in advance of the actual date to allow people to train for the event.
3. Make Quitter Survival Kits “QuitKits” for your quitters to help them through the day. The kits can contain sugar free hard candy and gum, healthy snacks, bottled water and other helpful items.
4. Set up a “Trade In or Trade Up” table for your quitters. You ask your quitters to trade their cigarettes, chewing tobacco, lighters, cases and other paraphernalia for sandwiches, popcorn, sunflower seeds, sugarless gum and hard candy and other snacks and prizes at your table.
5. Spread the Word – Promote your Great American Smokeout event to your members with posters, banners, mailbox flyers and email blasts. Be sure and post local and online resources for smoking cessation to help your quitters quit.

There are many online resources and ideas for Great American Smokeout Day events and activities available online at:
www.ucanquit2.org
American Cancer Society Great American Smokeout

Materials required for Great American Smokeout activities

- Tables or booths
- Posters, flyers and banners – available online or make your own
- Sugarless hard candy, gum, sandwiches, bottled water and healthy snacks for quitkits and trade up table
- Raffle Tickets
- Frozen of fresh turkey(s) for raffle
- May use Couch to 5K training challenge in MESSA Toolkit for Turkey Trot

Suggested exertion range:
Green Range – level 4 to 6 on perceived exertion scale for Turkey Trot Event
No ifs, ands, or butts... the Benefits of Quitting Smoking are Great!

As soon as you quit smoking, your body begins a series of healing or recovery changes that continue for years.

20 MINUTES after quitting your heart rate drops to a normal level

ONE YEAR after quitting your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting your risk of having a heart attack begins to drop and your lung functions begin to improve

Your cough and shortness of breath decrease 1 to 9 months after quitting

10 YEARS after quitting your risk of dying from lung cancer or getting bladder cancer is about half that of a smoker’s, and your risk of getting cervical cancer or cancer of the larynx, kidney, or pancreas decreases

15 YEARS after quitting your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as that of a nonsmoker

12 HOURS after quitting the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal

5 to 15 YEARS after quitting your risk of having a stroke is reduced to that of a nonsmoker’s and your risk of getting cancer of the mouth, throat or esophagus is half that of a smoker’s

Members can request a MESSA Quit Smoking packet by calling MESSA’s Condition Specific Case Management at 800.336.0022, prompt 3.
**Activity Challenge**

A great way to interest your members in increasing their activity levels is to sponsor an activity challenge. One of the goals of the activity challenge is to make members aware of how many steps (or how few) they make in their daily activities.

Members should be asked to wear their activity trackers while they go about their usual activities for two or three days. This will establish a baseline activity level for each member. When members are aware how many steps are required to complete their usual activities they can are prepared for the activity challenge.

The first activity challenge may be simply challenging each member to increase their steps by 30% each day. After a week, they may be challenged to try increasing by 50% each day. Another challenge may be to increase steps by 50% and reduce calories by 20% each day for 2 weeks. This will take off some unwanted pounds!

Other popular activity challenges are to ask each member to log 10,000 steps or more per day on their activity tracker for a specified period of time. Ten thousand steps on the activity tracker is roughly the distance of 4 miles. If members do this they will greatly improve their fitness and lose some pounds as well. Daily and weekly step totals can be submitted to the wellness committee for small prizes. A larger prize can be awarded for the person with the most steps at the end of the competition.

Another popular activity challenge is the Weekend Activity Challenge. Members are asked to start their activity trackers at 6 PM on Friday and to try to log as many steps as possible by 6 PM on Sunday. Everyone tries to increase their activity over the weekend to compete for the most steps. The person with the most steps is awarded a prize.

**Materials required for the Activity Challenge:**

- Activity Trackers—available at sporting goods stores, or may contact your MESSA Health Promotion Consultant for basic pedometers in limited quantities while supplies are available.
- Journals for logging steps or minutes of walking activities

**Exertion scale color code:**

1-3 = Orange – no effort to light effort for slower walking paces
4-6 = Green – moderate effort for faster walking paces
Bike-or-Feet

Bike-or-feet is an event for your wellness participants that should take place toward the end of the month of October. The phrase “Bike-or-feet” is a play on the old “Trick-or-Treat.” A Bike-or-Feet party or event is intended as a healthy alternative to a traditional Halloween party or event. It is intended as a healthy alternative to a traditional Halloween Party that would have candy, desserts and sugary or alcoholic beverages.

A Bike-or-Feet party is typically held at a local park that has walking and biking trails. Everyone is asked to ride or walk the trails for a certain distance or time that they choose. Members can state their distance or time when they arrive. Everyone is provided a map of the trails.

During the walking and biking, the wellness committee can set up or prepare a healthy barbeque or picnic for the member and their families. The meal should feature healthy recipes, snacks and desserts as an alternative to the traditional Halloween fare. Members may be asked to bring healthy pot-luck dishes and desserts to contribute to the meal. The wellness committee can also set up games and events such as bobbing for apples, sack races and costume contests. The creative possibilities are endless for a Bike-or-Feet party!

Materials required for a bike-or-feet event:

- Posters and flyers to advertise the event
- Trail maps for participants
- Well fitting running or walking shoes for walkers
- Bicycles and helmets for cyclers
- Pot luck dishes and picnic utensils
- Sacks, tubs, apples and other items for games

Exertion scale color code:

1-3 = Orange – no effort to light effort for slower pace
4-6 = Green – moderate effort for faster pace

Suggestion: Plan your Bike-or-Feet event for a Friday evening or a Saturday afternoon in middle to late October. Ask your members to bring family members.
Healthy Recipe Challenge

March has been designated as National Nutrition Month on the National Health Observance Calendar. A popular wellness activity to celebrate this observance is a health recipe challenge.

The wellness committee can send an email blast to members asking them to submit their favorite healthy recipes for desserts, entrees, beverages and snacks.

The recipes are then sorted and published by category to all of the wellness program members. Each member is asked to try at least one new recipe. Toward the end of the month, members are asked to vote on their favorite new recipe. The top two or three recipe winners are awarded a prize.

Another activity is to publish all of the healthy recipes in a district healthy recipe booklet. The booklet can be distributed to all of the members, or sold as a fundraiser for the wellness program.

Materials required for the healthy recipe challenge:

- Posters and flyers to advertise the event
- Binders, paper and other materials to make cookbooks
- Prizes for recipe challenge winners

Exertion scale color code:

1-3 = Orange – no effort to light effort
Couch to 5k Challenge

A great way to interest your members in a walking program is to offer a couch to 5k training. The committee can ask a member with experience running or walking in 5K events to act as coach for the training program.

There are many couch to 5K training programs for novice runners and walkers available online, or the coach may elect to use their own training program. One suggestion is to map out a 1 mile course near the school building or designated training place. Participants can walk the 1 mile loop one or more times to gradually increase their stamina until they can walk the 1 mile course 3 times, which is very close to the actual 5K distance.

Members who can already walk 5K may wish to use an alternating run/walk technique to increase their running distance until they can run an entire 5K. Members who already run 5K distances may use this training to improve their personal 5K times.

The group trainings should be offered 2 or 3 times per week and members should be encouraged to map out a 1 mile and 5K route for training near their home.

The training should end with all participants meeting to do a 5K walk/run offered in the community. Afterward the 5K run/walk participants may gather for a picnic or celebration.

The wellness committee should offer a small reward or prize for each member who completes the couch to 5K challenge. A popular option for the prize for this challenge is a wellness program t-shirt featuring the group or district name and the phrase “5K Challenge”.

Materials required for the couch to 5K training activity:

- Members should be sure to have well-fitting running or walking shoes
- Posters and flyers advertising the 5K trainings and final 5K event
- Prices for participants – t-shirts or water bottles
- Maps of 1K and 5K training routes

Exertion scale color code:

1-3 = Orange – no effort to light effort for slower paces walking
4-6 = Green – moderate effort for faster paced walking and jogging
7-9 = Red – mildly difficult to very difficult for running or sprinting
## A Year of Wellness

For school year: ___________________  District: ___________________

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Suggestions for next year’s program: 

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Sample Evaluation

Date:________________________ Name of program/activity:______________________________

Evaluation

Did this _____________________ (program/activity) help you to achieve a healthier lifestyle?

Did you learn valuable health information?  □ Yes  □ No

What suggestions do you have to improve the program?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

If offered again in the future, would you participate in this program?  □ Yes  □ No
HEALTH PROMOTION CAMPAIGN:
Adult Health Maintenance Exam and Preventive Screenings

Preventive care is one of the most important ways to improve individual health and control rising health care costs. Health care costs can be controlled by shifting spending from high-cost disease treatment to low-cost early detection or intervention. All MESSA health plans cover health maintenance exams, specific preventive screenings and recommended immunizations at 100 percent — not subject to deductible — when performed by in-network providers.

Mechanics of running a campaign:

- Determine your goal/purpose of your campaign.
- Determine what human and material resources you have/need to successfully execute your plan.
- Determine what activities you want to incorporate into your wellness plan.
- Determine how you will communicate with your members. How will you promote member education and involvement activities?
- Create a campaign calendar containing information release dates and planned activity dates.
- Evaluate your efforts through surveys and measurements indicated on next year’s report card.

Campaign goal:

- Educate members about coverage for health maintenance exams and preventive care.
- Educate members about importance of routine preventive care.
- Increase use of health maintenance exam benefits.
- Increase use of preventive screening health benefits.

MESSA contacts and resources:

- MESSA field representatives can help members get the most value from their health plan. Contact your local representative at 800.292.4910.
- MESSA's health promotion consultant can assist you with wellness and health promotions. Call 800.292.4910 or email healthpromotions@messa.org.
- MESSA member service representatives can inform members about benefit coverage and in-network providers. Contact them at 800.336.0013.
- Blue Cross Online Visits for medical and behavioral health visits. Enroll at bcbsmonlinevisits.com.
- Contact MESSA member services to preauthorize your flu shot clinic. Flu shots are covered at 100 percent — not subject to plan deductibles — when administered by a covered health provider. Call 800.336.0013 for more information.
- NurseLine is a 24/7 help line staffed by registered nurses. Contact NurseLine at 800.414.2014.

MESSA material resources:

- Health maintenance exam poster
- Health maintenance exam and adult immunization flyers
- Avoid the flu posters
- Healthy lifestyle posters
MESSA material resources (continued):
- Blue Cross Online Visits posters and flyers
- NurseLine posters and flyers
- MESSA phone list magnets
- Cancer screening brochure

MESSA health promotion consultants:
Your health promotion consultant will advise your group/wellness committee on planning, implementing and evaluating your health/wellness needs and then the campaign(s) to begin addressing these needs.

Campaign activity suggestions:

INCREASE AWARENESS OF HME/PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS
- Include program information in staff newsletters.
- Disseminate flyers in staff mailboxes.
- Display posters in prominent staff areas.
- Schedule a health presentation with your health promotion consultant — a great idea for a staff development day, and it’s free!

INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT MESSA WELLNESS BENEFITS
- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Posters
- Presentations

INCREASE AWARENESS OF ONLINE DOCTOR AND THERAPIST VISITS
- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Posters
- Presentations

Related activity suggestions:
- Lunch and learn seminar
- Worksite flu shot clinic
HEALTH PROMOTION CAMPAIGN: 
Diabetes, asthma and cardiovascular case management programs

Chronic conditions such as heart disease, asthma, and diabetes are common and, if unmanaged, costly. With education and proper self-management, individuals can improve health, increase productivity and have a better quality of life.

Mechanics of running a campaign:
- Determine the goal/purpose of your campaign.
- Determine what human and material resources you have/need to successfully execute your plan.
- Determine what activities you want to incorporate into your wellness plan.
- Determine how you will communicate with your members. How will you promote member education and involvement activities?
- Create a campaign calendar containing information release dates and planned activity dates.
- Evaluate your efforts through surveys and measurements indicated on next year's report card.

Campaign goal:
- Educate members about MESSA’s condition-specific (diabetes, asthma and cardiovascular) case management programs that help members better manage chronic conditions.
- Increase enrollment in MESSA’s case management programs.
- Increase use of Blue Cross Online Visits.
- Decrease emergency department visits for chronic conditions.

MESSA contacts and resources:
- MESSA field representatives can help members get the most value from their health plan. Contact your local representative at 800.292.4910.
- MESSA’s health promotion consultant can assist you with wellness and health promotions. Call 800.292.4910 or email healthpromotions@messa.org.
- MESSA member service representatives can inform members about benefit coverage and in-network providers. Contact them at 800.336.0013.
- Blue Cross Online Visits for medical and behavioral health visits at bcbsmonlinevisits.com.
- NurseLine is a 24/7 help line staffed by registered nurses. Contact NurseLine at 800.414.2014.
- MESSA member education nurse educators can be reached at 800.336.0022, prompt 3.

MESSA material resources:
- Posters for our asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular case management programs
- Flyers for our asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular case management programs
- Blue Cross Online Visits posters and flyers
- Healthy lifestyle posters
- Posters and flyers for NurseLine
- MESSA phone list magnets
MESSA health promotion consultants:
Your health promotion consultant will advise your group/wellness committee on planning, implementing and evaluating your health/wellness needs and then the campaign(s) to begin addressing these needs.

Campaign activity suggestions:

INCORPORATE AWARENESS OF MESSA’S CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS
• Include program information in staff newsletters.
• Disseminate flyers in staff mailboxes.
• Display posters in prominent staff areas.
• Schedule a health presentation with your health promotion consultant — a great idea for a staff development day, and it’s free!

INCORPORATE AWARENESS ABOUT MESSA WELLNESS BENEFITS
• Newsletters
• Flyers
• Posters
• Presentations

INCORPORATE AWARENESS OF ONLINE DOCTOR AND THERAPIST VISITS
• Newsletters
• Flyers
• Posters
• Presentations

Related activity suggestions:
• Wear Red Day
• Walking/Fitness challenge
• Healthy cooking seminars
• Lunch and learn seminars
• No Weight-Gain Holiday Challenge
• National Health Observance (i.e., Diabetes Awareness Month)
HEALTH PROMOTION CAMPAIGN: Emergency Services Education

Sudden illness or injury is never convenient and the most effective measures to take are not always clear. This campaign educates members about MESSA resources that support effective and well-informed decision making in the event of a medical emergency.

Mechanics of running a campaign:

- Determine the goal/purpose of your campaign.
- Determine what human and material resources you have/need to successfully execute your plan.
- Determine what activities you want to incorporate into your wellness plan.
- Determine how you will communicate with your members. How will you promote member education and involvement activities?
- Create a campaign calendar containing information release dates and planned activity dates.
- Evaluate your efforts through surveys and measurements indicated on next year’s report card.

Campaign goal:

- Educate members about ER, urgent care, primary care physician, and utilization behavior.
- Educate members about using MESSA’s 24/7 NurseLine service to help determine appropriate level of care.
- Educate members about Blue Cross Online Visits.
- Increase utilization of 24/7 NurseLine.
- Increase utilization of Blue Cross Online Visit services.
- Decrease number of unnecessary ER visits.

MESSA contacts and resources:

- MESSA field representatives can help members get the most value from their health plan. Contact your local representative at 800.292.4910.
- MESSA’s health promotion consultant can assist you with wellness and health promotions. Call 800.292.4910 or email healthpromotions@messa.org.
- MESSA member service representatives can inform members about benefit coverage and in-network providers. Contact them at 800.336.0013.
- Blue Cross Online Visits for medical and behavioral health visits at bcbsonlinevisits.com.
- NurseLine is a 24/7 help line staffed by registered nurses. Contact NurseLine at 800.414.2014.

MESSA material resources:

- Healthy lifestyle posters
- Blue Cross Online Visits posters and flyers
- NurseLine posters and flyers
- MESSA phone list magnets
**MESSA health promotion consultants:**

Your health promotion consultant will advise your group/wellness committee on planning, implementing and evaluating your health/wellness needs and then the campaign(s) to begin addressing these needs.

**Campaign activity suggestions:**

**INCREASE AWARENESS OF EMERGENCY SERVICES EDUCATION**

- Include program information in staff newsletters.
- Disseminate flyers in staff mailboxes.
- Display posters in prominent staff areas.
- Schedule a health presentation with your health promotion consultant — a great idea for a staff development day, and it's free!

**INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT MESSA WELLNESS BENEFITS**

- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Posters
- Presentations

**INCREASE AWARENESS OF ONLINE DOCTOR AND THERAPIST VISITS**

- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Posters
- Presentations
HEALTH PROMOTION CAMPAIGN:
Generic Drug Utilization

Generic medications are the same as brand-name medications in dosage, safety, strength, quality and performance. The Food and Drug Administration requires generic drugs to have the same active ingredients as brand-name drugs. One of the benefits of generic drugs is cost. Generic medications typically cost less than brand-name medicines, which ultimately helps save you money.

Mechanics of running a campaign:
• Determine the goal/purpose of your campaign.
• Determine what human and material resources you have/need to successfully execute your plan.
• Determine what activities you want to incorporate into your wellness plan.
• Determine how you will communicate with your members. How will you promote member education and involvement activities?
• Create a campaign calendar containing information release dates and planned activity dates.
• Evaluate your efforts through surveys and measurements indicated on next year’s report card.

Campaign goal:
• Educate members about their Rx plan and costs/savings by using generics.
• Increase utilization percentage of generics.
• Educate members about resources to learn more about prescription medications, NurseLine and discussions with physicians.

MESSA contacts and resources:
• MESSA field representatives can help members get the most value from their health plan. Contact your local representative at 800.292.4910.
• MESSA’s health promotion consultant can assist you with wellness and health promotions. Call 800.292.4910 or email healthpromotions@messa.org.
• MESSA member service representatives can inform members about their Rx coverage and in-network providers. Contact them at 800.336.0013.
• NurseLine is a 24/7 help line staffed by registered nurses. Contact NurseLine at 800.414.2014.

MESSA material resources:
• Generic Rx Save Money poster
• Rx program flyers
• Healthy lifestyle posters
• Blue Cross Online Visits posters and flyers
• NurseLine posters and flyers
• MESSA phone list magnets
• Facebook
MESSA health promotion consultants:

Your health promotion consultant will advise your group/wellness committee on planning, implementing and evaluating your health/wellness needs and then the campaign(s) to begin addressing these needs.

Campaign activity suggestions:

**INCREASE AWARENESS OF GENERIC DRUG UTILIZATION**

- Include program information in staff newsletters.
- Disseminate flyers in staff mailboxes.
- Display posters in prominent staff areas.
- Schedule a health presentation with your health promotion consultant — a great idea for a staff development day, and it's free!

**INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT MESSA WELLNESS BENEFITS**

- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Posters
- Presentations

**INCREASE AWARENESS OF ONLINE DOCTOR AND THERAPIST VISITS**

- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Posters
- Presentations
HEALTH PROMOTION CAMPAIGN:
Stress Management

Stress is inevitable, so finding ways to manage and reduce it is essential.

Mechanics of running a campaign:
• Determine the goal/purpose of your campaign.
• Determine what human and material resources you have/need to successfully execute your plan.
• Determine what activities you want to incorporate into your wellness plan.
• Determine how you will communicate with your members. How will you promote member education and involvement activities?
• Create a campaign calendar containing information release dates and planned activity dates.
• Evaluate your efforts through surveys and measurements indicated on next year’s report card.

Campaign goal:
• Educate members about strategies for coping with stress.
• Educate members about MESSA resources: Blue Cross Online Visits, NurseLine, behavioral health benefits, and other stress management resources available at www.messa.org.

MESSA contacts and resources:
• MESSA field representatives can help members get the most value from their health plan. Contact your local representative at 800.292.4910.
• MESSA’s health promotion consultant can assist you with wellness and health promotions. Call 800.292.4910 or email healthpromotions@messa.org.
• MESSA member service representatives can inform members about benefit coverage and in-network providers. Contact them at 800.336.0013.
• Blue Cross Online Visits for medical and behavioral health visits at bcbsmonlinevisits.com.
• NurseLine is a 24/7 help line staffed by registered nurses. Contact NurseLine at 800.414.2014.
• MESSA member education nurse educators can be reached at 800.336.0022, prompt 3.

MESSA material resources:
• Healthy lifestyle posters
• Stress management brochures
• Blue Cross Online Visits posters and flyers
• NurseLine posters and flyers
• MESSA phone list magnets
MESSA health promotion consultants:

Your health promotion consultant will advise your group/wellness committee on planning, implementing and evaluating your health/wellness needs and then the campaign(s) to begin addressing these needs.

Campaign activity suggestions:

INCREASE AWARENESS OF STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

• Include program information in staff newsletters.
• Disseminate flyers in staff mailboxes.
• Display posters in prominent staff areas.
• Schedule a health presentation with your health promotion consultant — a great idea for a staff development day, and it's free!

INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT MESSA WELLNESS BENEFITS

• Newsletters
• Flyers
• Posters
• Presentations

INCREASE AWARENESS OF ONLINE DOCTOR AND THERAPIST VISITS

• Newsletters
• Flyers
• Posters
• Presentations

Related activity suggestions:

• Walking/Fitness challenge
• Lunch and learn seminars