

Board announces preliminary estimate of 2004 premium increase

During stakeholder forums held in May, the Public Employees' Benefit Board rolled out the results of six months of planning for 2004 benefits.

"In Oregon, other employers are facing 10 to 30 percent increases in medical insurance costs," said Diane Lovell, who chairs the Board's Plan Design Subcommittee. "We feel very fortunate that PEBB's strategies during the last few years have resulted in lower-than-average increases for 2003 and 2004, with an overall nine percent increase for 2004."

During the forums, conducted via videoconference around the state, the Board sought feedback on three options from employees and other PEBB stakeholders. The options presented were:

- **Option 1**

Keep current plans and carriers, which will require funding a \$54 million increase in rates.

- **Option 2**

If total funding for the increase is not available, would stake-holders prefer to reduce the benefit design to keep premiums fully paid, or keep the current design and pay some monthly premium?

- **Option 3**

If no new funds are available, would stakeholders prefer to

change the plan design more significantly than Option 2, or add an employee premium contribution or a combination of both?

Under Option 1, the Board reported that if the plans stay the same, the average per-employee composite cost would increase from \$647 in 2003 to \$706.16 per month in 2004.

Board members reiterated that the Board has no role in determining the state's contribution to employee benefits. Those decisions are made by the governor, the legislature, collective bargaining, branches of government and the Department of Administrative Services. PEBB's role is to design the benefits, negotiate with carriers and make policy decisions.

The Board is considering the feedback it received during the forums, and through other employee and stakeholder communications. It is incorporating the feedback in the process of making decisions about plan designs for 2004 and beyond. Employees and other stakeholders who were unable to participate in the forums may view details at <http://pebb.das.state.or.us/stakeholder.htm> and send their comments and suggestions to the Board by e-mail to inquiries.pebb@state.or.us or by mail to PEBB at 775 Court St NE, Salem, OR 97301.

The Board is scheduled to announce decisions on the 2004 benefits program during its public meeting on June 17.

Flexible Spending Accounts **Dependent Care Accounts Online**

PEBB members who provide paid care for dependents so the members can work or go to school can initiate a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA). (See the PEBB Eligibility Rules Handbook, online at <http://pebb.das.state.or.us/Eligbook.pdf>).

Associated Administrators, which administers the FSA for PEBB, has created a Web site for FSA participants. At www.aai-pca.com, participants can verify the benefit level they have elected, view their account balance, print claim forms and review a detailed listing of qualified expenses. The site also provides instant access to account balances, contributions and reimbursement status 24 hours a day.

Decisions, decisions, decisions

With so many new treatments, technologies and drugs available to healthcare providers and consumers, how do you know you're making the right decisions about your care? In addition to your healthcare providers, you can look to the State of Health for help in making those sometimes-complicated decisions.

PEBB's statewide wellness program, The State of Health, offers a number of decision paths:

- At The State of Health online (www.wellmed.com/stateofhealth) you'll find condition centers that range from allergies to women's health. Each presents information to help you understand the condition, the range of treatments and any

available evidence on how the treatments work. For example, the Menopause Condition Center has the latest information on the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy, along with alternatives for women who are experiencing symptoms. It also presents a decision-making guide to balance the pros and cons of the treatment options.

- The professionals at the PEBB Health Center are happy to provide information and counseling on health conditions. You can call these healthcare navigators Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for expert information and how to get

advice on the benefits and drawbacks of treatment for most any conditions. Call (503) 362-1111 in Salem or (800) 701-1333 outside Salem.

- If you're dealing with a chronic condition, such as heart disease, asthma or diabetes, PEBB's health plans are specifically designed to provide coordinated care plans through your healthcare provider. If you want to know more about these options, call the Health Center staff. They'll help to steer you in the right direction.

When you're dealing with a difficult healthcare decision, don't think you have to go it alone. There's help in The State of Health.

Standard Demutualization Update

Through PEBB, The Standard Insurance Company (Standard) provides group life and disability insurance for state employees and their dependents. Early in 1999, Standard demutualized. In April 1999, PEBB as the policyholder received \$19,499,676 as a result of the demutualization.

After consulting with the Attorney General's office, these funds were placed in an interest-bearing trust account at the Oregon State Treasury. After further advice from the Attorney General's office, the Benefit Board authorized the filing of an interpleader action in Marion County asking the Court for legal determinations related to ownership and use of the funds.

Two employees asserted claims to the funds on behalf of themselves and all similarly situated employees; the Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU) also asserted a claim to the funds.

The court eventually dismissed the interpleader action, leaving the employee and OHSU claims to be resolved. The state is currently defending against those claims. In January 2003, the State filed a motion for summary judgment.

At the date of this printing, a hearing was scheduled for May 27.

Watch the PEBB Web site (<http://pebb.das.state.or.us>) and future issues of this newsletter for further information as it becomes available.

The PEBB Health Center's lending library has materials related to these topics and more. Call or e-mail for your library card so you can take advantage of the resources available to all PEBB members.

Some new additions to our lending library include:



- *Dealing with People You Can't Stand*
- *Hot Stones & Funny Bones*
- *Massage for Health*
- *The 5 in 10 Cookbook*
- *Denial is not a River in Egypt*
- *Validate Your Pain*
- *The Food Allergy Book*
- *Busy Mom's Cookbook*

PEBB Health Center Update

775 Court St. NE • Salem, OR 97301

(800) 701-1333 • www.pebbhealth.org • (503) 362-1111 • pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com

At the start of the beach, boating and barbeque season, here are important safety tips to remember when picnicking:

Keep Everything Clean:

- Always wash your hands before and after handling food.
- Don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry.
- If there isn't safe drinking water available, bring water for preparation and cleaning. Wet, disposable cloths or moist towelettes or paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces are essential.

- Include lots of clean utensils, not only for eating but also for serving the safely cooked food.

Keep Hot Food Hot and Cold

Food Cold: Food should not be left out of the cooler or off the grill more than two hours (*one hour when the outside temperature is above 90 °F*). Most bacteria do not grow rapidly at temperatures below 40 °F or above 140 °F. The temperature range in between is known as the "Danger Zone."

- If bringing hot take-out food such as fried chicken, eat it within two hours of purchase. Or plan ahead and chill the

food in your refrigerator before packing it into an insulated cooler.

- Carry cold perishable food like hamburger patties, hotdogs, luncheon meats and chicken in an insulated cooler packed with plenty of ice or frozen gel packs.
- Be sure raw meat and poultry are wrapped securely to prevent juices from cross-contaminating ready-to-eat food.
- Perishable cooked foods such as meats, chicken and potato or pasta salads must be kept cold, too.
- Discard any leftovers that have not remained cold.

Programs at the PEBB Health Center

Registration is required for all programs. Handouts may be available if you are unable to attend. Feel free to bring your lunch to any of these noon-hour classes. For registration call (503) 362-1111 or (800) 701-1333, or send an e-mail to our **E-Mail Address** pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com. Check the Health Center website at www.pebbhealth.org for updated class or lending library information. (*Please follow your agency rules on use of the Internet at work.*)

Creating a Balanced Exercise Program

Presenter: Joana Freedman, RPT
Date: Tuesday, June 10
Time: Noon-1p.m.

Having a balanced workout is essential for minimizing injuries as well as maximizing benefits. We will discuss stretching, strengthening and cardiovascular conditioning, and how target heart rates can affect the outcome of your exercise program. Get help designing a program specific to your needs.

Tough Love

Presenter: Shirley Graham, Representative & Trainer
Date: Tuesday, June 17
Time: Noon-1p.m.

Tough Love means refusing to support unacceptable behavior from our children and learning new ways to handle family crisis. It means working to help our kids grow up to be responsible adults and getting the support we need to make positive change in our own lives and in the lives of our children.

Dietary Control of Cholesterol & Triglycerides

Presenter: Judy Forest, RD
Date: Thursday, June 19
Time: Noon-1p.m.

New studies show that diet therapy can lower total and LDL cholesterol by as much as a third. This is as effective as and safer than taking prescription drugs, which may have serious side effects. Bring a two-day food and drink record, and come learn easy-to-do steps to lower cholesterol and achieve a healthier diet.

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June 2003 Public Meetings

The Public Employees' Benefit Board will meet Tuesday, June 17, from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Hearing Room of the Land Conservation Board building at 635 Capitol St. NE in Salem.

The Board's Operations Subcommittee will meet Tuesday, June 10, from 10 a.m. to noon in the PEBB Conference Room located at 775 Court Street NE in Salem.

The Board's Plan Design Subcommittee will meet Tuesday, June 17 from 9 a.m. to noon in Conference Room 350 of the State Capitol Building.

Meeting schedules are subject to change. To be placed on the list of those to be notified of schedule changes, please call Becky Johnson at (503) 378-6296. The most current

public meeting notices are posted on PEBB's Web site at <http://pebb.das.state.or.us>. Meetings held at these addresses are wheelchair accessible. If special accommodations are necessary, please contact Becky Johnson within 48 hours or as soon as possible before the meeting.

Programs at the PEBB Health Center

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Body Image

Presenter: Jennifer Truax, RPT, ATC
Date: Wednesday, June 25
Time: Noon-1p.m.

Wish you were in better physical shape, but find yourself paralyzed by obstacles and bad habits? Understand how a self-defeating body image keeps you from your goals. Learn new ways to measure your successes in real form, and see just how much your body self-image plays into your daily life.

Summer Sensations

Presenter: Ann Raymon, RD
Date: Thursday, June 26
Time: Noon-1p.m.

Simple ideas about meals that children can prepare or help an adult prepare that will provide the body with important nutrients for growing, staying active and looking good. Learn how to use the food pyramid, and discover which nutrients come from each food group.

PEBB Resources

Access PEBB, insurance companies and other benefit resources using the contact information below. The insurance company Web sites include provider directories. You can also link to insurance company Web sites from the PEBB Web site.

Public Employees' Benefit Board (PEBB)

(503) 373-1102, (800) 788-0520
<http://pebb.das.state.or.us>
inquiries.pebb@state.or.us

Associated Administrators, Inc. (Dependent Care FSA)

(800) 334-4340
(503) 220-3805
www.aai-pca.com

BestChoice Administrators

(800) 556-3137
(503) 765-3581

Health Center

(800) 701-1333
(503) 362-1111
pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com

Cascade East Health Plan (medical)

(866) 577-CEHP (2347) toll-free
www.cehp.org

Kaiser Permanente (medical & dental)

(800) 813-2000
www.kp.org/nw

Nationwide Insurance (auto)

(888) 628-4663 media code 8425
(888) 662-8446 (TDD)

ODS Health Plans (dental)

(800) 452-1058
www.odshp.com/pebb/

Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon (medical)

(800) 826-9813
(503) 220-3849
www.or.regence.com/pebb

The Standard Insurance Company (life & disability)

(800) 242-1888
www.standard.com

Unum (long-term care)

(800) 227-4165
www.unumprovident.com/enroll/pebb

VSP (vision)

(800) 877-7195
www.vsp.com

Willamette Dental Insurance (dental)

(800) 460-7644
www.denkor.com

PEBB Mission

To provide a high quality plan of health and other benefits that are affordable to both the employee and the state.