

## Does cost equal quality? *What is compared with what should be*

In January, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said that healthcare now accounts for 15 percent of the nation's economy. The department reported that, in 2002, the U.S. spent \$1.55 trillion for healthcare – an average of \$5,440 per person.

Does paying more buy better quality? Maybe not, according to a survey conducted by the Commonwealth Fund. The fund surveyed consumers in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. It asked how people feel about the quality of care they receive.

Compared with consumers in these other countries, U.S. consumers ranked their healthcare:

- Last in patient safety. They reported the highest level of medication errors and medical mistakes in their treatment.
- Second-to-last in patient-centered care. We tied with Great Britain on doctors not

*(Continued on page 4)*

### *Inside this issue*

Health Center Update .....	2-3
Public Meetings .....	3
Remember VSP Process .....	4
PEBB Resources .....	4

What is	What should be
<p>The U.S. Institute of Medicine reports that up to 98,000 people die from medical mistakes in the U.S. every year. Most of these deaths result from prescription errors.</p>	<p>Doctors enter prescriptions into computers – eliminating handwriting errors. Bar codes ensure that drugs given in a hospital are the right dose, for the right person at the right time.</p>
<p>Doctors get paid more to see more patients in their offices more often in less time and to provide more medical services.</p>	<p>Care coordinators are paid to listen to and counsel with patients on ways to improve their lives and health. They're also paid for follow-up by phone and secure, online messaging, so you don't have to make another visit.</p>
<p>Offices schedule visits only by phone or in person far in advance. You must work your schedule around the doctor's. If the doctor is called away, you wait.</p>	<p>Offices schedule by e-mail as well as phone. If you need care today, you get care today. Doctor called away? A loaner beeper lets you know when to come back. Just a question? Secure messaging works.</p>
<p>Every doctor you see makes a paper file on you with only that doctor's findings. Your complete medical file is scattered among all your doctors. You're lucky if the right papers are in the right file at the right time.</p>	<p>With your permission, your complete, secure electronic medical file is available to your full care team. Just as important, you have access to all your own health records, and your care team takes time to explain them. Secure Web sites offer more information.</p>
<p>People with chronic illness must access care and medicine more often and with more doctors, who don't always communicate with each other. These patients pay more, have more redundant tests and require more office visits. If they don't follow through, complications can require more-costly treatments, emergency-room visits and hospitalizations, and result in disabilities and even death.</p>	<p>Disease management programs ensure those with chronic conditions receive coaching, reminders and nurse advice to help them maintain their well-being. Their full care team participates and communicates – with the patient and each other. The person has better healthcare and a better quality of life. And healthcare is more affordable for all of us.</p>

# PEBB Health Center Update

775 Court St. NE • Salem, OR 97301

(800) 701-1333 • [www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org) • (503) 362-1111 • [pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com](mailto:pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com)

Let Valentine's Day hearts and flowers serve as a reminder to take care of your ticker. Heart disease is still the number one killer of American men and women. Many PEBB members are unaware of their heart health. This is a good month to have your blood

pressure, cholesterol and blood sugars checked. PEBB Health Center staff can help you determine what steps to take to see what condition your heart is in. Log on to The State of Health online at [www.wellmed.com/stateofhealth](http://www.wellmed.com/stateofhealth) for more information about heart disease and stroke.



## 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 inside Salem, or (800) 701-1333 outside Salem. Or send an e-mail to [pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com](mailto:pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com). Check the Health Center Web site at [www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org) for any updated class or lending library information. *(Please follow your agency rules on use of the Internet at work.)*

### Diabetes Health Risks

**Presenter:** Carolyn Buel, ANP

**Date:** Tues., Feb. 10

**Time:** Noon-1:00 p.m.

Learn what contributes to adult-onset, Type 2 diabetes and what can be done to prevent it. Learn about trends, facts and disease progression.

### Is it Asthma or Bronchitis?

**Presenter:** Liz Marik, FNP

**Date:** Wed., Feb. 18

**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Wheezing, coughing, short of breath? Know the difference between asthma and bronchitis. Learn the best treatments during winter and beyond.

### Heart Disease: Are You at Risk?

**Presenter:** Jeanine Olson, ANP

**Date:** Thurs., Feb. 19

**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Are you at risk for heart disease? Learn how to modify risk factors and minimize your chances – especially if you have a family history of heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes.

### Preparing for Pregnancy

**Presenter:** Liz Marik, FNP

**Date:** Tues., Feb. 24

**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Learn what you can do on your own to make sure you have a healthy pregnancy and how to access resources in your medical plan. Dads-to-be are welcome, too.

### Depression

**Presenter:** Lynn Bosworth

**Date:** Tues., March 9

**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Depression is a common, highly treatable, medical condition. You may have a friend, family member or colleague who is depressed. Or, you may suffer from depression, yourself. Learn how to get help for yourself or others.

## PEBB Health Center Update *(Continued from page 2)*

### Breaking Down Barriers

**Presenter:** Liz Marik, FNP  
**Date:** Wed., March 10  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

This third class in the Lifestyle Change Series will discuss barriers to physical activity and the solutions to help you be more active. Feel free to join the class any time during the 12-month series.

### Five a Day

**Presenter:** Liz Marik, FNP  
**Date:** Wed., March 17  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

If you want to get the recommended five fruits and vegetables into your daily diet, this is the class for you. Learn to easily add color and taste to your diet and improve your health at the same time.

### IBS and Other Gastrointestinal Disorders

**Presenter:** Jeanine Olson, ANP  
**Date:** Thurs., March 18  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Learn how to identify and manage irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Also, learn about the features of an "abdominal migraine" and dietary measures that may be helpful.

### A Dribble With a Giggle?

**Presenter:** Carolyn Buel, ANP  
**Date:** Tues., March 23  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

This light-hearted title introduces a frank discussion of types of female urinary incontinence, causes of bladder irritants and treatment options.

The PEBB Health Center's lending library has materials related to these topics and more. Call or e-mail now for your library card. Go to [www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org) for a listing of all their books and videos. *(Please follow your agency rules on use of the Internet at work.)*



## February 2004 Public Meetings

**The Public Employees' Benefit Board** will meet Tuesday, February 17, from 2 to 4 p.m. in Hearing Room 50 of the Capitol building at 900 Court St NE, Salem.

**The Board's Operations Subcommittee** will meet Tuesday, February 10, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the PEBB Health Center conference room at 775 Court Street NE, Salem.

**The Board's Plan Design Subcommittee** will meet Tuesday, February 3, from 9 a.m. to noon in the Willamette Room in the Willamette Education Service District building at 2611 Pringle Road SE, Salem. The Subcommittee will also meet on Tuesday, February 17 from 9 a.m. to noon in Conference Room 350 of the Capitol building.

*Meeting schedules are subject to change. Please check the PEBB Web site at <http://pebb.das.state.or.us> prior to attending a meeting.*

*To be placed on the list of those to be notified of schedule changes, please call Becky Johnson at (503) 378-6296. Meetings held at these locations are wheelchair accessible. If further accommodations are necessary, please contact Becky Johnson within 48 hours or as soon as possible before the meeting.*

## Regence PPO members Remember VSP Process

VSP covers routine vision services for members of the Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon PPO plan. In 2003, VSP changed reimbursement procedures to further protect members' healthcare information and improve member satisfaction.

VSP now provides patient eligibility and benefits information only to members and VSP network doctors. VSP does not provide this information to providers who are not in the network.

Members may still use doctors who are not in the VSP network, but they will receive a lower benefit than if they used a VSP doctor. These members must pay the bill in full and submit their own claims to VSP. VSP will send reimbursement directly to the member.

You can find VSP doctors in your area by searching on the VSP Web site at [www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com). Or you can call VSP customer service at (800) 877-7195, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Pacific Time.

## Does Cost Equal Quality?

(Continued from page 1)

- spending enough time with us. We ranked last on doctors not listening to our health concerns.
- Second-to-last in timeliness. U.S. consumers said they had shorter hospital waiting times. But, we were next-to-last on getting in to see our doctor in five days or less when we needed medical attention.
  - Last in healthcare efficiency. More of us were sent for duplicate tests by different providers. We were last in having medical records and test results available to the doctor at our appointment.
  - Last in effectiveness. More of us failed to get a recommended test, treatment or follow-up because of cost. We also failed to have a prescription filled because of cost.

These perceptions illuminate some elements of the Benefit Board's Vision for PEBB in 2007. The following examples show ways the healthcare system could be improved.

The Benefit Board knows transforming *what is* to *what should be* may take many years. But, in view of today's healthcare landscape, the Board's mission of quality, affordable benefits may soon become "mission impossible." In the coming months, the Board will continue to plan for implementation of the PEBB vision for 2007.

## 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](mailto:inquiries.pebb@state.or.us)

### PEBB Health Center

(800) 701-1333, (503) 362-1111  
[www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org)  
[pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com](mailto:pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com)

### Associated Administrators, Inc. (Dependent Care FSA)

(800) 334-4340  
(503) 220-3805  
[www.aai-pca.com](http://www.aai-pca.com)

### BestChoice Administrators

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

### Kaiser Permanente (medical & dental)

(800) 813-2000  
[www.kp.org/ehealth/nw/pebb](http://www.kp.org/ehealth/nw/pebb)

### Nationwide Insurance (auto)

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

### ODS Health Plans (dental)

(800) 452-1058  
[www.odshealthplan.com/pebb/](http://www.odshealthplan.com/pebb/)

### Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon (medical)

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

### The Standard Insurance Company (life & disability)

(800) 242-1888  
[www.standard.com](http://www.standard.com)

### Unum (long-term care)

(800) 227-4165  
[www.unumprovident.com/enroll/pebb](http://www.unumprovident.com/enroll/pebb)

### VSP (vision for Regence members)

(800) 877-7195  
[www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com)

### Willamette Dental Insurance (dental)

(800) 460-7644  
[www.willamettedental.com](http://www.willamettedental.com)

## PEBB Mission

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