

Call

continued from page 1

you receive all communications from PERS and your health plan. Address changes are accepted via telephone or in writing.

■ **Health Plans:** The health plan that you are currently enrolled in can assist you with questions related to their health plan benefits and providers. They can

also assist with questions related to medical claims and ID cards. Phone numbers are listed on your ID card.

■ **Prescription Drugs:** If you are a member of Clear Choice Health Plans, Providence Health Plan or ODS Health Plans, and have questions regarding your prescription drug benefit, contact the ODS Pharmacy Department listed on your ID card — If you are a member of Kaiser

Permanente, contact the Kaiser Membership Services telephone number listed on your ID card.

■ **PERS Pension Office:** The Pension office located in Tigard, Oregon can answer questions related to your PERS pension or disability benefit check, taxes deducted, year-end statements, and 1099 statements. In the Portland area call 503-603-7777 or toll free 1-888-320-7377.



Health related legal documents

Most of you by now are familiar with the restrictions placed on hospitals, doctor offices, insurance companies and other entities due to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). These restrictions limit the release of information to certain, designated individuals. There are many people, for various reasons, that have a family member or someone else

acting on their behalf regarding financial and health matters.

The PERS Health Insurance Program can release limited information to an immediate family member, but the health plans and hospitals are more restrictive. Most often, a Power of Attorney or other legal document is required for a person, even an immediate family member, to act on the

member's behalf. The PERS Health Insurance Program requires a copy of this document. Be sure to send a copy to ALL providers and health plans you are connected with in addition to the PERS Health Insurance Program. This will reduce potential problems when contacting various offices for the person acting on your behalf.

PLAN CHANGE ALERT

The annual PERS Plan Change period is quickly approaching. The next issue of Health Wise, which is sent the first part of September, will contain the fall PERS Plan Change meeting schedule and other important information regarding plan changes for 2007. Be sure to keep the fall issue on hand. While we make every effort to send out the annual Plan Change packets by mid September, which also contains a meeting schedule, unanticipated changes can delays the schedules. Retaining your fall issue of Health Wise will ensure you have plenty of time to plan on attending a meeting in your area.

Also, if you area planning a trip this fall, be sure to let the PERS Health Insurance Program know your forwarding address so we can ensure your receive your important Plan Change information. The phone number is on the back of this publication.

False brain myths

The brain is a complex and fascinating organ. The following points are four false brain myths.

- You can't change your brain
- People lose brain cells and eventually run out of brain cells.
- The brain does not make new brain cells
- Memory decline is inevitable as we get older.

For more information on these brain myths visit the AARP website at www.aarp.org/health/brain/aging/myths_about_aging_and_the_brain.html.

Staying cool during the summer heat

Hot represents a serious health risk for older adults.

Poor health conditions, particularly heart issues, often occur when temperatures heat up, especially above 90 degrees. In such hot weather, the chance of getting sick increases if certain prescription drugs or particular health problems, such as heart problems, excess weight or diabetes, are already an issue.

The key to being safe in hot weather is looking for the early warning signs of serious heat stress. If you experience dizziness, rapid heartbeat, diarrhea, nausea, throbbing headache, dry skin, chest pain, great weakness, mental changes, breathing problems, vomiting or cramps, contact a physician.

Here are some ways to keep cool and avoid stress:

- Slow down. Take things slower in the hot weather.
- Keep your cool. Look for cool spots, like an air conditioned room in your house, a shopping mall, a senior center, a public library or a movie theater.
- Use air conditioning if you have it. Do not turn of your air conditioner to save energy if it is going to endanger your health.
- Use fans. Portable fans and ceiling fans keep the air moving and blow away body heat. Window fans in the evening can draw cool night air into the home.
- Dress light. Wear light colors and loose fitting, cotton clothing.
- Drink lots of water and other liquids. Cool



baths and showers also help.

- Watch what you eat. Watch your salt use, and avoid alcohol, hot foods and heavy meals. To avoid using the stove and heating up your home even more, try salads and sandwiches.

Health Matters

Work those muscles and strengthen your health

By Megan Mikkelsen, MPH
ODS Quality Improvement Specialist

THE BENEFITS OF STRENGTH TRAINING EXERCISE

Muscle tissue begins to weaken as you age. Strength training can reduce age-related muscle loss and promote mobility, improve fitness and strengthen bones. Strength training is also called weight lifting or resistance training.

ADD STRENGTH TRAINING TO YOUR EXERCISE TO-DO LIST

A well-balanced activity program is important to staying healthy as you age. Try to incorporate all of the following when you get physical:

- Aerobic activities: these exercises should be completed at a moderate intensity to raise your heart rate and increase your endurance. Working aerobically will improve your heart health and circulatory system. Some examples include brisk walking, swimming and dancing.
- Strength Training: can be completed by using free weights, weight training machines, or stretch bands. Incorporate resistance training into your exercise routine to improve your over-all fitness and strengthen your body.
- Stretching: these activities help keep your body limber and flexible by stretching muscles. Regular stretching will also reduce your risk of exercise related injury.
- Balancing activities: improving your balance can help prevent falls and reduce

fall-related injuries. Tai chi and pilates are examples of activities that help increase your balance.

ARE YOU READY?

Trying new physical activities is good for most people, but check with your healthcare provider before trying something new.

TIPS TO HELP GET YOU STARTED

- Try a new exercise class that incorporates a variety of activities like water aerobics or circuit training.
- Work with a personal trainer to help conquer your fitness goals.
- Look online, check out the library, or pick up a book about strength training or exercise. There are many free resources as well as inexpensive books on the topic of strength training.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/index.htm

Reference:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Growing Stronger - Strength Training for Adults. http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/spotlight.htm. Accessed 3/29/06.

Numbers You Should Know



PERS Health Insurance Program
www.pershealth.com
P.O. Box 40187
Portland, OR 97240-0187
503-224-7377 • 1-800-768-7377

PERS Pension Office
www.pers.state.or.us
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 23700
Tigard, OR 97281-3700
Street Address
11410 S.W. 68th Parkway
Tigard, OR 97223-8634
503-603-7777 • 1-888-320-7377

Kaiser Permanente
www.kaiserpermanente.org
500 N.E. Multnomah, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97232-2099
503-813-2000 • 1-800-813-2000

Providence Health Plan
www.providence.org
3601 S.W. Murray Blvd. #10
Beaverton, OR 97005
503-574-8000 • 1-800-603-2340
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 4327
Portland, OR 97208-4327
Claims
P.O. Box 3125
Portland, OR 97208-3125
Providence RN
503-574-6520 • 1-800-700-0481

Clear Choice Health Plans
www.clearchoicehp.com
2650 NE Courtney Drive
Bend, OR 97701
541-385-5315 • 1-888-863-3637
Claims
P.O. Box 7469
Bend, OR 97701

ODS
www.odscompanies.com
601 S.W. Second Ave.
Portland, OR 97204-3156
Medical
503-243-3880
1-800-962-1533 (Oregon)
1-800-852-5195 (National)
Dental
503-243-4494
1-800-452-1058 (Oregon)
1-800-852-5195 (National)
Pharmacy
503-265-4709
1-888-786-7509
Claims
P.O. Box 4030
Portland, OR 97208-4030

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT NO. 1039

HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM
PERS
Oregon Employees Retirement System
P.O. Box 40187
Portland, OR 97240-0187

Health related legal documents Page 3
Plan change alert Page 3
Brain myths Page 3
Staying cool during the summer heat Page 4
Work those muscles and strengthen your health Page 5

PERS HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Summer 2006

Health Wise

Inside:

Health related legal documents
Page 3

Plan change alert
page 3

Brain myths
page 3

Staying cool during the summer heat
page 4

Work those muscles and strengthen your health
Pages 5

Health Wise Editor
Katie Paullin

Making the right call the first time

The PERS Health Insurance Program attempts to make things as convenient as possible for members, and we understand that members are often confused over which office to contact with questions. These questions may range from “Where do I get a new Identification Card?” to “Has my insurance plan paid for my recent hospital bill?” Contacting the correct office for your specific needs the first time can save you time.

The phone numbers members need to get their questions answered can be found on the back cover of the PERS Member Handbook and Benefit Guide. This handbook is provided to members who first enroll in the program, and an updated version is mailed to all health plan members each year in the fall. Members will also find the phone numbers for their health plan on their health plan

Identification (ID) card. Following are some helpful tips to help you contact the right office with your first call. ■ **PERS Health Insurance Program:** Telephone hours for our office are 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Member specialists can answer questions regarding eligibility, enrollment, premium and billing. It is important that all communications related to enrollments, address changes, requests for termination of coverage or changes to coverage be mailed to the PERS Health Insurance Program office. Those changes will be forwarded to your health plan. Address changes are very important to ensure

Call,
continued on page 2