Fast Facts About HEALTHY YOU
Working Together for Your Wellness

What is HEALTHY YOU?

Over the past three years, Northeastern University has actively collaborated with several of our peer institutions—through The Boston Consortium of Higher Education (TBC)—on a range of challenges shared by all of us. One of The Consortium's initiatives is to keep the health care of its member institutions affordable and accessible by helping employees and their families get and stay healthy. This health management initiative is called HEALTHY YOU.

HEALTHY YOU is a series of health management programs designed to help faculty and staff understand, improve and maintain their health. *Completely voluntary and totally confidential,* through these programs you can:

- Take a Personal Health Assessment (PHA) to learn about your health and any issues you may have. You receive a personal report that you can share with your doctor so that, together, you can plan for a healthy future.

- Participate in lifestyle coaching to identify those long-term actions that will improve your health through the life choices you make by building skills that last a lifetime.

- Receive outreach and resources to help you take an active role in understanding and managing chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

- Have access to a variety of BlueCross BlueShield-provided tools and education including websites, informational sessions and onsite events.

What is The Boston Consortium for Higher Education?

The Boston Consortium is a not-for-profit membership organization founded by the chief financial officers of Boston-area colleges and universities to help member institutions develop and implement innovative cost management and quality improvement ideas. A key challenge that TBC has undertaken is to learn more about health care costs and how best to control them.

How does HEALTHY YOU relate to health care costs?

The primary goals of the HEALTHY YOU initiative are to encourage employees and their families to live healthier lifestyles and, over time, to foster a campus-wide culture of health awareness. To the extent that this initiative ultimately results in a healthier workforce, a secondary outcome could be a positive impact on the rise of medical plan costs, which would benefit both employees, who pay a portion of the costs, and the University.

What is the Personal Health Assessment (PHA)?

The PHA is a confidential questionnaire prepared by healthcare experts at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) to help you identify a potential health risk early and receive proper care before it becomes an "issue." The questionnaire includes basic questions about your health history and your lifestyle and some specifically addressing health issues for men and for women individually. A personal report with the results of the PHA is provided to you and the BCBSMA nurses—your employer will not receive this confidential information.

How can you guarantee that my private health information will be kept secure?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was passed by Congress in 1996 to protect your personal information from being inappropriately disclosed. All those who provide medical services such as hospitals and doctors and insurance companies and health plan employees have completed Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training and are in compliance with HIPAA privacy guidelines. In addition, strict confidentiality and data security protocols are in place and adhered to by all healthcare employees.

I run three miles every-other-day, watch my weight and eat right—Why should I take the PHA?

Everyone knows that lifestyle choices such as diet and exercise can have a major impact on your health, and therefore, your medical costs. But one of the biggest threats to your health can be something you don't know. The first step to better health is a clear understanding of your personal health status. The PHA is your opportunity to take this important first step.

Let's cut to the chase…I've heard that programs like HEALTHY YOU work for a year, but then people lose interest and go back to the same bad habits. How is this different?

HEALTHY YOU combines health self-knowledge through the PHA with wellness coaching to improve lifestyle habits and disease management to help those who suffer with serious chronic disease. It is a long-term health management program that, through education, health events and one-on-one coaching, can measurably improve the health of all employees.

How can HEALTHY YOU benefit employees financially?

Northeastern University's costs for health care are a direct consequence of the medical claims incurred by plan participants, and employees help pay for those costs through their premium contributions. If, in the long run, there are fewer claims because employees are healthier, the University's costs will be lower, and the premium dollars the University will need to collect from employees will also be lower. A successful HEALTHY YOU initiative will be a win-win for all.

Okay, I understand that our health care costs are a product of the claims of those who are insured. But I am just one person…I can't really have an impact on our costs, can I?

Each step that you take to understand your health and get healthier can have positive results on your life and the life of our entire institution. The smallest action—taking the stairs instead of the elevator; eating carrot sticks instead of potato chips; completing your PHA—can lead to healthier habits for a lifetime. In addition, your actions and your example are *powerful* and can be the inspiration to help another person take that first important step. Working together, we can be healthier both physically and fiscally.

How can I learn more about HEALTHY YOU?

You will be receiving a variety of communications over the coming year. The HEALTHY YOU brand will help you identify the information about the health management programs available to you. Watch for more information at www.northeastern.edu/hrm/benefits.

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