

Health & Wellness

University System of New Hampshire



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My 2009 New Year's resolution began a few months early last October after the Healthy Returns program. Healthy Returns is a series of screenings including blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, weight and Body Mass Index (BMI) assessment. The screenings are available to all USNH benefits eligible faculty and staff twice a year, and provide a valuable opportunity to acknowledge and identify areas of needed health improvement. My screening allowed me to find time to stop, assess and alter some of my behaviors. A priority for me was to lose a few extra pounds that had crept up on me over the past year.

Two of my colleagues had lost significant amounts of weight so I asked them how they were accomplishing such great results. They told me they were participating in Weight Watchers, and also were having fun with the Nintendo Wii Fit interactive video games. Their descriptions of the Wii programs piqued my curiosity so I went out and purchased the Wii console and the Wii Fit program.

As I write this I am 10 pounds lighter and exercise every day for one hour while making a conscious effort to be mindful of my food choices. It is time now to focus on maintaining my current weight, and continuing to eat the right foods

while exercising each day. Of course, I knew all of the things I needed to do before the introduction to Wii—I have one degree in Health and Human Performance and two degrees in Health Education—but I was not paying attention to and focusing on behaviors I knew would enhance my health. I do feel better, lighter physically as well as psychologically. The trick is to stay with it and find ways to keep my interest engaged, such as through USNH's wellness programs.

Another supportive mechanism I'm using is a Health and Wellness Coach. APS HealthCare, our new Employee

Assistance Program (EAP) provider, responded to USNH's request to offer Health and Wellness Coaching with a top-notch program. So you can, as I have, call the 1-800-424-1749 number and ask for a Health and Wellness Coach. You will be connected with a

health professional who will become your personal coach. The Health and Wellness Coach will maintain his or her coaching relationship with you for as long as you like. This has been a very valuable support to me as I work to maintain the behavior change efforts I have made. I want my loss of 10 pounds to stay lost!

— Nancy Puglisi, Ph.D.

USNH Director of Organizational Wellness

“The trick is to stay with it and find ways to keep my interest engaged...”

Personal health, systemic health and the role of USNH Health & Wellness

The University System of New Hampshire's Health and Wellness program was established in 1982, one of the first health promotion programs in higher education. In March this program will be 27 years old. I have been here the entire time working with faculty and staff members providing programs to enhance health and wellbeing. It is a rewarding and fulfilling profession.

Today we are embarking on new challenges. Our nation is facing a national health crisis, as is the University System of New Hampshire. Our expenditure for health care now exceeds \$50 million per year. Often the cost of health care is from self-induced illnesses brought on by our own not-so-healthy choices, like the choices I made leading to my weight gain. If I had not reversed my negative behaviors, hypertension, high cholesterol and diabetes, as well as a host of cardiovascular illnesses, could have been in my future. By paying attention to those areas, I can make healthy choices, creating the best possible scenario to ward off illnesses and suffering. Genetics do play a role in health status; we cannot alter the genes we are born with (at least for now!).

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Personal health, systemic health and the role of USNH Health & Wellness

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However, we can often mitigate some of the effects of our biological destiny by caring for ourselves and partnering with health professionals to make the best of our individual circumstances.

It is not only individual choices that lead to healthy or unhealthy behavior, it is the environment we live and work in. USNH has retained and enhanced its strong commitment to wellness over the years, taking a number of steps to institutionalize wellness not just from an individual perspective, but from an organizational one as well. One of the first steps was the formation of the USNH WELLPAC (Wellness Promotion, Activity, and Commitment) group last spring. Representatives from each campus meet monthly to discuss, design and support wellness activities on each campus. Additionally, campus committees have been created to further support healthy efforts offered through campus-based initiatives and/or from the USNH Health and Wellness Office.

Current initiatives include:

- ▶ KSC continues to support its wellness committee (in place for the past decade!) and recently found a way to allow faculty and staff to use the Health Education reimbursement (available to those covered by Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare) for campus yoga classes.
- ▶ GSC is developing an online exercise program for their staff.
- ▶ UNH-M is developing maps for historic walking routes in Manchester.
- ▶ A trail through the woods has been cut so USNH System Office employees can walk without having to go out on busy Route 4.
- ▶ UNH is embarking on a major health initiative called "Healthy UNH".
- ▶ PSU is planning a peace garden and a labyrinth to have a stress-free place

for faculty, staff and students to reflect and gather.

- ▶ The StressEraser program will be offered again. You can learn how to use a small biofeedback device to train you in eliciting the relaxation response.
- ▶ Participate in the LifeLine Screening Program, which uses sophisticated ultra sound equipment to detect aneurisms and avoid possible stroke.

"Representatives from each campus meet monthly to discuss, design and support wellness activities..."

- ▶ Campus Weight Loss Programs.
- ▶ Take advantage of fitness facilities and health education offerings.
- ▶ Soon a "Health Risk Assessment" (HRA) will be made available to you along with a Cultural Health Audit and a Health Interest Survey. Please take the time to participate in the Health Risk Assessment. The Health Risk Assessment will gauge your current health status. When you get your results, APS HealthCare will provide the health and wellness coaching support and guidance to assist you in improving your health and wellbeing. In addition there will be a "Cultural Health Audit" survey which will assess just how supportive the campus environments are while the "Health Interest" survey will inform us as to what types of additional programs might serve our campus communities.

New results from research conducted at the Mayo Clinic indicate the need for humans to move more and has suggested ways to incorporate more movement in a work environment.

Something as simple as standing up to answer your office phone can help burn more calories and help you gain flexibility. Informal meetings with one or two people could take place as a "meet and walk," which are now accepted in some Fortune 500 companies.

I have also changed how I work at home. With a very short adjustment period, I've trained myself to take my work down to my treadmill and read and write comments as I walk at 1.4 miles an hour. I can read, comprehend and write while I am moving. I used to spend hours sitting at my home desk or on my couch doing this, and now I am benefitting from the extra movement. It has been a wonderful change.

I would like to challenge all of us at USNH to marry sustainability, which all of the campuses have embraced wholeheartedly, with ways to capture human energy and return that energy to the grid. Third World countries are doing this with merry-go-rounds. Children are children everywhere and as they play and laugh and go around and around they are generating energy for their village. We are using enormous amounts of energy in our fitness facilities. The potential for capturing that energy to power the electrical needs of the facilities effectively taking them "off line" is real. This might be an interesting research project for engineering students. MIT students have created a hallway with sensors underneath the floor that captures the human energy expenditures, which then powers the lights that light the hallway. What kinds of things can we do to bring together human energy expenditure and sustainability?

I challenge faculty, staff and students to think differently, act differently, and work differently. The technology and knowledge is available for caretaking our planet and ourselves as a combined effort.

Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) Reminder

All active full-time status employees who are enrolled in USNH medical coverage and not covered by a collective bargaining agreement are eligible and have been automatically enrolled in an HRA. The HRA is only

available to eligible employees who newly elected medical coverage as of January 1, 2009, or continued medical coverage in a qualifying USNH medical insurance plan. The HRA can be used to pay for eligible health care expenses

not covered by the health plan. Any remaining funds in an HRA at the end of a year roll over to the next year. Visit www.wageworks.com for information and to access your account online.

Looking to improve your health in '09? Check out your Wellness Connection Benefits

Here's how you can benefit from the Wellness Connection:

Eligibility Guidelines

You're eligible to participate in the Wellness Connection Program if you are a USNH subscriber with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care of New England.

Club Membership:

Receive up to \$500 a year!

You are eligible for up to a \$500 benefit per year for a health club membership that is payable to a selected participating health club.

Health Education:

Receive up to \$200 a year!

You can get reimbursed up to \$200

a year (per family/individual contract) for completing a variety of health education classes. Classes may be on subjects such as: smoking cessation, stress management, weight loss, nutrition, first aid and parenting.

Member Rewards:

Receive great prizes for your daily activity!

The Wellness Connection rewards you and your covered family members for participating in regular exercise and physical activity.

Visit www.usnh.edu/hr/health-wellness/get-active.html for Wellness Connection Program details.

USNH has a new Employee Assistance Vendor:



Watch for information about new services. Please note: There will be no change to our toll-free number – 1-800-424-1749.

Want to learn more? Be on the lookout for informational materials from APS Health Care. You can explore issues in an anonymous, confidential, and secure manner 24 hours a day... all from the comfort and privacy of your own computer. Go to www.APSHelpLink.com (Enter your company access code: USNH)

Enjoy the rewards of a healthier you!

Healthy Returns is an exciting program sponsored by USNH Human Resources and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. It's designed to help you make positive changes and meet realistic health goals, while bringing you additional rewards along the way. All status benefits eligible employees are welcome.

Healthy Returns targets five important health areas:

- ▶ Blood Pressure Control
- ▶ Weight Management
- ▶ Cholesterol Management
- ▶ Glucose Management
- ▶ Smoking Cessation

It should take most people about 30 minutes to complete the program.



Visit our website for more information: www.usnh.edu/hr/health-wellness

- ▶ How the program works
- ▶ Reward details
- ▶ Program event schedule/sign-up
- ▶ Healthy Returns resources

Congratulations on taking positive steps toward a healthier you.


2008 Wii (Console/Sports package) Raffle Prize Winners!

- ▶ Patrick Cate, PSU
- ▶ Debbie O'Neil, USNH
- ▶ Nikki Blodgett, UNH-M
- ▶ Lucretia Wallace, UNH
- ▶ Francisca Mathes, GSC

2008 USNH Step the System (\$250 Gift Card) Raffle Prize winners!

- ▶ Nan Sherry, UNH
- ▶ Sharon Flanagan, UNH
- ▶ Kelly Washburne, UNH
- ▶ Larry Johnson, USNH

USNH Health & Wellness Program Schedule (February - May 2009)

	StressEraser				LifeLine Screening	
	Date	Room	Date	Room	Date	Room
PSU	2/24/2009	Room 109 HUB	4/7/2009	Heritage Commons HUB	4/21/2009	Multipurpose Room HUB
UNH	2/24/2009	MUB Room 203	4/1/2009	MUB Rooms 330/332 & 334/336	4/28/2009	MUB Rooms 338/340
Keene	2/25/2009	Madison Street Lounge	4/16/2009	Mountain View Room	5/6/2009	Mountain View Room
USNH	2/26/2009	Dunlap Center Conference Room	3/31/2009	Dunlap Center Conference Room	—	
UNH	3/4/2009	MUB Room 203	4/15/2009	MUB Rooms 330/332 & 334/336	4/29/2009	MUB Rooms 330/332
GSC	4/22/2009	Concord Office Room 102	4/8/2009	Concord Office Room 103	—	
UNH-M	—		5/7/2009	286 Commercial St. Rooms 16 & 7	—	

Note: additional program details will be mailed to those eligible.

Health Promotion Programs for Faculty & Staff

Cultivating emotional balance and developing mental fitness skills

Life seems to be moving faster and faster, especially at the workplace. With technology enhancing our ability to easily and efficiently stay connected to work 24/7, it also brings with it an inability to detach from tasks, and finding little or no time to renew and refresh ourselves. While cell phones and other electronic equipment keep us wired to the external world, our inner environments never find a time to rest. Completing numerous tasks quickly results in feelings of “just getting by” instead of outcomes that make us proud of our endeavors. This continuous cycle compromises the emotional immune system. Stress not only impacts our emotional wellbeing, it takes a toll on our bodies, leading to disorders including hypertension, headaches, backaches, muscle tension, gastrointestinal disorders and compromised immune function.

Could one solution be a technological tool just waiting for us to use?

Introducing the

STRESSERASER



The StressEraser is a small portable FDA regulated biofeedback device, about the size of a deck of cards, used by many people to mitigate stress by activating the relaxation response. Guiding the user through a series of simple breathing exercises, relaxation can occur within 15 minutes, calming the mind and relaxing the body. We invite you to join us as we explore ways to become free from chronic stress, relieve worry, and gain a greater ability to cultivate emotional wellbeing.

LifeLine Screenings, April 2009

(Your Cost: \$50)

The LifeLine screening consists of three noninvasive, painless tests that scan specific areas to detect risk factors for stroke, aneurysms, and heart disease. The three tests cost a total of \$119 per person. However, because USNH recognizes the importance of this information to your continued wellbeing, the USNH Health & Wellness program will pay \$69 toward the total cost of the test. Your cost will be \$50. This screening and discount are also available to your spouse or USNH benefits-eligible domestic partner.

Note: If you have an HRA or are enrolled in a health care flexible spending account, you can receive reimbursement for your portion of the cost of this screening. For more information, visit www.wageworks.com

For additional information about the LifeLine screening visit www.lifelinescreening.com

To register: Call 1-800-636-0418

For general inquiries: Contact **Debbie Wood**, deborah.wood@usnh.edu, 862-0931

Cost Containment Corner

Generic Drug Use

Did you know that only 60 percent of prescriptions filled by USNH employees are generic, yet most companies see 70 percent or more of their employees using generic medications? If USNH increased its rate of generic prescription use to 70% percent, the employees and the System have the potential to save more than \$500,000 per year!

Do your part to keep healthcare affordable. Ask your doctor if there is a generic option for the medication you take. Take advantage of HP's mail order prescription drug savings program for maintenance drugs. It's a simple solution that can create substantial savings.

The average cost of a "Generic" Prescription Drug is **\$15**. The average cost of a "Brand Name" Prescription drug is **\$90**.

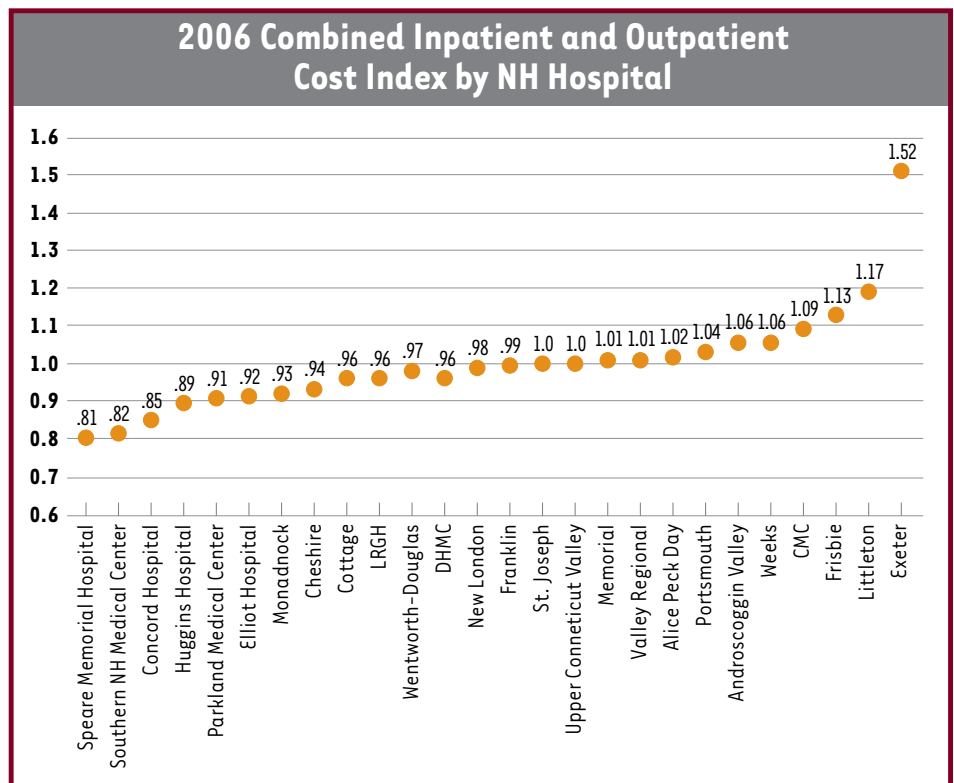
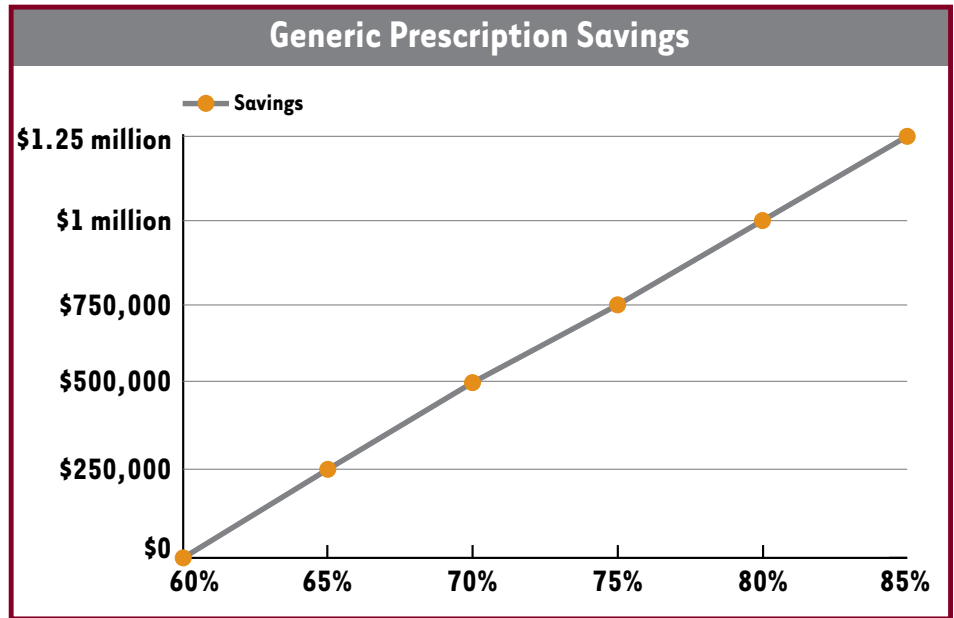
Hospital Costs

The NH Insurance Department recently released a report on the costs for common in-patient and out-patient procedures at New Hampshire hospitals. The hospitals were compared to each other, with the average hospital costs set, in the table, at 1.0. What this shows is that for the exact same set of hospital services, the costs across hospitals varies 71 percent.

For example, the costs at Spear Memorial in Plymouth are 19 percent below the average, while the costs at Exeter were 52 percent higher than the average.

Use your voice. Ask at your hospital why the costs vary so greatly. Use your choice. Seek out lower cost hospital options whenever possible. This will help keep health care affordable for everyone.

The complete NH Insurance Department report can be found at www.nh.gov/insurance/consumers/documents/nh_ac_hosp_comp.pdf



Coming Soon....

The University System of New Hampshire is participating with other public employers as a member of the NH Purchasers Group on Health (www.nhpgh.org). The NH Purchasers Group will be producing a scorecard on NH Hospitals to provide you with important information about the quality of care at each hospital, as well as the relative costs.