

Pain Awareness Month

September is Pain Awareness Month. While everyone has experienced physical pain at some point, some people suffer from chronic pain and other pain conditions that impact many aspects of their life, health, and mental wellbeing. Chronic pain can be caused by disease, injury, or other conditions. Unfortunately, some who experience chronic pain become addicted to opioids or other substances. Pain science research is ongoing to find safer and more effective treatments for those suffering from pain conditions.

If you are experiencing pain, consult with your healthcare provider. The [Choosing the Right Care](#) page of SBO's website contains information about quality, safety, and patient engagement to help you make the most out of your visit. The [Musculoskeletal Pain Resources](#) page contains strategies that may help you manage your pain, including physical therapy and chiropractic care. If you or someone you know struggles with opioid addiction, resources are available on the [Behavioral Health/Emotional Wellbeing](#) page.



Flu and COVID-19 Vaccines

Getting a flu vaccine this fall is important to help protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community against flu illness, hospitalization, and death. When large numbers of the population get flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, they help lessen the burden on our healthcare system. Local pharmacies can administer the flu and the COVID-19 vaccine during the same visit. State of Delaware Group Health Insurance Plan members can obtain flu shots and COVID-19 shots at no cost when using either their Highmark Delaware or Aetna health plan or their CVS Caremark prescription plan at local participating network pharmacies, including Walgreens, Rite Aid, and CVS Pharmacy. Contact your pharmacy before going, as an appointment may be recommended or required to receive vaccines.

Employee Spotlight

"I'm a State of Delaware pensioner and, a few months back, received an email regarding the opportunity to participate in the Hinge Health program. I've spent, honestly, two decades trying to resolve issues that have caused neck pain. When I saw the email for Hinge Health, I thought I would give it a try. I've now been in the program for four months, and it has made such a difference for me! I'm now able to do things that previously would have resulted in quite a lot of pain. The Hinge Health program has not only taught me how to manage my condition and become stronger, but it has also (through coaching and education) given me the confidence to engage in activities I haven't done for a very long time...I feel like I've gotten my life back. Thank you so much for offering this program!"

~ Jean, Non-Medicare Pensioner

Cholesterol Education Month

September is National Cholesterol Education Month. Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in your body and some foods you may eat. Although your body's cells need cholesterol, it is important to know the two types, HDL (good) and LDL (bad). Having too little good or too much bad cholesterol can cause a build-up in the inner walls of your arteries, which can lead to heart disease or a stroke.

Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Many factors, in addition to your cholesterol levels, contribute to heart disease, such as smoking, lack of physical activity, obesity, and a poor diet. You can prevent heart disease by implementing simple lifestyle changes into your daily routine.

Here are three things you can do to manage your health: check your numbers, make healthy lifestyle choices, such as making healthier food choices and exercising, and control your cholesterol levels, which may include working with your Primary Care Provider (PCP).

You can find resources to help you prevent or manage heart disease and keep you healthy on the [Heart Health Resources](#) page.

Retiree Healthcare Newsletter

The Office of Pensions and the Statewide Benefits Office (SBO) have partnered to provide an additional resource to inform our retirees of State Employee Benefits Committee (SEBC) decisions and provide important information, updates, and reminders related to retiree healthcare benefits. The first edition of a [Retiree Healthcare Newsletter](#) was mailed to benefit-eligible Medicare and non-Medicare pensioners in August. The newsletter will be mailed and posted [online](#) twice a year.



Upcoming Webinars

Aetna offers monthly [webinars](#) that employees, pensioners, and their family members can attend, regardless of enrollment in a State health plan. There is no need to register; simply click the link below to attend.

- Maintaining a Health-Conscious Workplace - [9/12 @ 5pm](#)
- Effective Presentation and Public Speaking Skills - [9/28 @ 12pm](#)

ComPsych® GuidanceResources® offers [webinars](#) that employees, pensioners, and their family members can attend, regardless of enrollment in a State health plan. Click on the links below to register:

- Program Orientation for Supervisors - [9/13 @ 3pm](#)
- Program Orientation for Employees - [9/14 @ 3pm](#)

Delta Dental offers [webinars](#) addressing good oral health that employees, pensioners, and their family members can attend, regardless of enrollment in a Delta Dental plan.

- Oral Health and Wellness - [9/13 @ 2pm](#)

The webinars above will be recorded and posted to the website if you are unable to attend.

State Employee Benefits Committee (SEBC) Corner

At the August meetings, the Financial Subcommittee reviewed the June fund report, FY23 Q4 financials and long-term projections, and the FY24 budget. The Health Policy & Planning Subcommittee began discussing updates to the Group Health Insurance Plan (GHIP) Eligibility & Enrollment Rules, the results of a recent inclusive benefits study and development of a weight loss strategy. These discussions will continue throughout the fall. The Retiree Healthcare Benefits Advisory Subcommittee continued discussions on recommended funding, eligibility, and plan design modifications. The SEBC reviewed the June fund report, FY23 Q4 financials and long-term projections, the GHIP Strategic Framework, and the Medicare Request for Proposals (RFP) scope of work. The SEBC voted on updates to the GHIP trend assumptions first discussed in July.

SEBC and Subcommittee meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for public comment. Visit the [SEBC page](#) for meeting information and more.

Apple Raisin Salad



Ingredients:

- 5 apples, cubed
- ½ cup sliced celery
- ½ cup chopped nuts
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup reduced fat mayonnaise
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 head of lettuce, washed

Directions:

1. Combine apples, celery, nuts, raisins, mayonnaise, and lemon in a large bowl; toss to coat.
2. Serve over fresh lettuce leaves.

[Recipe from Delta Dental](#)

Hidden Treasures: Locate the Musculoskeletal Pain Resources page of the SBO website. Determine the maximum limit on physical therapy or chiropractic visits for treatment of back pain for members enrolled in a State of Delaware non-Medicare health plan. Send your answer to sbo.communications@delaware.gov (Subject: Hidden Treasures). A random drawing from all correct responses received by the end of the month will be conducted for a prize. Congratulations to last month's winner, JoAnn B. from Department Health and Social Services!