

LABORMatters

JULY 2017

Inside

2017 National Labor/Management Healthcare Strategies Meeting



Labor Representative of the Year winner Andy Seymour (HCSC, BCBS Illinois), second from left, stands with HCSC colleagues Jennie Tatooles, left, Dick Quigley, second from right and David Gieselman, right. Not Pictured: Runner-up John Hamakawa (BCBS Hawaii) and nominees Mike Nowak (Excellus BCBS), Bruce Fessenden (Regence BCBS), Patrick Lolli (Anthem BCBS) and Kristin Squier (BCBS Minnesota). We congratulate all honorees!



Keynote speaker Richard Gephardt, President and CEO, Gephardt Government Affairs, shares insights on national labor policy and the outlook on healthcare.



Ericka Alston-Buck, CEO of Maryland Community Health Initiatives, Inc. - Penn North Recovery Center (left), accepts an award for the Penn North Kids Safe Zone, alongside Bonnie Summers, Executive Director-NLO (center) and Tom Little, Board of Directors-NLO and Vice President, Highmark BCBS (right).

[Page 1](#)
[NLO Healthcare Strategies Meeting](#)
[Page 2](#)
[Executive Director's Corner](#)
[Page 3](#)
[BREVENA: Skin Health in the Workplace](#)
[Page 4](#)
[Welcome HearUSA](#)
[Page 6](#)
[BCBS Health of America Drug Report](#)
[Page 7](#)
[NLO Webinar Series](#)
[Page 8](#)
[Calendar of Events](#)

Executive Director's Corner

A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL LABOR OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, **BONNIE SUMMERS**

Labor Matters is a publication for anyone working in or with organized labor. The information about various vendors and their products and services is provided for informational purposes only. The National Labor Office is not making any representations regarding quality of the products and services described herein.

Views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Labor Office or the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. Any health information contained in **Labor Matters** is not intended to substitute for the sound medical advice of your doctor. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your medical condition, you should discuss them with your doctor.

National Labor Office
1310 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
202.626.4815
nlo@bcbsa.com
www.BCBS.com/nlo

Bonnie Summers
Executive Director
202.626.4836
bonnie.summers@bcbsa.com

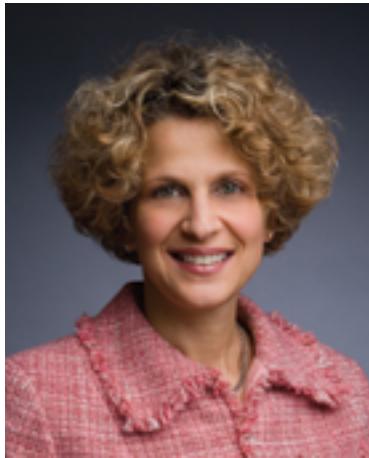
Tony Saguibo
Executive Director - West Coast
202.626.4813
tony.saguibo@bcbsa.com

Fernande Georges
Senior Project Manager
202.626.4816
fernande.georges@bcbsa.com

Jonathan Fenech
Project Manager
202.626.8635
jon.fenech@bcbsa.com

Jeffery Jefferson
Associate Consultant
202.626.4807
jeffery.jefferson@bcbsa.com

Glen Williams
Executive Assistant - Operational Readiness Office
312.297.6308
glen.williams@bcbsa.com



"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

– Albert Einstein

I like this quote from Albert Einstein because it embodies the healthcare mission we set forth today. At the NLO, our top driver is to offer secure and stable health coverage for our working families in America. At our recent NLO Healthcare Strategies Meeting, we had the privilege to present a community service award to the Penn North Kids Safe Zone, an organization that provides a safe haven for children in Baltimore neighborhoods. I'm hopeful this award will help the Penn North community live

healthy lives from childhood and beyond.

The NLO also honored top BCBS plan labor representatives for their exemplary contributions to labor union relationships, service and knowledge. The Healthcare Strategies Meeting was also an opportunity for BCBS Plans, labor organizations and NLO strategic alliances to join forces and discuss the future of healthcare. No topic was off limits – the current labor movement, innovative approaches to healthcare, policy insights – and attendees left with impactful strategies to bolster the health of their local unions and communities.

Read on to discover tips for hard-of-hearing employees during the summer months and a guide to check your hearing from one of our strategic alliances. Also, find out more information on pharmaceutical drug trends from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's recent Health of America report that is useful insight to union and employer groups alike. Finally, be sure to understand the importance of healthy skin in the workplace – especially in the heat of summer – in a message from one of our strategic alliances.

For additional information regarding BCBS Plan programs, please contact your local Plan directly. If you have any questions about the NLO or this newsletter, contact us at 202.626.4815.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BJS".

Bonnie Summers, PAHM, CMCE, CHC
Executive Director
BCBSA National Labor Office

BREVENA: SKIN HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

One of our newest Strategic Partners, BREVENA® Laboratories, specializes in addressing skin conditions. With over twenty years of experience treating traumatized skin, BREVENA is uniquely positioned to provide solutions for skin conditions ranging from dry, itchy Eczema to severe dry, cracked skin.

One in every four Americans are struggling with skin irritations affecting their lives, livelihood and our economy. The percentages rise in occupations requiring heavy use, or frequent washing, of the hands. An article on Occupational Skin Disease In The Construction Industry, published by The British Journal of Dermatology (M.Bock, 2003) link, found that construction workers run a high risk of developing contact dermatitis, or Occupational Skin Disease (OSD). Tile Setters and terrazzo workers had the highest incidence rates, followed by construction and cement workers. A similar study on "Occupational Skin Diseases In Washington State, 1989 through 1993: using workers' compensation data to identify cutaneous hazards" (Cohen, MA., 1998) link, identified that 9.1% of claims filed were for contact dermatitis and involved more than three missed work-days. These surprising statics, along with the fact that Occupational Skin Diseases are preventable, identify the importance of discussing and promoting skin health in the workplace.

Healthy skin is dependent upon maintaining adequate moisture. When dry or irritated skin is addressed early on, these severe conditions may be avoided. Here are a few tips for maintaining proper skin health that are easy to promote in the workplace.



HYDRATE: Considering skin is your largest organ, water is the best way to hydrate your body. Drinking enough water throughout the day will ensure skin is hydrated from the inside out.



RESTORE: Now that you have hydrated your skin, it's critical to lock in moisture with a balm that will promote skin health. Macro B Complex® found in BREVENA® Restorative Skin Balm, provides an environment for optimum skin health.



PROTECT: Wearing gloves is one of the best proactive measures you can take on the job. Many skin conditions can be avoided by simply protecting your tools – your hands! Protect and restore by applying BREVENA® Restorative Skin Balm under work gloves to protect your skin while you work.

Take it from others who have tried BREVENA products with success:

" You don't need much to feel results, even my wife noticed my hands were better. I would recommend it to anyone whose hands take daily abuse from their jobs.

Louie, Construction Crew Member, WI

" My feet were painful to walk on. I've been using the BREVENA Restorative Skin Balm for a few weeks and my feet are much more supple and the cracks are finally healing. Thank you for this incredible product!

Robert, Alma, WI

" I enjoyed using it [Restorative Skin Balm] and it really replenished and rejuvenated the skin on my hands quickly. I would recommend this product to anyone, but especially my mosaic students and colleagues.

Tami, Mosaic Artist, Santa Barbara, CA

" My hands immediately felt better. Normally by now [December] my hands are cracked and split, but they haven't since I've been using the Restorative Skin Balm.

Nate, Construction Crew Member, WI

For more information about BREVENA skincare products, including their luxury line of facial moisturizers, visit www.brevena.com or call 1-800-260-8031.

Literature Cited:

- Bock, M., Schmidt, A., Bruckner, T., Diepgen, T.L., 2003. Occupational skin disease in the construction industry. British Journal of Dermatology.
- Cohen, MA., Kalat, J., Kaufman, JD., Sama, SR., Shields, JW. 1998. Occupational skin diseases in Washington State, 1989 through 1993: using workers' compensation data to identify cutaneous hazards. American Journal of Public Health

National Labor Office Welcomes New Strategic Alliance: HearUSA

For over 30 years, HearUSA has been a leader in managed hearing benefits. Through its partnerships and strategic alliances with managed care organizations, employers, health plans, unions and benefit sponsors, HearUSA provides real hearing solutions for those with hearing loss and their families. From hearing evaluations and expert consultations to state of the art digital technologies, HearUSA offers an array of products and services to meet the diverse needs of BCBS clients and their memberships.

HearUSA: Taking a road trip this summer? Check out these better hearing tips!

Our sense of hearing alerts us to situations in or around our vehicle that requires us to respond, such as honking horns, engine sounds and emergency vehicles. Over time, our hearing often diminishes, and we may miss cues that we used to hear. Loud sounds, music or conversation in the car can be a distraction and may take our attention away from the driving task. For a safer, more enjoyable summer road trip, consider these suggestions:

Hearing Tips

- Be alert to changes in your hearing.
- Have your hearing tested by a licensed hearing provider.
- Wear appropriately fitted hearing aids – consider smart hearing aids with special configurations for car listening.
- Adjust air conditioning/heating fan control to the lowest settings to minimize interference. Also keep the windows up to keep wind noise down.

Before You Drive

- Wear your hearing aids so that you can hear important signals inside and out-side of the vehicle.
- Consider properly installed assistive devices on your vehicle, such as a wide rear-view mirror.
- Make sure your left and right side-view mirrors are properly adjusted.
- Minimize the volume level on radio, CD and other music devices.

While Driving

- Check your mirrors frequently to observe the traffic around you and remain alert for the flashing lights of emergency vehicles.
- Watch for trains or flashing lights wherever train tracks cross the road.
- Keep distractions to a minimum.
- Check your turn signal indicator light on the dashboard to make sure it is not left in the “on” position.



HearUSA is America's most trusted hearing care provider. To learn more about hearing care plans, contact HearUSA at (561) 801-9490. More: <https://www.hearusa.com>

Check your hearing today!



Activity: Judging Your Hearing

Directions: For each question, check Yes or No.

- 1** Do you find yourself asking people to speak up or repeat themselves (that is, do people seem to be mumbling)?

Yes **No**

- 2** Do you have difficulty understanding speech or hearing sounds when background noises are present?

Yes **No**

- 3** Do you experience noise or ringing in your ears??

Yes **No**

- 4** Do you experience people telling you that you are not paying attention during conversations?

Yes **No**

- 5** Do you experience people telling you that you do not seem to hear them?

Yes **No**

- 6** Do you have difficulty understanding when someone talks to you from another room?

Yes **No**

- 7** Has anyone in your family history experienced hearing loss?

Yes **No**

- 8** Do you hear better with one ear than the other when using the telephone?

Yes **No**

- 9** Do you have trouble determining where sounds are coming from?

Yes **No**

- 10** Do you have difficulty understanding the voices of women or young children?

Yes **No**

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you may have some degree of hearing loss. If you answered "Yes" to several questions, you may need to schedule an appointment with a licensed audiologist or hearing specialist.

Call to find out how HearUSA can help at (561) 801-9490.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Study Shows Rising Costs for Patent-Protected Drugs Drive Growth Of Pharmaceutical Spending In The U.S.

Prescription drug spending increased 73 percent since 2010

Rising costs for patent-protected drugs are driving double-digit annual growth in pharmaceutical spending in the U.S., according to a new study by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA).

The Blue Cross Blue Shield, The Health of America ReportSM, "Rising Costs for Patented Drugs Drive Growth of Pharmaceutical Spending in the U.S." analyzes seven years of drug utilization, price changes and overall spending. It shows that prescription drug spending has increased 10 percent annually for Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) members since 2010, an overall rise of 73 percent.*

"This upward trend is due to a small fraction of emerging, patented drugs with rapid uptake and large year-over-year price increases that are more than offsetting the continued growth in utilization of lower-cost generic drugs," said Maureen Sullivan, chief strategy and innovation officer for BCBSA. "Current trends suggest that this rapid rise in drug trend costs is likely to continue in future years."



STUDY FOUND...

Prescription drug spending for BCBS members

↑10%
ANNUALLY | **↑73%**
IN 7 YEARS

UPWARD TREND DUE TO A SMALL FRACTION OF EMERGING, PATENTED DRUGS USED TO TREAT CHRONIC DISEASES.

Other key report findings include:

- Over the past seven years, generic drugs increased from 66 percent to 82 percent of total prescriptions filled, while brand drugs' share of total prescriptions declined from 34 percent to 18 percent. The rising cost of brand drugs has allowed these prescriptions to maintain the vast majority of total drug spending, at 78 percent, roughly the same proportion brand drugs held in 2010.

BRAND AND GENERIC SHARE OF PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED AND TOTAL SPENDING

TYPE OF DRUG	SHARE OF UTILIZATION		SHARE OF TOTAL SPENDING	
	2010	2016	2010	2016
GENERIC	66%	82%	23%	22%
BRAND	34%	18%	77%	78%



- The cost of brand drugs with patent protection and no generic alternatives is rising at an average annual rate of 25 percent (and 285 percent since 2010), more than double the 10 percent average annual rate of spending for all drugs. These patent-protected drugs now make up 63 percent of total drug spending, up from 29 percent of total spending in 2010, despite the fact that they comprise less than 10 percent of total prescriptions filled.
- A list of the top 25 patent-protected drugs in terms of spending in 2015 demonstrates dramatic increases in spending. For example, spending on the drug Gilenya** increased 30,257 percent over a seven-year period.
- “The data highlighted by this report is reflective of what we’re seeing — aggressive pricing strategies and new product launches, particularly on specialty drugs, are a big driver of the increases and these are real dollars affecting payers and members,” said Steve Johnson, assistant vice president of health outcomes for Prime Therapeutics. “Fortunately PBMs have management strategies that recognize and leverage innovative new therapies offering clinical outcomes while at the same time encourage remaining generic opportunities to bring some cost relief to our plans and members.”

This is the twelfth study of the Blue Cross Blue Shield, The Health of America ReportSM series, a collaboration between the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and Blue Health Intelligence, which uses a market-leading claims database to uncover key trends and insights into health care affordability and access to care.

For more information, visit www.bcbs.com/healthofamerica.

* The report examines the medical claims of more than 30 million BCBS commercially-insured members per year (non-Medicare) and more than \$208 billion in prescription spending from January 2010 through September 2016. Unit prices were computed as the total cost of the prescription divided by the days supplied, or the average daily price of the prescription.

** All product names, logos and brands are property of their respective owners and used for identification purposes only. Use of these names, logos and brands does not imply endorsement.

NATIONAL LABOR OFFICE – 2017 EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES		
Month	Date	NLO Strategic Alliance
July	13	Davis Vision
July	27	United Concordia Dental
August	24	HearUSA
September	21	Teladoc
October	19	AIM Specialty Health

To register for a webinar, contact nlo@bcbsa.com or 202-626-4815.

Who should register?

- BCBS Plan employees
- Organized Labor Leaders, Health Care Bargainers, and Fund Managers
- Benefit Consultants
- Human Resource Administrators

BREVENA's webinar highlighted solutions for keeping skin healthy in the workplace. Congratulations to Christine Carter, Florida Blue & Bill Campbell, Davis Vision for correctly answering the challenge question

Challenge Question: What percent of health care claims for contact dermatitis in the labor force, have resulted in 3+ missed days of work? Answer options: a. 5.1% b. 9.1% c. 25% d. 50% (Correct answer is below)

For more on BREVENA, visit <https://www.brevena.com>

Correct answer: b. 9.1%

2017 NLO CALENDAR OF EVENTS		
Sept.	23 – 27	NCCMP Annual Conference (Hollywood, FL)
Oct.	1 – 4	NCPERS Public Safety Employees Pension & Benefits Conference (San Antonio, TX)
	22 – 25	IFEBP Annual Conference (Las Vegas, NV)
Nov.	6 – 8	NLO Fall Board of Directors Meeting (Nashville, TN)
Dec.	11	Food & Drug Conference (Las Vegas, NV)

17-037-B76

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies.

1310 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
www.bcbcs.com/ulio

ASSOCIATION
BlueCross
BlueShield

