



**BlueCross
BlueShield**

**National
LABOR OFFICE**

LABORMatters

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Inside

Page 2

Executive Director's Corner

Page 3

**HearUSA:
Better Hearing Month**

Page 4

**Regence BCBS
Value-based Care**

Page 5

**BCBS Tennessee
Opioid Prescriptions**

Webinar Schedule

Page 6

**National Women's
Health Week**

Page 7

Men's Health Month

Page 8

Calendar of Events



National Labor Office provides contribution to Helmets to Hardhats at annual Healthcare Strategies Meeting

From left to right: Darrell Roberts, Executive Director-Helmets to Hardhats; Bonnie Summers, Executive Director - NLO; Dick Quigley-NLO Chairman & Vice President of Sales, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois; and Tony Saguibo, Executive Director-NLO.

Helmets to Hardhats is a national, nonprofit program that connects National Guard, Reserve, retired and transitioning active-duty military service members with skilled training and quality career opportunities in the construction industry.

The program is designed to help military service members successfully transition back into civilian life by offering them the means to secure a quality career in the construction industry.

Most career opportunities offered by the program are connected to federally-approved apprenticeship training programs. Such training is provided by the trade organizations themselves at no cost to the veteran. No prior experience is needed; in fact, most successful placements start with virtually no experience in their chosen field. All participating trade organizations conduct three to five year earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship training programs that teach

service members everything they need to know to become a construction industry professional with a specialization in a particular craft. And, because these apprenticeship programs are regulated and approved at both federal and state levels, veterans can utilize their Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits to supplement their income while they are learning valuable skills and on the job training.

In 2007, Helmets to Hardhats supplemented its existing program with a disabled American veteran program known as the "Wounded Warrior" program, which serves to connect disabled veterans with employment opportunities in the construction industry and the careers that support construction. ■

To learn how to participate with Helmets to Hardhats and for more information, visit <https://helmetstohardhats.org/>



NATIONAL LABOR OFFICE

**LIVE FEARLESS WITH
SECURE AND STABLE
HEALTH COVERAGE
FOR AMERICA'S
WORKING FAMILIES**

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Executive Director's Corner

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



The NLO applauds our servicewomen and servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. On Memorial Day, we remember and honor the integrity, service and commitment of our fallen soldiers.

It's important we all come together to support veterans returning home. At our recent Healthcare Strategies meeting, the NLO was proud to provide a community contribution to Helmets to Hardhats, an organization that enables veterans with apprenticeships and skills in the constructions. Make sure to read our article on the Helmets to

Hardhats organization and how it's helping our vets every day.

May and June are both critical months for supporting the health of working families, especially parents! Read on to uncover tips for men and women to live a healthy life, in celebration of Women's Health Week and Men's Health Month. Additionally, learn the role of hearing loss in the workplace from one of our strategic alliances and know what preventive actions you can take to improve your hearing health.

During the month of May, we also honor a host of professions that are the glue that holds our local communities together. Remember to thank nurses, teachers, police officers and firefighters for their service in your local community.

Now that summer is right around the corner, consider how you can get outside, stay active and improve your health. If anything, be the catalyst to build a healthier community and stronger workplace for you and yours.

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,

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



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<http://eepurl.com/dah3ZT>

HEARUSA:

May is Better Hearing Month

Highlighting On-the-Job Safety



Every year, 22 million workers in America are exposed to potentially harmful levels of noise. The impact of workplace noise has become so serious that “noise induced hearing loss” (NIHL) now ranks as one of the top occupational illnesses (OSHA, 2018). It is imperative that companies and employees are aware of the impact of noise and plan for hearing safety. May is Better Hearing month nationally – making it the perfect time to highlight this issue.

THE ROLE OF HEARING IN THE WORKPLACE

From a biological standpoint, one of the roles of hearing is to warn us of danger, and this adaptation in the workplace is crucial. An active job site puts even more pressure on the ability to hear: constant noise makes it harder to communicate, affects concentration and is fatiguing. Add hearing loss to the equation and the consequences become more serious.

In the United States, 11% of workers have untreated hearing loss, with the highest occurrences reported in the construction, manufacturing and agricultural sectors (NIOSH, 2017). The safety concern related

to hearing loss is not only for the workers, but also their colleagues.

Workers need to be able to hear:

- Instructions and safety briefings
- Danger signals and alarms
- Vehicle or equipment back-up signals
- Verbal warnings
- Changes in operating sounds from machinery

Being unable to hear in any of these situations can be the catalyst for a potentially serious accident.

5 TIPS FOR HEARING LOSS PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

“Only noise-induced hearing loss can be prevented,” says Jill Botkin, chief audiologist at HearUSA. “Employers should conduct noise assessments, provide hearing loss education and ensure their workers use protective equipment.”

If a worker has to raise their voice to shout over a noise at a distance of an arm’s length, it is likely that the noise is at a volume range that can cause damage to hearing.

Employers and workers should:

1. Know which noises and levels are damaging
2. Provide and wear Noise Reduction Rated (NRR) hearing protection devices such as earplugs
3. Host and/or participate in an annual hearing testing program
4. Be aware of the symptoms of hearing loss (ringing ears, muffled speech)
5. Monitor sound levels

Being aware of noise levels now can pay dividends in the future.

IF WORKERS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO NOISE

Further prevention and treatment are both important. A hearing screening with a HearUSA hearing care professional is the first step. With 30 years of experience with hearing protection and NIHL solutions, HearUSA can outline a treatment program and make recommendations to safeguard against further hearing damage. ■



During Better Hearing Month, give us a call to ensure your employees’ hearing is safe. It is estimated that \$242 million is spent annually compensating workers for hearing loss related disability (OSHA, 2018), so prevention is both positive for employees’ health and the company’s bottom line.

To learn more about the HearUSA hearing care program:
Call Brittany Zedlitz at 561.801.9490
or email bzedlitz@hearusa.com

Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah and Aledade Partner to Expand Innovative Value-based Care Model

Network of primary care practices to deliver high-quality, coordinated care to 4,000 Regence members



Aledade, Inc. and Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah announced a new partnership expanding Aledade's Utah Accountable Care Organization (ACO) to provide high-quality, coordinated care to 4,000 Regence plan members cared for by its practices. Under Aledade's first commercial contract in the state, Regence and its members will benefit from Aledade's innovative physician-led ACO model that rewards doctors for improving quality of care and patient health outcomes, while lowering costs.

"Utah has always been known for quality and innovation in healthcare. Aledade is proud to partner with Regence, a longtime leader in the state, to expand our unique primary care physician-led ACO model," said Scott Segell, vice president at Aledade. "Regence members are the real beneficiaries of this partnership that allows independent primary care practices to take advantage

of value-based opportunities with payers that have previously only been available to large physician networks and hospital providers."

Aledade's Utah ACO will take on accountability for the total health care experience of Regence members who see an ACO primary care physician. Aledade offers a new model of primary care by partnering with physicians to build and lead ACOs that allow doctors to stay independent, practice medicine like they've always wanted to, and thrive financially by keeping people healthy. In this partnership, Regence patients get to keep their primary care doctor while seeing the results of Aledade ACO practices' focus on care coordination, population health management, and preventive care.

"We're very pleased about our new collaboration with Aledade," said Jim

Swayze, president of Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah. "Their nationally deployed and proven ACO model aligns perfectly with our long-standing priority of working closely with leading provider groups who share our belief that Utahns deserve high quality, well-integrated health care at an affordable cost."

Regence, Utah's first health insurer, also has the distinction of being the first insurer to offer an accountable health solution, called Total Cost of Care, to the market in 2013. The inclusive care management model offers members the opportunity to align with their choice of physician groups, rather than requiring selection from a single system. Over the past five years, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah and its affiliated health plans have implemented over 50 value-based agreements – including the Total Cost of Care program – with providers across Idaho, Utah, Oregon and Washington.

Founded in 2014, Aledade's Accountable Care network has grown to include more than 260 independent, physician-led practices across 18 states that together represent more than 360,000 covered lives and \$2.5 billion in health care spending. Aledade's value-based primary care model now delivers care across all payer and patient populations, including Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, and commercial health plans. Today, all of Aledade's ACO partner practices offer same or next day appointments, and 95 percent provide access to on-call physicians 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ■

**For more information,
visit www.aledade.com**

BlueCross Sees 52 Percent Drop in Long-Acting Opioid Prescriptions

Pharmacy measures combined with social efforts combat crisis

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee is fighting on a number of fronts against the opioid crisis, and the efforts are beginning to show meaningful double-digit reductions in painkillers prescribed and abused.



The company, guided by an external advisory panel of doctors and medical professionals, worked to reduce the supply of opioids by implementing measures such as prior authorization requirements and quantity limits. In 2017, those changes resulted in 194,000 fewer opioid prescriptions filled – an equivalent of 12 million pills. That represents a 6 percent decrease in the overall number of opioid prescriptions per member, per month.

For long-acting opioids claim numbers dropped 52 percent from 2016 to 2017. Short-term opioid use also dropped among BlueCross members, and lower strengths of opioids (Morphine Equivalent Dose) are being used.

“We are excited about our positive momentum, and we look forward to more collaboration with our government, provider and community partners to continue this progress,” said Dr. Andrea Willis, chief medical officer at BlueCross.

For members, the company has focused on building integrated medical and behavioral health care support offerings, as well as specialized care for expectant mothers who are opioid-dependent.

The company has also worked closely with providers, offering data-driven scorecards to help physicians understand how their prescribing patterns compare to peers and providing notifications about patients who are at high risk for opioid abuse. Providers whose prescribing patterns consistently diverge from best practices are removed from BlueCross networks.

“Pain relief is important, but it’s clear that both overprescribing and extended periods of opioid use can increase the risk of addiction,” said Natalie Tate, vice president of pharmacy for BlueCross. “We will continue to focus on ensuring that providers follow best practices in prescribing – and that they consider alternate pain medications and treatments for patients whenever possible.”

In addition to pharmacy initiatives, BlueCross has also supported a variety of community-based efforts to address the issue. These efforts began in 2013 with a focus on supporting babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome, and continued with \$2 million to support addiction treatment programs statewide. A \$2.7 million award to Count It! Lock It! Drop It! helped educate the public about the need to count pills regularly, lock them up and securely dispose of unused medications. ■



NATIONAL LABOR OFFICE EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES

Who should register?

- BCBS Plan Employees
- Organized Labor Leaders, Healthcare Bargainers and Fund Managers
- Benefit Consultants
- Human Resource Administrators

To register for a webinar, contact nlo@bcbsa.com or 202.626.4815.

SCHEDULE

Month	Date	Strategic Alliance
May	17	Teladoc/ Best Doctors
September	20	Teladoc/ Best Doctors
October	18	New Directions Behavioral Health
November	8	Davis Vision
December	6	HearUSA



For more information about BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee’s efforts to combat the opioid crisis, visit bcbstnews.com. Learn more about Count It! Lock It! Drop It! at countitlockitdropit.org.

Get Active During National Women's Health Week!

MAY 13-19, 2018

Did you know? Women of all ages who get enough physical activity can reduce their risk of heart disease and cancer — the most common diseases women have to worry about. Men get more physical activity than women. We can change this — let's move!



Women need 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity physical activity every week — about **30 minutes a day**.¹ But fewer than 50% of women are getting enough aerobic activity, and only 20% get enough muscle-strengthening activity.²

Just **30 minutes** of brisk walking a day is enough to **lower your risk of breast cancer**.³



The more exercise you do, the more your risk of early death goes down. A woman who exercises 30 minutes every day can lower her risk of dying early by 27% compared with someone who exercises just 30 minutes once a week.⁴

Tips

Try these ideas for fitting more physical activity into your daily routine.

- ✓ Add walking or biking to your commute.
- ✓ Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ✓ Turn on your favorite music and dance.



Schedule your well-woman visit

A well-woman visit is a time to see your health care provider to:

- ▶ Discuss family history, family planning, and personal habits, such as alcohol and tobacco use
- ▶ Schedule necessary tests, such as screenings for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes
- ▶ Set health goals, such as being active and maintaining a healthy weight



NWHW
NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK

National Women's Health Week is an observance led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health. The goal is to empower women to make their health a priority. The week also serves as a time to encourage women to take steps to improve their health.

- ▶ Learn more about how to fit physical activity into your daily life at www.health.gov/PAGuidelines.
- ▶ Learn more about National Women's Health Week at womenshealth.gov/nwhw



OWH
OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

Sources:

1. www.health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/paguide.pdf
2. www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahus/2014/063.pdf
3. www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/prevention/physicalactivity
4. www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/chapter2.aspx



JUNE IS MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

awareness | prevention | education | family



01

Eat Healthy. Start by taking small steps like saying no to super-sizing and yes to a healthy breakfast. Eat many different types of foods to get all the vitamins and minerals you need. Add at least one fruit and vegetable to every meal.



02

Get Moving. Play with your kids or grandkids. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Do yard work. Play a sport. Keep comfortable walking shoes handy at work and in the car. Most importantly, choose activities that you enjoy to stay motivated.



03

Make Prevention a Priority. Many health conditions can be prevented or detected early with regular checkups from your healthcare provider. Regular screenings may include blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, prostate health and more.

100%

Women are 100% more likely than men to visit the doctor for annual exams and preventive services.

1 IN 2

1 in 2 men are diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime compared to 1 in 3 women.

1994

On May 31, 1994 President Clinton signed the bill establishing National Men's Health Week.

"Recognizing and preventing men's health problems is not just a man's issue. Because of its impact on wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters, men's health is truly a family issue."
Congressman Bill Richardson (May 1994)

In 2000 there were fewer than 80 men for every 100 women by the time they reach age 65 – 74.

80

ONLINE RESOURCES

Men's Health Month
menshealthmonth.org

Men's Health Network
menshealthnetwork.org

Get It Checked
getitchecked.com

Talking About Men's Health Blog
talkingaboutmenshealth.com

Women Against Prostate Cancer
womenagainstoprostatecancer.org

2018 NLO CALENDAR OF EVENTS					
May	15 – 17	Self-Insured Workers’ Compensation Executive Forum (Charleston, SC)	Sep.	10 – 12	NLO Fall Board of Directors Meeting (St. Paul, MN)
	13 – 16	NCPERS Annual Conference & Exhibition (New York, NY)		24 – 26	NCCMP Annual Conference (Hollywood, FL)
June	11 – 14	Rutgers – BCBS Labor Studies Program (New Brunswick, NJ)	Oct.	14 – 17	IFEBP Annual Conference (New Orleans, LA)
	14 – 17	LERA 70th Annual Meeting (Baltimore, MD)		21 – 24	NCPERS Public Safety Employees’ Pension & Benefits Conference
			Dec.	10 – 12	Food & Drug Conference (Las Vegas, NV)

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



Association

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