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Health Fair Features Wide Array of Exhibits, Information

The Women's Health Week annual Health Fair will be 10 a.m.-2 p.m. May 17, in the CHR Building lobby and cafeteria. The finale of the America on the Move wellness program will begin at 9:45 that morning.

Frankfort-based employees may use up to one hour in addition to lunch and break periods to attend the Health Fair and America on the Move finale.

Exhibitors and information topics featured in this year's Health Fair include:

- Chef Nancy
- Nutrition
- Pregnancy issues
- UK Women's Health Registry
- Diabetes
- Humana
- Cholesterol screenings
- Blood pressure screenings
- Medicare prescription drug coverage/SHIP
- Medical Management and Quality Assurance Division – information on diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer, prostate cancer, pediatric obesity, COPD and asthma, pediatric asthma and other health topics
- Tobacco cessation
- Activity center
- Employee recognition
- Division of Women's Physical and Mental Health
- Division of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services
- Employee Wellness Committee, Healthy Lifestyles Subcommittee with information on stress management

The top three teams moving into the finale of America on the Move are: Motivated Movers with 2,312,747 steps; OIG Accelerators with

2,261,369 steps; and Step by Step with 2,198,879 steps.

KEHP Offers Tobacco Cessation Aid

If you are considering becoming tobacco-free, the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP) is offering a two-week supply of over-the counter (OTC) Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) for only \$5 co-pay per two-week supply. This health insurance benefit is available for eligible members who are actively participating in the Cooper Clayton Method to Stop Smoking or Kentucky's Tobacco Quit Line.

This benefit is available for individuals who are 18 years or older, enrolled in the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan, and actively participating in an approved cessation program. Participants may receive up to 12 weeks of NRT each calendar year. A two-week supply of the OTC NRT, such as the patch, gum or lozenge, will cost only \$5. This is an estimated savings of \$70 per month.

The Cooper Clayton Method is a comprehensive behavioral support program that consists of 13 one-hour classes. The program is followed by relapse prevention training. The Cooper Clayton Method combines NRT with education, skills training and social support. You must attend all 13 sessions to receive the OTC NRT benefit. More information is available on the Department for Employee Insurance Web site (listed below). Print a copy of the "The Cooper Clayton Method, Smoking Cessation Voucher" and take it with you for the facilitator to complete and sign. To find the nearest Cooper Clayton program, contact your local health department or the Kentucky Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT NOW.

Kentucky's Tobacco Quit Line is a free, statewide, telephone-based tobacco cessation resource that offers proactive one-on-one counseling. The Quit Line will assist you in

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setting a plan of action to become tobacco-free. The counselor will work with you to set your quit date, accomplish your goals, as well as follow up with you at regularly scheduled appointments. The Quit Line counselor will submit your initial paperwork in order to receive your discounted OTC NRT. To enroll in the one-on-one counseling program with the Quit Line, call 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669). English and Spanish counselors are available. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing should call 1-800-969-1393.

For more information regarding eligibility and benefits of this program, please contact the Department for Employee Insurance; Member Services Branch at (888) 581-8834 or (502) 564-6534; or see the tobacco cessation benefit Web site at www.wellnessworks.ky.gov.

OHRM Announces Changes to Exit Interview Survey

The Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) has revised the Exit Interview Survey Form to encourage greater participation and provide more meaningful data to senior management.

The survey form has been revised in the following manner:

- Demographic information has been streamlined
- Questions and rating scale have been changed to mirror the Employee Satisfaction Survey
- Critical reason(s) for leaving the cabinet may be indicated

“These revisions will allow us to compare the responses of employees who stay with the Cabinet versus those who do not,” said Dorothy Brown, director of Professional and Organizational Development in OHRM. “This

comparison will provide ‘benchmark’ data to better identify factors contributing to turnover.” Brown said the revisions will become effective on May 16, 2006. She said the CHFS Personnel Liaisons will continue to be instrumental in communicating the process to exiting employees.

If you have any questions, call Jean Kendell at (502) 564-7770, ext. 4104, or e-mail her at Jean.Kendell@ky.gov.

Secretary’s Forums continue this week

By Anya Armes Weber

The spring Secretary’s Forums for central office staff continue this week in the Health Services Auditorium.

The remaining sessions will be from 11 a.m. to noon and are targeted according to office. Here is the schedule.

Friday, May 19 - Administrative and Fiscal Affairs

Thursday, May 25 – Human Services and Secretary’s Office

Friday, May 26 – Children and Family Services

Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell will discuss his vision for the Cabinet; undersecretaries will report their office’s recent accomplishments; and staff will have the opportunity to ask questions to leadership.

The sessions began last week with staff from offices in the Health vertical.

Staff who cannot attend their office’s specific session may attend another one. Supervisors should ensure office coverage during the meetings.

Cleaning the Air – Inside and Out!

Polluted air can damage our bodies in many ways. Air pollution causes a range of respiratory symptoms, including coughing, throat irritation, chest tightness, wheezing and shortness of breath. Recent studies have shown that air pollution can harm lung development in children and can help cause early childhood asthma. Higher air pollution levels have also been associated with a higher incidence of heart problems, including heart attacks, and toxic air pollutants can increase the risk of developing cancer.

Air pollution occurs both inside and outside. The primary inside air pollutant is cigarette smoke. Secondhand smoke, also referred to as involuntary smoking, is a known cause of lung cancer, heart disease, low weight births and chronic lung ailments such as bronchitis and asthma, as well as other health problems.

It's been estimated that 38,000 Americans die annually as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is responsible for over 1 million illnesses in children every year.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, children's exposure to involuntary smoking is causally associated with an increased risk of lower respiratory tract infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia; increased prevalence of fluid in the middle ear; symptoms of upper respiratory tract irritation; and a small but significant reduction in lung function.

Another serious pollutant in the home is radon. You can't see radon, smell it or taste it, but it may be a problem in your home. Radon is estimated to cause many thousands of deaths each year. Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that are breathed into the lungs. In fact, the Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today. Contact your local health

department for a year-long testing kit, or you can purchase a short-term testing kit from many hardware stores or retail outlets.

Outside greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxide (as N₂O, nitrous oxide), and hydrofluorocarbons, trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere in a process known as the "greenhouse" effect. Human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels, are causing these gases to build up in the atmosphere. At ground level, these gases damage the lungs, affect long-term lung development in children, and can help cause early childhood asthma.

What can you do to help protect the air?

- Don't smoke.
- Team up with coworkers or classmates to carpool to work or school; walking or riding a bike is good for your health and the environment.
- Keep your car tuned up; well-maintained cars produce less pollution.
- Recycle and try to buy things that are recyclable and made with recycled materials.
- Recycle paper products. Trees help protect the earth from several air pollutants.
- Buy less toxic products. Paint with water-based paints; wash clothes by hand instead of dry cleaning; buy less toxic cleaning products; and avoid insecticides and pesticides when possible.
- Use less energy. Use compact fluorescent light bulbs to save energy; turn off lights when they are not needed; buy energy-efficient appliances; and consider using solar power.
- Don't use indoor air cleaners that generate ozone.
- Use an electric mower or push mower instead of a gas-powered mower.
- Speak out for clean air. Tell your family, friends and coworkers about the

importance of clean air. Encourage businesses and manufacturers in your area to do all they can to protect the air and the earth.

To find out the quality of the air in your area, visit http://lungaction.org/reports/sota06_county.html and enter your zip code.

CHFS University Offers Free Training for Frankfort Staff

The Office of Technology (OIT) invites all Frankfort CHFS staff to take advantage of its KeyStone video training series. The training sessions are in the computer lab at the Distance Learning Center in the Health Services Building.

This detailed video training series is instructor-led and great for those interested in learning a new program. It is also beneficial for fine-tuning skills already in use. The sessions include beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of the following Microsoft courses: Access, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and Word.

Please take a look at the course outlines available on the OIT intranet page at <http://chfsnet.ky.gov/afa/oit/videoTraining.htm>. Each participant must obtain supervisor approval before registering for the training sessions. Register online using the CHFS University calendar at <http://itmp.chfs.ky.gov/CHFSUniversity.aspx>. Space is limited. Classes have been scheduled throughout the remainder of May and June.

Each session will repeat monthly. If this month's class is full, be sure to sign up for next month's session when it becomes available on the CHFS University Calendar. E-mail notices will be sent when new classes are scheduled.

All training participants will receive course credit in Pathlore, Kentucky's Learning Management System.

Unfortunately, the existing training is not available to staff outside of Frankfort due to travel restrictions. OIT is researching other options for enterprise training to reach field staff.

Food Allergy Awareness Week May 14-20

By Elizabeth Fiehler, M.S., R.D., L.D.

Two percent of all adults and 6 to 8 percent of children under the age of 2 have food allergies. Family genetics often play a role. If both of your parents have food allergies, your chances are much greater. A food allergy is an abnormal response to a food that is triggered by the body's immune system.

Food allergens are proteins within the food that enter the bloodstream after food is digested. The body reacts to these proteins as harmful, foreign substances and then the immune system reacts. The reaction usually takes place within minutes or hours of ingestion. The most common sites affected by food allergy symptoms are the nose, throat, lungs, skin and digestive tract. Common symptoms to watch for are itching or tingling in the mouth, swelling of the tongue or throat, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, decrease in blood pressure, hives or eczema, difficulty breathing or asthma.

The most common food allergies exist with the following foods:

- Shellfish (shrimp, crayfish, lobster, crab)
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts such as walnuts, almonds, etc.
- Fish
- Eggs
- Cow's milk protein
- Wheat
- Soy

Tree nuts and peanuts are the leading causes of death resulting from severe, hypersensitive or anaphylactic reactions.

Diagnosing food allergies is easiest if you can provide your health care professional with some specific information. Keeping a food diary for one to two weeks will provide a good starting point. Record everything that you eat, including the amounts consumed. Knowing the amount you ate may help determine the severity of the reaction. Also, record how the food was prepared - cooked, raw, fried, etc. If you have any symptoms, record the times they occurred. If you did anything to relieve symptoms, such as take over-the-counter medications, record what you did and how well it worked. Take this information with you when you see your health care provider. Your health care provider will want to examine you to rule out any other causes of your symptoms.

The best treatment for food allergies is strict avoidance of the food or foods that cause the symptoms. Reading the food label ingredients list will help with this process.

*Sources: Health and Human Services
The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network*

Deferred Comp Seminar Available for New Employees

It is never too soon to begin planning for your retirement. Kentucky Deferred Compensation is an optional state-sponsored benefit available to all state employees. Kentucky Deferred Compensation is the easy, tax-sheltered way to supplement your retirement needs. At Kentucky Deferred Compensation, we want to help new employees like you take full advantage of this important tool for helping you achieve financial independence at retirement. Join us for a brief enrollment presentation on Kentucky Deferred Compensation, and take the actions necessary to:

- Learn about the different risks and rewards associated with investing.
- Discover the best way to invest your money to help meet your retirement goals.
- Enroll in our 401(k) and/or 457 plan immediately.

The seminar will be from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. May 31, at 105 Sea Hero Road, Suite 1, in Frankfort (just past Silverlake Subdivision, turn right off US 460, Georgetown Road). Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration is required. To register, call Carol Cummins or Larincia Bowers at (502) 573-7925 or (800) 542-2667.

Social Work Group to Hold Membership Meeting in Lexington

By Anya Armes Weber

The Kentucky Society for Clinical Social Work is having a general membership meeting May 16 at Joseph-Beth Booksellers Café in Lexington.

Socializing begins at 6:30 p.m., and the program begins at 7:30 p.m. Featured speaker Martha Wetter, Ph.D., will discuss dialectical behavioral therapy.

The meeting is free, but attendees may order their own dinner from the menu.

Please RSVP to kscsw1@yahoo.com, or call (859) 276-5285. Give your name, number and number of persons attending.

Learn more about the Kentucky Society for Clinical Social Work online at <http://home.insightbb.com/~kscsw/>.

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CHFS Focus Health Tip

Submitted by Anne Parr, R.N.

With spring rains, there's more mold growth inside and outside your home. Flowers, trees, weeds and grasses also begin to blossom. And spring-cleaning will stir up dust mites throughout the house.

As May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, we offer these tips to help manage your symptoms:

- Wash bedding every week in hot water. Shower and wash your hair before going to bed, since pollen can accumulate in hair.
- Wear a mask and gloves when cleaning, vacuuming or painting to limit dust and chemical exposure. Vacuum twice a week.
- Limit throw rugs to reduce dust and mold. If you do have rugs, make sure they are washable.
- Change filters in air conditioning units and vents frequently this time of year.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

Customers never forget the attitudes of the people who help them. A previous bad experience may be at the forefront of their minds when they talk to you, so remember to be patient when a demanding client calls or visits. Every worker involved in helping clients may affect the experience for the customer. A resourceful worker can give clients what they need, or at

least enough information to let them know why things aren't going their way.

Pay attention to the way you and your staff respond to unruly clients. Team members who don't execute good standards of practice may need a tutorial to brush up on their customer relations skills.