

## Board begins planning for 2004-2005 health plans

In February 2003, the Board asked our current health plan carriers to project premium cost increases for 2004. The Board also asked the carriers to address how, during 2004 and beyond, they could help PEBB move toward its new vision for 2007.

The Board needs this information to make decisions about whether to renew, redesign or re-bid the health plans for next year. The Board intends to complete the plan design process in mid-June.

### Known and Unknown

The Board's role is to design, negotiate and purchase benefits for the state and employees at a cost that is affordable to both.

PEBB does *not* make decisions about the amount of dollars available to spend toward contributions to benefits. That decision is made through a series of processes that include decisions made by the governor, legislature, collective bargaining agreements, Department of Administrative Services, other agencies and other branches of government.

### Looking at Options

In an effort to provide as much information as possible to all stakeholders and decision makers, PEBB asked carriers to respond to three theoretical options for 2004:

- **Option One:** PEBB keeps the current plan designs and current carriers for a projected increase in premium cost. In this option, the Board will model a mix of funding scenarios while keeping the current plan design.
- **Option Two:** The carriers offer variations to the current plan designs that reduce the projected premium increase by 50 percent. The Board will model example scenarios for this option.
- **Option Three:** The carriers offer plan design variations that would be offered for the same premium rates as 2003, or no additional dollars.

Throughout the process, the Board maintains a fourth option – to issue a request for proposals for new carriers or vendors if necessary.

### Sharing the Information

As part of the plan design process, the Board will share the information with all PEBB stakeholders. The Board is hosting public forums via videoconference during the last week in May to provide updates on the options and responses. These meetings will also give stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions before the Board makes its decisions on June 17.

The forums are scheduled for May 20, 2:30-4:30 and 5:30-7:30 p.m., and May 27, 10 a.m.–noon. PEBB staff members are making arrangements with universities and education service districts to set up videoconference sites in the following cities:

Astoria	Corvallis	Monmouth
Ashland	Eugene	Pendleton
Bend	Klamath Falls	Portland
Burns	La Grande	Salem
Coos Bay	Medford	

As they become available, PEBB will post details about meeting locations on its Web site at <http://pebb.das.state.or.us>. The Board will also post meeting-related materials on the Web site before the first meeting.

If you would like to speak at one of the forums, or for more information on the locations, please contact Amy Sanford, PEBB Customer Service Coordinator, at (503) 373-1102 in Salem, or (800) 788-0520. Or send her an e-mail at [amy.sanford@state.or.us](mailto:amy.sanford@state.or.us). Presentation time may be limited, depending on the number of individuals who register to speak.

If you would like to share feedback with the Board but can't participate in the forums, please send written comments to [inquiries.pebb@state.or.us](mailto:inquiries.pebb@state.or.us) or 775 Court St. NE, Salem 97301.

## *It's Sneezin' Season* **Claritin® now available over the counter**

The federal Food and Drug Administration recently ruled that Claritin may be sold over the counter. This means those with respiratory allergies can ease their sneezes with the nation's leading non-drowsy antihistamine without a prescription.

The over-the-counter (OTC) version contains the same amount of medication (loratadine) as prescription-strength Claritin. Another OTC version, with the trade name Alavert®, also contains the same amount of loratadine.

An FDA panel confirmed that Claritin is safe and effective as a non-prescription medicine. Analysis shows that Zyrtec®, Allegra® and Clarinex®, which are



prescription-only antihistamines, are no safer or more effective than Claritin.

A recent survey by Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon reported that a one-month supply of OTC Claritin-D 24-hour Tablets costs in the range of \$17-\$26. That breaks down to 57-87 cents per day. Costs for the prescription-only brand-name antihistamines range from \$50-\$60 for a one-month supply, or \$1.67-\$2 per day.

## **Healthcare Costs Continue to Increase**

Projections indicate we'll continue to watch healthcare costs increase through this year. A recent report by Aon Consulting shows that medical plan rate increases are currently averaging 15.1 percent for HMOs and 15.8 for PPO plans nationwide. The report also states that pharmacy costs are still a major driver of cost increases. Pharmacy costs increased 18.3 percent during the survey period, October 2002 through March 2003.

The PEBB Health Center's lending library has materials related to these topics and more. Call or e-mail now for your library card so you can take advantage of the resources available to all PEBB members. Some new additions to our lending library include:



- *Parenting with Humor*
- *Get A Life*
- *Humor Your Stress*
- *Relaxation for Expectant Mothers*
- *Winsor Pilates*
- *Kids Who Laugh*

## **New for you**

In April, the PEBB Health Center launched two new online applications to help you locate health and wellness resources in your community. At [www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org), select "Resources in My Community." From there, you can access statewide hospital and fitness center databases.

On the hospitals page, just type in your city's name and hit "search." The return screen will show contact information for hospitals in your city and offer a link to the hospitals' Web

sites. There you can find classes, support groups and other resources on such issues as diabetes, asthma, pregnancy and general wellness.

On the fitness centers page, again simply type in your city's name and select "search." The return screen will show a list of the fitness centers in your community. From there, you can check to see if a center offers a discount or incentive for state employees.

# PEBB Health Center Update

775 Court St. NE • Salem, OR 97301  
(800) 701-1333 • [www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org) • (503) 362-1111 •  
[pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com](mailto:pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com)



## Here Comes the Sun

Spring is here, with warm days on the way. As the sun (finally) begins to shine, remember to take care of the largest organ of your body — your skin. According to the American Cancer Society, the rate of skin cancer cases is continuing to rise each year. The good news is that most forms of skin cancer are easily preventable and highly curable if detected early. Early detection is especially important for melanoma, the most deadly form of

skin cancer, which can spread rapidly. Be on the lookout especially for:

- An irregularly shaped growth — if the border is jagged or notched, be suspicious.
- A mole or sore that is larger than the eraser on a pencil.

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your physician or the staff at the PEBB Health Center. Enjoy your time in the sun but be mindful of the harm it can bring to your skin.

## Programs at the PEBB Health Center

Registration is required for all programs. Handouts may be available if you are unable to attend. Feel free to bring your lunch to any of these noon-hour classes. For registration call (503) 362-1111 or (800) 701-1333, or send an e-mail to our **E-Mail Address** [pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com](mailto:pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com). Check the Health Center website at [www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org) for any updated class or lending library information. *(Please follow your agency rules on use of the Internet at work.)*

### Recognition and Prevention of Hypertension

**Presenter:** Jeanine Olson, ANP  
**Date:** Thursday, May 8  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Hypertension is referred to as the silent killer. Find out how it is identified and what you can do to decrease your risk factors.

### Preparing for Pregnancy

**Presenter:** Liz Marik, FNP  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 13  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Learn what you can do on your own to make sure you have a healthy pregnancy. For other resources in your community, visit [www.pebbhealth.org](http://www.pebbhealth.org).

### Humor and Health

**Presenter:** Megan Osborn, FNP  
**Date:** Thursday, May 15  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Is there a connection between humor and health? Attend this “lunch and learn” opportunity to hear about their close relationship.

### Freedom from Cigarettes

**Presenter:** Cindy Stegner, RN  
**Dates:** May 19, 27, 28, 30 and June 2, 16  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.  
**Class Materials:** \$15.00 Refundable \$20.00 deposit due at second class. Pick up materials prior to first class.

These six one-hour sessions focus on ways to help participants end their dependence on tobacco products. Learn how to handle stress without relying on tobacco, how to overcome

cravings and how to live your life free from the grip of this addiction.

### Eat Five a Day

**Presenter:** Liz Marik, FNP  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 20  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

For everyone who has struggled trying to get five fruits and vegetables into their diet daily, this is the class you want to attend. Learn how you can easily add color and taste into your diet and improve your health at the same time.

### Learn the ABCs of Pilates

**Presenter:** Robin Burton  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 21  
**Time:** Noon-1 p.m.

Learn all about your abdominal muscles and how to use your breath to calm your mind and energize your body, helping to eliminate patterns and habits that can cause pain and muscular imbalance.

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## May 2003 Public Meetings

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**The Public Employees' Benefit Board** will meet Tuesday, May 20, from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Hearing Room of the Land Conservation Board building at 635 Capitol St. NE in Salem.

**The Board** will also hold public forums on Tuesday, May 20, from 2:30 to 4:30 and 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., and on Tuesday, May 27, from 10 a.m. to noon in the Willamette Room of the Willamette Education Service District building located at 2611 Pringle Road SE in Salem. These meetings will also be available through videoconferencing across

the state. For more information: <http://pebb.das.state.or.us>.

**The Board's Plan Design Subcommittee** will meet Tuesday, May 20 from 9 a.m. to noon in Suite B-1, Studio A, of the Public Service Building at 255 Capitol St. NE.

**The Board's Operations Subcommittee** will meet Tuesday, May 27, from 10 a.m. to noon in the PEBB Conference Room located at 775 Court Street NE in Salem

**The Board's Wellness Subcommittee** is not scheduled to meet in May.

*Meeting schedules are subject to change. To be placed on the list of those to be notified of schedule changes, please call Becky Johnson at (503) 378-6296. The most current public meeting notices are posted on PEBB's Web site at <http://pebb.das.state.or.us>. Meetings held at these addresses are wheelchair accessible. If special accommodations are necessary, please contact Becky Johnson within 48 hours or as soon as possible before the meeting.*

## PEBB Resources

Access PEBB, insurance companies and other benefit resources using the contact information below. The insurance company Web sites include provider directories. You can also link to insurance company Web sites from the PEBB Web site.

### **Public Employees' Benefit Board (PEBB)**

(503) 373-1102, (800) 788-0520  
<http://pebb.das.state.or.us>  
[inquiries.pebb@state.or.us](mailto:inquiries.pebb@state.or.us)

### **Associated Administrators, Inc. (Dependent Care FSA)**

(800) 334-4340  
(503) 220-3805  
[www.aai-pca.com](http://www.aai-pca.com)

### **BestChoice Administrators**

(800) 556-3137  
(503) 765-3581

### **Health Center**

(800) 701-1333  
(503) 362-1111  
[pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com](mailto:pebbhealth@oregonwellness.com)

### **Cascade East Health Plan (medical)**

(866) 577-CEHP (2347) toll-free  
[www.cehp.org](http://www.cehp.org)

### **Kaiser Permanente (medical & dental)**

(800) 813-2000  
[www.kp.org/nw](http://www.kp.org/nw)

### **Nationwide Insurance (auto)**

(888) 628-4663 media code 8425  
(888) 662-8446 (TDD)

### **ODS Health Plans (dental)**

(800) 452-1058  
[www.odshp.com/pebb/](http://www.odshp.com/pebb/)

### **Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon (medical)**

(800) 826-9813  
(503) 220-3849  
[www.or.regence.com/pebb](http://www.or.regence.com/pebb)

### **The Standard Insurance Company (life & disability)**

(800) 242-1888  
[www.standard.com](http://www.standard.com)

### **Unum (long-term care)**

(800) 227-4165  
[www.unumprovident.com/enroll/pebb](http://www.unumprovident.com/enroll/pebb)

### **VSP (vision)**

(800) 877-7195  
[www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com)

### **Willamette Dental Insurance (dental)**

(800) 460-7644  
[www.denkor.com](http://www.denkor.com)

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## PEBB Mission

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*To provide a high quality plan of health and other benefits that are affordable to both the employee and the state.*