



Educators  
**Health**  
Alliance

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*Participation. Collaboration. Cooperation.*

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## ***EHA Members Taking Advantage of Alt-Network***

**As summer continues**, EHA members whose districts have implemented the new Alt-Networks began researching which networks work best for them and their families. This is very exciting news as our members are now dipping their toes into the insurance world, looking to see what plan saves them the most money with the absolute best care. The advantage of participating in the EHA is that all our plans are fantastic with deep savings and now the new Alt-Networks allows for even further saving.

While some schools do not qualify based on geographical location, the EHA spreads the savings Statewide. Members who choose the Alt-Network have agreed to stay in either Premier Select Blue Choice or BluePrint Health. This means that services rendered are done at a reduced claim rate negotiated by BCBS, thus saving the EHA premium dollars used for claims. Networks have reduced their prices because the member have chosen to stay in network. This limits the claims amount paid and saves our entire plan premium dollars. Savings on lower claim payments will help keep our entire plan premiums down.

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## ***Blue Cross Blue Shield COVID-19 Coverage***

**Vaccines have been approved** by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA). Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) members are able to get the vaccine at not cost. Talk to your physician about which vaccine is best for you, and when and where it's available.

Through October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, BCBSNE will waive all costs for medically appropriate in-network testing of COVID-19. We encourage the use of in-network providers. They will never ask upfront for a payment for COVID-19 vaccines or testing.

Please take extra caution in washing your hands, cleaning and disinfecting, and always cover coughs and sneezes! The EHA wishes you a safe rest of your summer and start of the school year!

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## ***Traveling the State Via Zoom and Car!***

The beginning of the year is always so exciting and filled with the great anticipation for all the students coming back to start a new school year. The new school year is also filled with questions regarding benefits and change. This too can cause a little anxiety and rightfully so as healthcare can be a daunting issue and decision. These feelings are very normal and expected.

To help assist with these issues I have been circling the state with Zooms and actual travel. It has been a longtime since I have been able to get out to the schools in person and I am very excited to begin my travel again to see everyone! The beginning of the year will be a challenge as well because many schools have requested meetings on the same day which makes it very difficult to meet that need.

To better manage this, I have relied on zooms for those heavy days and traveling by car when possible. It was fantastic to get out to Wakefield and Oakland-Craig in the same day since they were an hour away from each other. We can also take the route of Shickley Public Schools who found out I was at Sutton and sent the request by texting me! I jumped at the chance and got to visit with an awesome staff! Another great day was the 8AM meeting at Wahoo, then off to Gibbon and Cozad to help explain benefits. It is such a pleasure to go out and see everyone.

Not to leave the Panhandle out, I plan on coming out very soon and can't wait for some invitations. I did get the chance to zoom with Gering and Crawford along with many schools on the eastern side of the state too.

I look forward to the beginning of the year and continuing seeing all my EHA friends!!!!

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Even more exciting is the willingness of our members to dive down deep in the insurance plans and see what plan best fits their needs. I am always happy to help and look forward in coming out to our districts to continue teaching about all the healthcare plans.



**Get up-to-date EHA updates by following me on Twitter @EHAGregLong1**



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# EHA Wellness 2021

## Participating Organizations



## The Joy of Movement with EHA Wellness

Movement is key to physical and mental wellness. Whether you are taking a walk, playing with your children or running a marathon, movement is important for all that we do. Exercise is also linked to release of serotonin, an important chemical used in our bodies to make us feel happier and more energetic. The young and the young at heart both benefit from daily movement, exercise, or play. We actually get *joy* from movement!

Despite all the benefits of exercise, only about a third of American adults get the exercise they need. Lack of time is the most common reason for sedentary lifestyles, and the belief that exercise is too hard is a close second. What they don't know is that *moderate exercise*, built into daily life, is all it takes to promote health. Our bodies come equipped with well-oiled movement mechanisms, our joints. They are principle players in your body's ability to move and groove. But these wonders of the body can break down with neglect, age and disease. Many ask if exercise can cause arthritis, especially as we age? Even if it were true, it might be wise to accept aching knees as the price for a healthy heart, brain, and metabolism. But studies show that exercise can be safe for joints, both in older, overweight folks and in athletes. (Health.Harvard.edu; September 2009)

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, EHA Wellness will be challenging participants of *Joyful Joints* to move and care for their joints. Videos from Bob & Brad, experienced physical therapists with a sense of humor, will target trouble joint areas while giving tips to keep them healthy. *Joyful Joints* will also help you put those Headspace and WW apps to good use. The daily challenge emails will include recommendations for more ways to move in your app's workout and yoga sessions. Cont. Pg. 4

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## Breathing Your Way Through back-to-School

It is that time of year again! The new school year is looming on the horizon and it seems that the summer has slipped by use way too soon. For many, going back to school means joyful anticipation for new goals, opportunities, and achievements. For most, the season also brings increased responsibilities and obligations. For all of us, it is a busy time that fills our calendars, making us long for a calmer place.

Technically, humans need stress. It is what keeps each of us moving about our daily lives. So a little is actually good. Without it, we would be motionless, unmotivated to respond to the world around us. However, the team at EHA Wellness knows that stress can build up and, if high levels continue long-term, can cause depression, disease and deterioration of the whole body.

The answer, of course, is to decrease our stress. And relief may take many forms: Exercise, meditation, play, or even a really great piece of chocolate. But the most effective and accessible means of stress relief available is to just...*breathe*. The next time you are filling those stress levels rise, try the breathing exercise below or log into your free Headspace app and check out **Breath** for 1 to 3 minutes of guided breathing right on your phone.

### 4 Square Breathing

--- *Breathe, Chill*; Lisa Roberts RYT, RCYT; 2014

Breathing is something we do naturally without thinking too much about it. If we were to describe how we breathe, we would most likely say that we breathe in and out in two simple steps. But there are actually four steps to each breath we take: 1. Inhale 2. Pause 3. Exhale 4. Pause

4-Square-Breathing is a technique used to emphasize each stage of breath, slowing it down and calming the mind, body and nervous system. A very effective relaxation tool, this technique is extremely helpful in alleviating anxiety and stress and can be used prior to any situation where you want to feel calm, centered and focused.

*Time to Breathe:*

- Begin in a comfortable seated position, spine naturally erect and chin level. Be sure that your shoulders, arms and face are relaxed. Hands should rest comfortably in your lap, or on the knees.
- Observe your natural breath cycle for a few rounds before beginning to deepen the breath.
- Breathe all the way in until your belly expands, and then all the way out until the belly button moves toward the spine, expelling all of the air.
- When you feel ready to begin, inhale to a count of THREE.
- Once inhale is complete, hold the breath in for a count of TWO.
- Slowly exhale, with control, for a count of THREE.
- Hold all of the air OUT for a count of TWO.
- Continue breathing this way for 3-5 full rounds.

Looking for more relaxation? Sign up (if you haven't already) for your *free* Headspace app [HERE](#) and see how meditation, movement and better sleep can have a great impact on your stress levels and all around wellness.

### **Movement: Continued from page 3:**

Bring a little joy to your summer with **Joyful Joints!** Sign up by July 31<sup>st</sup> **by logging in** on your EHA Wellness account page at [www.ehawellness.org](http://www.ehawellness.org). Don't miss your chance to get motivated to move a bit more each day, keeping yourself healthier now and in the future. Not signed up for your free **Headspace** meditation app? Click [HERE](#) today! Want to learn more about **WW** (Weight Watchers reimagined)? *Please click here for program and pricing details:* [WW + EHA Wellness](#).