Every year my goal is to visit as many school districts as possible. The 2017-18 school year was shaping up to be a banner year for the EHA and it did not disappoint! Many superintendents, union leaders, and board members contacted me regarding visits to their district to speak about healthcare to the EHA members.

At the start of my EHA career the traditional yearly healthcare meetings were perceived by members as “more of the same”. Only a select few members would be engaged asking questions. The members asking questions were either individuals entering into retirement, or families who were going through a medical hardship needing guidance on costs and future planning. The rest were itching to get into their classrooms eager to begin the school year and welcome their new students.

After all the meetings I attended in the spring of 2013 it was time to take the EHA culture out of autopilot. The new direction was to teach districts the advantages of all the EHA plans available. While also reviewing if the district was meeting their goals offering the best benefits for the members. This was a daunting task as the EHA has over 245 school districts and more than 36,000 members. The transition of learning all the different things the EHA can offer, has taken many years but the ball was rolling after my initial meeting back in 2014!

Now it’s been five years and thousands of miles traveled. What was only 10 school districts participating in the Dual Option plan, has now grown to 192 districts! Meetings began to slowly change from the boring beginning of the year healthcare benefits update, to having members engaged and asking critical questions. I could see it in the emails and phone calls I was getting from teachers after my presentations. The momentum was picking up and things were starting to change.

The 2017/2018 school year seemed to be no different. The momentum continued and the annual meeting requests started filling my email inbox from districts across the state. Then came my first meeting at Tekamah-Herman public schools.

Continued on Pg. 2
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) believes in the importance of providing options to help you access affordable and immediate health care. That is why we are delighted to offer telehealth to our members.

**Telehealth Service – How does it work?**

Telehealth is an innovative patient consultation service that lets you connect with a U.S. board certified, licensed and credentialed doctor and easily using your computer, tablet or phone. Its easy to use, affordable, private and secure.

Rather than having to schedule a doctor’s appointment and travel to and from the doctor’s office, telehealth lets you interact with a doctor at your convenience for common conditions such as: *Sinus* *Sold* *Flu* *Fever* *rash* *ear infection* *migraine*

**Board-Certified Doctors**

**Who provides telehealth service?**

BCBS of Nebraska provides telehealth service through American Well®, also know as Amwell, the industry’s leader in telehealth solution. With Amwell, you can register for free, and the cost per visit is less than the cost of an in-person doctor office visit.

Amwell offers:

* A choice of trusted, U.S. board-certified Nebraska doctors
* Access to a licensed physician via computer, tablet or phone
* Consultations and diagnosis for common conditions, including e-prescriptions

Cont. Pg.1:  A teacher greeted me at the door with MyBlue papers in hand. This continued as I went to many other districts.

What changed? Knowledge is power, and members started to engage in what I have been teaching. This brought an entirely new mindset and sparked serious discussions around the dinner table regarding which plan best fits their family. By the time the 2017/2018 school year was complete, I had happily attended over 110 school districts, spoke to over 6,000 members and traveled over 40,000 miles.

The EHA meetings are a time to understand, learn, and reflect on information that can seriously benefit Nebraska families. I look forward to a new year, and speaking to you.

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

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Happy Feet: Foot Care and Exercise

Your feet are pretty small, considering they have to support the entire height and weight of your body. But they can cause big problems. So pay some attention to your feet. Each step you take involves a remarkably intricate network of bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments. That complexity—combined with all the weight they carry—accounts for why feet can be so prone to problems, including bone fractures, arthritis and plantar fasciitis, a swelling of the thick band of tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot.

You can help keep your feet healthy by wearing comfortable, well-fitting shoes. Wash your feet regularly (especially between your toes), wear clean socks and try to rotate your shoes to give them time to air out. If left untreated, foot problems may worsen. Eventually, the pain could interfere with your ability to do even the most basic things like walking upstairs or down the street. If pain alters the way you walk, it can lead to pain in your knees, hips and back as well. These problems can multiply, limiting your activity and affecting your quality of life. The good news is that most foot disorders are either treatable or modifiable.

Take better care of your feet during October. Walking is a great way to exercise your feet! Good foot care and regular foot checks are also an important part of your health care. If you have foot problems, be sure to talk to your doctor.

Challenge Guidelines - October 2018:

- Go for at least one short 10 minute walk during the day.
- Take any action to improve your foot health. Use your foot massager.

Register for this challenge at www.ehawellness.org
Managing Change and Stress

Change of any kind brings with it the ups and downs of emotions and in some cases worry, anxiety, and fear. Managing change requires us to also manage our stress levels and engage in self-care activities. See the tips below for managing change and minimizing stress.

1. Identify the thing that is giving you stress. Once you identify the origin of what is providing you stress you can build a plan to minimize its hold on you.
2. Be realistic with your time commitments. Do the best you can with the time and resources you have. That's it – that's all you can do. Be o.k. with it and move on.
3. Schedule time for yourself daily. Time to relax, take a walk, drink coffee in the quiet, journal – something that gives you some “down time”. Even if it's only 5 minutes.
4. Recognize that change requires you to change behaviors and behavior change takes time and is uncomfortable. Baby steps to accepting change and embracing the new norm will help. Building patience with yourself and others will also help.
5. Manage procrastination. If you are a natural procrastinator – adjust and get an early start.
6. Prioritize activity according to urgency level. Not everything is urgent and not everything needs your attention. Single task when you can.
7. Practice mindfulness and gratitude. Allowing yourself to experience situations without negativity or judgment and the simple act of saying thank you will help you feel more optimistic, and increase your ability to adapt.