



Health Matters staff thanks you for your patience. This month's Health Matters Minute delivery was late due to the recent fire in the Yesler Building.

Have a happy, healthy and safe holiday season and New Year.

## New and improved WebMD coming in January 2011

Five years ago, county leadership and its labor partners agreed to implement the Healthy Incentives<sup>SM</sup> program, an innovative approach to curbing health care costs by supporting improved employee health. Since then a culture of wellness has developed in the county with the support of Health Matters programs like Weight Watchers at Work<sup>®</sup>, Farm to Work, King County Walks and the Goat Hill Giving Garden. The program has won national recognition for being innovative and effective and has served as a model for similar programs across the country.

Throughout the life of the program, the Joint Labor and Management Insurance Committee (JLMIC) has continued to put employee feedback at the center of continuously improving the program. The county and its partners in labor have been working together to respond to your concerns and improve the WebMD

online individual action plans for next year to get you out from behind your computer so you can spend your time maintaining or improving your health.

Feedback from thousands of employees was gathered by labor leaders and Health Matters staff during the first part of 2010. Since early summer, Health Matters staff has been working with WebMD on a new online format that improves the online experience. Initial feedback from employee focus groups has been positive.

To accomplish the 10 weekly goals required to earn gold, begin your first week's activities no later than Saturday, April 23. Then, to stay on top of your entries to earn gold, you will need to record 3 activities each week for 9 more weeks—without missing a week—to meet the July 1, 2011 deadline.

## Blue letters to be delivered to homes in December

At the end of this month, you will receive a blue letter telling you how to earn gold with the improved 2011 Healthy Incentives<sup>SM</sup> program. The blue letter will be sent to your home mailing address in the Healthy Incentives<sup>SM</sup> envelope shown here.

If you cover a spouse or domestic partner under your medical coverage, he or she will receive a separate blue letter. Be sure to read the letter to understand the requirements for the 2011 Healthy Incentives<sup>SM</sup> program. You will find more details by going to [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) and clicking on the WebMD story in the revolving banner.

If you have questions after you've read your blue letter, call Benefits, Payroll and Retirement Operations at 206-684-1556 or e-mail [kc.benefits@kingcounty.gov](mailto:kc.benefits@kingcounty.gov).



## DOT's John Murphy, Health Hero



John Murphy, Lead Mechanic with Vehicle Maintenance at Transit North Base is our December Health Hero.

In October John sat down with us and talked about many things: his health, his recovery from a deadly disease that took his father's life, and some of the struggles he faces day-to-day as he strives for better health.

Watch his video at: [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters).

## Initiative becomes Employee Health and Well-Being Program

In the past five years we have gotten older, but healthier. Hundreds of us quit tobacco. We lost more than 10,000 pounds through Weight Watchers at Work®. We got moving and we started eating better. And from 2005 – 2010 we spent \$26 million less than expected on health care costs.

Since 2006 when we first took the wellness assessment, 90 percent of us have continued to evaluate our health annually with this tool. This is one of the highest participation rates in the country. As a group, our health has improved in 12 out of 14 areas and our health care costs have risen more slowly than predicted. An innovative benefit plan design that encourages choosing generics over brand name drugs has decreased costs by \$1.8 million in just one year.



Grassroots efforts to transform our workplace into an environment that supports healthy choices were empowered.

The Farm to Work program was launched so people at worksites throughout the county can get fresh produce delivered at work. The Employee Giving Garden

bloomed in a once vacant lot downtown so employees can teach other employees how to grow healthy food.

The Live Well Challenge fostered camaraderie among co-workers supporting each other's goals of eating smart and moving more to claim the title of winning team. Employees took advantage of discounts at more than 120 gyms in three counties. An effort to arm employees and their families with the best online tools and information for making smart health care choices

## Holiday tips for employees in the December Health Matters

**Eat Smart** – The hustle and bustle of the holiday season can make it hard to stick to your healthy eating routine. Small changes in the way you shop and cook can make a big difference. Go to [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters), and find our story on the revolving banner.

**Move More** – This season, why not give the best gift of all – the promise to enjoy some active time with your loved ones. Start a new family tradition building memories through your active adventures. Go to [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) and find our

story on the revolving banner.

**Stress Less** – Balancing your work with family and social obligations can make this joyous season the most stressful time of the year. Try these strategies to reduce holiday stress. Go to [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) and find our story on the revolving banner.

**Quit Tobacco** – The holidays can be a stressful time to try quitting tobacco, but a great time to plan for success in the new year. Click “Quit Tobacco” from the [www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/HealthMatters) or call us at 206-263-6085.

was launched and nearly 2,000 signed up to keep a personal health record.

In 2010 a partnership with WebMD focused on engaging employees for 10 weeks, the amount of time research shows a behavior needs to be practiced in order to form a habit. Welless Assessment data shows health improvements over time, but also backsliding in health gains between the end of individual action plans in June and taking the wellness assessment again in January. To support employees in lasting health improvements, Healthy Incentives<sup>SM</sup> was redesigned to engage employees for a full 10 weeks.

Following a commitment to continuously improve the program to meet participants' needs, changes are planned for 2011 that keeps the 10 week model for behavior change, while providing an experience where the emphasis is on practicing an action instead of logging it on the computer.

The Health Reform Initiative now transitions to the Employee Health and Well-Being Program and will work to achieve the Strategic Plan goals of creating a high performance workforce and smart financial stewardship. Health Matters will look for even more ways to support employee health keeping the same supportive programs in place, along with Healthy Incentives<sup>SM</sup>.

