Hello everyone! It’s my second post where I tell you I fell off the wagon and went into a food coma. It was glorious! I was so hungry after eating healthy for three weeks, I couldn’t be stopped. I hit the drive-thru for two breakfast biscuits, took down a dozen boneless wings, ranch, fries and three glasses of diet cola for lunch, snacked on cookies and enjoyed pizza and popcorn in the evening.

Just kidding! I can happily report that the paragraph you just read did not occur since you’ve last heard from me. I’ve lost a few more pounds and I’m starting to enjoy some new foods from the fruit and vegetable group. I’ve had a couple of weak moments. Chips and salsa at Mexican restaurants have such power. Also I lost a faceoff with a half an order of fried pickles. I would’ve taken the full order in the past, so let’s call that growth.

Before I go on, I must mention that the Invest In Your Health blog had more than 1,000 visits just to read my first post. I can’t say thanks enough to all of you that read. And to those that left a comment, I really appreciate your support. It’s a source of motivation to know that some of you took time out of your busy day to read about my plight.

Read the rest of the post on the Invest In Your Health website

Blogger’s confession: I’m not healthy

(Read the first post)

Jeff Mullins, the Digital Communications Manager at the Indiana State Personnel Department, started the Fit by Forty blog on the Invest In Your Health website to eat better, lose weight and get more exercise. Follow Jeff’s progress on the blog at InvestInYourHealthIndiana.com/fitbyforty and on the @INSPDBenefits Twitter account.
Indiana’s Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) is now accepting applications from families in the five pilot counties who may be eligible for grants for their children to receive high-quality, prekindergarten education through the On My Way Pre-K program starting in August of 2015.

Families residing in Allen, Jackson, Lake and Vanderburgh Counties must meet the following eligibility criteria to apply:

- The family must have an income below 127 percent of the federal poverty level.
- The child must be four (4) years old by August 1, 2015, and starting kindergarten in August 2016.

In Marion County, the same criteria apply as those listed above. However, the City of Indianapolis is providing additional funding in Marion County through its Indy Preschool Scholarship Program (Indy PSP). And while families can apply to Indy PSP and On My Way Pre-K using a single application, the Indy PSP funding will add eligibility in Marion County for children who are three years old and are from families living at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

It is important to note that first priority is given to children from families living at or below 127 percent of the Federal Poverty Level for On My Way Pre-K.

Once a child has received a grant, families in all five counties will choose from any of the eligible, enrolled On My Way Pre-K programs. OECOSL has already enrolled 128 On My Way Pre-K providers in the five pilot counties, and the application process is ongoing. In order to qualify, the program must be top-ranked at level 3 or level 4 on Paths to QUALITY or be accredited by an approved national or regional accrediting body. [Click here for details on provider eligibility.]

Applications are accepted until April 30, 2015. If more families qualify than there are grants available, awards will be made through a randomized lottery process. This lottery will be held on or around May 4, 2015, and families will be notified if they receive a grant.

Approved pre-K programs may be located in a public or private school, licensed child care center, licensed home or registered ministry as long as that program meets the quality requirements and is registered as an On My Way Pre-K Provider. Families may choose from a program that is full-day or part-day, as well as from programs that end with the school year or continue through the summer. [A list of approved pre-K providers can be found here.]

Families who need help finding an approved pre-K program can also call 1-800-299-1627 for assistance from an early learning referral specialist.

- To apply in Allen County, [click here.]
- To apply in Jackson County, [click here.]
- To apply in Lake County, [click here.]
- To apply in Marion County, [click here.]
- To apply in Vanderburgh County, [click here.]

More than 400 children who will begin kindergarten in August of 2015 are currently participating in the first phase of On My Way Pre-K, which began in Allen, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh counties in January of this year.

On My Way Pre-K is the name of Indiana’s first state-funded prekindergarten program, which was approved as a five-county pilot by the Indiana General Assembly in 2014. In addition to Allen, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh Counties, which are making a limited program available for about 400 children beginning in January, Jackson County will join the others and be fully-operational by the fall of 2015. The pilot program is expected to ultimately serve more than 2,000 students in the five counties. For more information, visit [www.onmywayprek.org.]

The Indy Preschool Scholarship Program (Indy PSP) is the City of Indianapolis’s first ever preschool program that provides free scholarships for children from low-income families to attend quality preschools. Indy PSP is partnering with On My Way Pre-K to expand access to preschool for families in Marion County. The United Way of Central Indiana will provide program administration support by managing the application, outreach, and evaluation processes. Visit [www.indypsp.org] for more information.
Vitality Checks are scheduled at state facilities

*HumanaVitality is available to employees, and their covered dependents, enrolled in a medical plan offered through the State Personnel Department.*

Complete a Vitality Check at one of the many free screening events happening around the state and earn a minimum of 2,000 and up to 4,000 Vitality Points.

State Personnel has begun scheduling checks at state facilities throughout Indiana. At these screening events, there is no charge to employees, or their covered dependents over 18, with a medical plan offered through the State Personnel Department. Some events are open only to employees at the location due to security concerns. Sites are classified as “Open” or “Closed” on the event schedule. More dates locations are being added so check back for more updates.

- [Click here to view the Vitality Check state schedule](#)

If a Vitality Check event is at your location, you are allowed up to 30 minutes paid time to complete the check during the event. Any additional time incurred is your responsibility. Please seek supervisor approval in advance of scheduling a screening.

If a Vitality Check event is not scheduled for your office, you may visit one of the open events in your area or visit your doctor, the Little Clinic (select Kroger locations), select Walgreens Pharmacies or Healthcare Clinics or Concentra Medical Centers to complete your Vitality Check. Each location requires you to bring a copy of the respective form and your Humana ID card to the visit. If you do not have a Humana ID card, please the Humana Customer Care line to get the information you need for the visit. You can reach them at 1-800-708-1105.

If you have an issues creating an account, please contact the Benefits hotline at (317) 232-1167 or toll-free at (877) 248-0007.

**How do I set up an appointment if my location is listed as “closed”?**

If a location is designated as a closed location, you cannot use the online scheduling tool to make an appointment. A paper process has been instituted for these locations. Contact your human resources department for more information on how to set up a Vitality Check.

Join a sports league this summer

Joining a sports league is a great way to have fun, meet new people and, best of all, to stay active. Participate in a sport you’ve always loved or try a new one — and earn Vitality Points in HumanaVitality.

Choose the sport that you enjoy most. It gives you the most benefits because you play more often, with more passion, and it gives you more satisfaction. When you’re ready for a change, trying new sports can take your fitness to the next level.

Select a sport below to join and earn points:
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Dance
- Football: flag, touch, or other
- Golf
- Racquetball
- Running: cross country, or other
- Soccer
- Softball
- Squash
- Swim team
- Tennis: single or double
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Volleyball
- To view the full list of sport teams, [click here](#).

**Completed a season of league sports?**

Each sports league, with a minimum of eight games or matches, qualifies as a single activity. Just send us proof of your participation, like a copy of the sports schedule or certificate of league participation, within 90 days of the league’s completion date to earn Vitality Points. Your league schedule must occur during your effective dates [Download and fax sports leagues form here](#).
Learn how to use HumanaVitality in a free webinar

Have you registered for HumanaVitality yet? Are you having trouble understanding how to effectively navigate the portal? Corey Nelson, the State’s HumanaVitality representative is hosting several great learning opportunities that can help state employees and adult dependents understand how to register for and become more familiar with how to use HumanaVitality. These 45 minute webinar sessions include:

- Registering
- Taking your Health Assessment
- Earning points
- Setting goals
- Registering an approved activity device
- Attaining Silver Status

Webinar dates include:
- April 9 and 21
- May 7 and 19
- June 9 and 25
- Click here for information and links to register for these webinars.

All webinars begin at noon. Click the link above to find the webinar of your choice and register today! Block a time on your calendar and take advantage of one of these opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of the HumanaVitality program!

Setting a goal in HumanaVitality®

HumanaVitality is available to employees, and their covered dependents, enrolled in a medical plan offered through the State Personnel Department.

After taking your Health Assessment and/or completing your Vitality Check, goals and personalized activities are recommended by HumanaVitality. A goal is a recommended activity that awards you points and brings you get closer to attaining Silver Status. For example, if you have a goal set to “Keep reducing your weight,” HumanaVitality may recommend that you complete the “Healthy Weight Conversation” or the “Is Your Weight Increasing Your Health Risks?” interactive health tool. You are awarded points for completing these recommended activities, on top of the points you are awarded for completing your set goal!

To see these recommended goals and activities, hover over “Get Healthy” on your dashboard/homepage and then click on “My Goals.” This takes you to your goals’ page, where you can see “Recommended Goals” and set these goals if you choose to do so. Before setting a goal, you may want to know what all it requires to be successful in completing a goal. In order to do this, click on the goal (in blue letters). You are then able see a more in-depth summary of the goal. If you want to set a specific goal, from the goals page, click “Set this goal.” After doing so, the goal you set is now be listed under “My set goals.” Once a goal is set, HumanaVitality also start a daily countdown for the goal’s timeline. This is the time you have to complete a goal.

If you are looking for more opportunities to help you become successful with completing a goal and potentially earn more Vitality Points you click on one of your set goals, which takes you to a “Goal summary.” From this page, you will once again get an in-depth look at why the goal was recommended and what you can do to complete the goal. If you continue to scroll down on this page, you see your “Personalized Activities.” These activities are other opportunities within HumanaVitality for you to earn points. If you click on one of these activities, it takes you to the screen you need to complete the activity.

Register with HumanaVitality today! Click here to begin your journey.
Mental health issues has an affect on all Hoosiers and employers

Mental health disorders affect every aspect of a person – thoughts, feelings, moods, the ability to relate to others, and day to day functions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that approximately 26 percent of American adults aged 18 or older suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. In Indiana, that translates to approximately 1.3 million people – enough to fill Lucas Oil Stadium more than 19 times. Mental health disorders have a tremendous impact on the state.

Mental health disorders include illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. These conditions are chronic and disabling. These can affect anyone at any time, regardless of age, income, race/ethnicity, gender or culture. Those who suffer from mental health disorders also suffer from other health problems, including chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, arthritis and cancer. For example, depression is found to co-occur in 17 percent of cardiovascular cases, 27 percent of diabetes patients, and more than 40 percent of cancer patients. The result of poor health behaviors, such as tobacco use and obesity, may be outward displays of more than just ill physical health – they also may indicate poor mental health. For example, 42 percent of people diagnosed as obese also have been diagnosed with poor mental health, and 36 percent of people who smoke have mental illnesses.

To address the impact of chronic disease and mental health on the state, the Indiana State Department of Health and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction are working to integrate primary care and behavioral health. The two agencies are partnering with stakeholders to define a model that works for both medical and behavioral care. The goal is to begin using this model with safety net providers federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics and community mental health centers. It is a tremendous undertaking, but it is critical to the state’s overall health.

Mental health and chronic disease also impact Indiana employers. The costs to treat chronic diseases and mental health disorders are a significant portion of the national health expenditures. According to Kaiser Family Foundation, there has been a 97 percent increase in premiums for employer-sponsored health coverage since 2002. However, there are other, significant costs for employers due to untreated chronic diseases and mental health disorders, such as missed work and decreased work productivity.

More and more, employers are implementing strategies to help treat chronic disease and mental health disorders, or to help modify risk factors. For state employees, a variety of programs exist including:

**Employee Assistance Program**. This free, confidential service offered through Anthem is available to all employees, regardless of whether or not they carry the state-provided insurance. More information can be found at [www.in.gov/spd/2466.htm](http://www.in.gov/spd/2466.htm).

**Invest In Your Health**. The state's wellness program has several options to inform employees about programs that help promote health. More information can be found at [investinyourhealthindiana.com](http://investinyourhealthindiana.com).

**Quit Now Indiana**. This evidence-based, free tobacco cessation program is available to all Indiana residents. More information can be found at [quitnowindiana.com](http://quitnowindiana.com).

**InShape Indiana**. This website provides tips on healthy diets and physical activity. More information can be found at [INShapeIndiana.org](http://INShapeIndiana.org).

Chronic diseases and mental health disorders are treatable. It’s important that, as a state, we begin to reduce the stigma associated with poor physical and mental health, and look for ways to help Hoosiers reduce modifiable risk factors and recognize when it is time to seek treatment.

**Resources**

2. United States Census Bureau. State and County Quick Facts.
Smart eating for a sharper mind

Thank you to Natalie Buchs MS, Registered Dietitian for this article.

Just as we should eat well to keep our hearts, skin and other organs flourishing, we also must nourish our brains. Follow the tips below to enjoy the benefits of a healthy brain – enhanced productivity, alertness, creativity and mood.

- **Eat more healthy fats.** Great sources include salmon, herring, sardines and anchovies, as well as grass-fed meats and eggs, flax seeds and walnuts. Aim to have a fatty fish at least twice per week. Incorporate flax into your routine with the recipe below.

- **Get enough protein.** A healthy brain requires a steady creation of neurotransmitters that are built from the amino acids in our diets. Choose high quality protein such as lean meats, eggs, dairy, beans and legumes. A good rule to live by - always include protein at breakfast.

- **Avoid sugar highs.** The brain needs continuous fuel but your best bet is a slow and steady supply. Peaks and valleys are caused by simple sugars found in sweets, pastries, sweetened beverages, sweetened cereals, white bread and pasta and granola bars. Stick to complex carbohydrates found in veggies, whole grains and fiber-rich fruits.

- **Buffer stress with B and C vitamins.** A steady stream of cortisol and other stress hormones that results from life’s stressors can weaken the brain. Vitamins C and B work together to protect the brain. Vitamin B3 is especially important and can be found in tuna, chicken, peanuts, green peas, potatoes, cantaloupe, sunflower seeds and brown rice.

### Brain Boost Breakfast Pudding

- ¼ cup flax seed meal
- ¼ cup water
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts

**Directions:**

Mix flax, egg and water in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for 45 seconds. Move the cooked part of the pudding towards the center of the bowl and add berries and walnuts. Microwave for 45-60 seconds. A Longer time is required if using frozen berries. Stir and enjoy!

### Healthy foods that fight stress

Eating when we’re stressed is a bad habit that many of us share. While it’s acceptable to indulge ourselves once in a while, reaching for a candy bar or that tub of ice cream every time we feel bad will only lead us to trouble. Lower your stress levels with snacks that won’t leave you feeling guilty tomorrow:

- **Blueberries:** packed with antioxidants and vitamin C, making them mighty stress-busters. When we’re stressed, our bodies need vitamin C and antioxidants to help repair and protect cells.
- **Nuts:** Packed with magnesium to keep cortisol levels low.
- **Asparagus:** Boosts mood enhancing folic acid.
- **Avocado:** Rich in stress-relieving B vitamins.
- **Milk:** High in protein, which lowers blood pressure, and potassium, which can help with muscle spasms triggered by tenseness.
- **Hot cocoa or tea:** Raises body temperature, leaving us feeling comforted, and triggering a similar response in the brain.

Find more ideas for stress-snacking [click here](#).

Taxes

File your taxes for free with INfreefile

The April 15 deadline to file your taxes is fast approaching. If you’ve waited to file, there’s no need to panic. The Department of Revenue offers a number of resources to help Hoosier taxpayers, including state employees, breathe a sigh of relief this tax season.

Nearly two million Hoosier taxpayers qualify to file their federal AND state taxes online for free with Indiana freefile (INfreefile). If your adjusted gross income (AGI) was $60,000 or less in 2014, you may qualify. Click here to compare INfreefile vendor offers and get started on your tax return today!

More than 80 percent of Hoosier taxpayers file electronically, and for good reason! Electronically-filed returns offer better accuracy and faster refunds. They’re more secure than paper returns as well.

And speaking of security, the department continues to work hard to protect Hoosier identities with the Identity Protection Program. Last year, the Identity Protection Program helped stop $88 million in attempted fraudulent returns. For tips on protecting your identity this tax season, visit the Stop ID Theft webpage at www.in.gov/dor/4794.htm. If you have questions about your tax return, please contact the department at 317-232-2240 or email individualtaxassistance@dor.in.gov.

Benefits

A new definition of spouse is available for FMLA leave

The U.S. Department of Labor has issued a Final Rule redefining the term “spouse” as it pertains to family-medical leave. What changed? An employee’s spouse for FMLA purposes was defined by the law of the state where the employee resided. The change means that whether a person is a spouse will now be determined by the law of the state where the couple entered into the marriage rather than the law of the state where the employee resides. Therefore, if a couple’s marriage was legal in the state or country in which the marriage was celebrated, then those spouses now meet the definition for coverage under the FMLA. The definition covers only legal marriages, it does not cover couples who are cohabitating nor those with civil domestic partner arrangements.

The new definition is:

Spouse means a husband or wife. For purposes of this definition, husband or wife refers to the other person with whom an individual entered into marriage as defined or recognized under state law for purposes of marriage in the State in which the marriage was entered into or, in the case of a marriage entered into outside of any State, if the marriage is valid in the place where entered into and could have been entered into in at least one State. This definition includes an individual in a same-sex or common law marriage that either: (1) Was entered into in a State that recognizes such marriages; or (2) If entered into outside of any State, is valid in the place where entered into and could have been entered into in at least one State.

Information about family-medical leave is located at www.in.gov/spd/2397.htm. You may also call the FML Line at 317.234.7955 or 1.855.SPD.INHR (1.855.773.4647).

Capitol Police now wear a new, custom patch

Indiana Capitol Police is making a change this spring to the patch worn on their uniforms to be more recognizable to state employees and visitors at the Indiana Government Center.

Currently, Capitol Police wear a dark blue version of the Indiana State Police patch. Starting soon, they’ll wear a patch (pictured at right) with the same dark blue color, but with gold stitching that reading “Indiana Capitol Police”. It also includes the 100 year anniversary dates stitched below the Indiana Government Center picture.

The patch was designed by Capitol Police Lieutenant Donnie Wheaton and selected by Superintendent Doug Carter from a number of several designs submitted.
Be safe when you dig this summer

Governor Pence has designated April as “Indiana Safe Digging Month” and issued a proclamation in honor of the national designation through the Common Ground Alliance, in conjunction with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission.

Spring in Indiana has many Hoosiers planning outdoor projects. Both homeowners and professional excavators should know that, in Indiana, it’s the law to call 811 two working days before any digging project. The call is free, and can be made at any time of day or night—seven days a week.

Once a call to 811 has been placed, utility locators will visit your property to identify buried utility lines with colored flags, indicating what type of facilities are nearby. Once you’re ready to begin your digging project, make sure to always safely dig around the utility marks, not on them. Some utility lines may be buried at a shallow depth, and an accidental hit to a line could result in inconvenient outages or injury. If your work is planned in a public right of way, contact the appropriate state or local agency to obtain a permit prior to starting your project.

Remember, each time you plan a project that requires you to dig, call 811 two full working days before you begin. It’s the law. With a little planning and a call to 811, it’s easy to incorporate safe digging into your springtime projects.

Indiana Bicentennial Commission celebrates Women’s History Month

February and March are dedicated to honoring African American and Women’s history. Not only was Madam CJ Walker the wealthiest African American woman of her time, she was a civic leader who stood beside Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois in their pursuit of social justice. Madam CJ Walker’s legacy continues to empower and inspire young people to become business owners and celebrate cultural diversity and heritage.

The Walker Theatre works to preserve the tradition of Indiana Avenue’s history of African American cultural arts and the legacy of Madam CJ Walker. Quoted as saying, “I got my start by giving myself a start,” Walker served as an inspiration to other women of her time. She was frequently asked to speak on issues such as business and politics. The government recruited Walker to encourage African Americans to support the efforts of World War I. Simultaneously Walker was an advocate of black soldiers who faced discrimination and was referred to as a “Negro subversive,” or agitator.

Walker spoke on many issues affecting African Americans, but focused her efforts on making lynching a federal crime. Walker used her millions to support organizations such as the NAACP, the National Association of Women, YMCA, YWCA and contributed to preserving Fredrick Douglass’ Washington D.C. home. Walker didn’t have it easy on her way to becoming the nation’s first self-made female millionaire. She was born Sarah Breedlove to former slaves in Louisiana in 1827 and orphaned by the age of seven. The young woman worked as a maid with her sister in Mississippi until she married her first husband, Moses McWilliams, at the age of 14. Three years later the couple had their daughter A’Leila, who would be the woman’s only daughter.

In 1905, Breedlove moved to Denver and found a business to manufacture and market her own hair treatment formula, Wonderful Hair Grower. Breedlove assumed a new professional name, the name she is most widely known as, Madam CJ Walker. In 1912, Walker also began to sell her beauty products door-to-door with her trained Madam CJ Walker Hair Culturist agents. Walker was not satisfied making money for herself and worked to provide employment for hundreds of African American women.

Walker relocated to Indianapolis, Indiana as her business expanded. At the time Indianapolis was the largest inland shipping hub in the nation. In 1927, the headquarters and manufacturing plant of Madame CJ Walker Hair Care and Beauty Products was built in Indianapolis. This building is now known as the Walker Theatre and still has most of its original architecture.

The Walker Theatre is a four-story brick building that sits on the corner of Indiana Ave. and Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd. in Indianapolis. It is now a historic venue for diverse performances. The Madame Walker Theatre Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to upholding Walker’s mission of social justice, entrepreneurship and empowering youth.
Indiana high school and college students have a choice: Use their smartphones behind the wheel and make a tragic mistake, or engage their social media followers to “Drive Now. TXT L8R.” and earn a $5,000 scholarship.

Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann, the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, Indiana Department of Labor, Indiana Department of Transportation and Indiana State Police are again partnering to award $5,000 scholarships to students who compose the most creative and viral social media posts on Twitter, Instagram and Vine.

Contest Rules
Students may register their public Twitter accounts through April 10 and read contest rules at www.txtl8rin.gov. Entries must be posted during April, which is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and use the hashtag #TXTL8RIN. Keeping one’s hands on the wheel and eyes on the road is not just a safe driving practice – it’s the law. Social media posts that are composed while driving are disqualified.

High school and college entries will be awarded separately, and up to three students may work together on the same social media account. The state will deposit $5,000 into the CollegeChoice 529 savings plans for the winners of five categories:

1. Twitter – most tweets/retweets/favorites
2. Vine – most likes
3. Vine – most creative
4. Instagram – most likes
5. Instagram – most creative

Indiana Veteran’s home wins award

The Great Lakes Caring Hospice Essential Piece Award was presented to the Social Work Department of the Indiana Veteran’s Home on March 26, 2015. The Indiana Veterans’ Home was the only 2015 skilled nursing facility recipient in the Lafayette area. The award is based on the facility’s awareness of the residents’ needs for services, supporting those services, and excellence in communication.
As part of your State of Indiana health benefits you now have access to Castlight! With Castlight you can:

- Compare nearby doctors, facilities, and medical services based on the price you’ll pay and the quality of care you can expect to receive.
- Learn what your health plan covers so you can get better care for you and your family.
- Review step-by-step explanations of past medical spending so you know how much you paid and why.

Access Castlight:
- Visit www.Mycastlight.com/soi
- Call 888-920-1264 to speak with a Castlight Guide

Download the mobile app:
- Scan the QR code
- Visit mycastlight.com/mobile