



Inside CommonHealth

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Know someone who wants to quit smoking, dipping, or chewing tobacco? Is having a baby? Is stressed over family and job demands?

Here are resources that can help:

Healthy Lifestyles

Quit Tobacco
Diet/Nutrition

Healthy Beginnings
Pregnancy

866-938-0349

Employee Assistance:
www.dhrm.virginia.gov
Employee Programs
Anthem: 800-346-5484
855-223-9277

Aetna: 888-238-6232
Kaiser: 866-517-7042

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EMPLOYEES RISE TO THE CHALLENGES

PROGRAM NOTES



Relearn to Relax

When's the last time you felt really relaxed, like you could totally unwind? Life moves fast these days, and those moments of quiet relaxation seem too few and far between for many of us.

Good news! There is a way to slow down and get some real mental and physical health benefits - it's called meditation. Meditation is the simple, scientifically proven brain exercise that helps you be more tuned in to your day and relax by rewiring your brain to deal differently with stress. And, practicing meditation and enjoying its benefits, like feeling happier and less overwhelmed, doesn't require the perfect conditions or a huge time commitment.



The **Relearn to Relax: CommonHealth's Guide to Meditation and Mindfulness for Busy Beginners** program:

- * Guides you through a 5 minute meditation exercise to practice daily
- * Discusses the physical and mental benefits of meditation and mindfulness
- * Explores ways to find moments of calm in your busy day
- * Shows you how to use technology to your advantage with some really useful apps
- * Explains techniques to help you power down for a good night's sleep

Participants will receive an incentive and a mindfulness guide for starting a meditation practice.

Join CommonHealth and **Relearn to Relax** starting January 2019. We will present this campaign to your employees in a fun and knowledgeable way in just a few minutes or a full-length presentation. Here are a few ideas: add a CommonHealth program to a staff meeting, schedule a lunch and learn, include a program or display during a conference or other staff events. Don't forget about our informative displays and learning stations for benefits fairs, health fairs, truck rodeos, safety days, wellness days, employee appreciation events, picnics etc. Contact your **Regional CommonHealth Coordinator** or contact us at wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov to schedule **Relearn to Relax: CommonHealth's Guide to Meditation and Mindfulness for the Busy Beginner** at your location. This program is available through June 2019.

Welcome, Vilma Alejandro, Our New Director of the Office of Employee Programs

Vilma Alejandro has joined the DHRM team as the new Director of the Office of Employee Programs. Ms. Alejandro has an extensive background and experience in organizational development, non-profit management, diversity and inclusion, assessment design, talent management, training, strategic and workforce development. Her experience includes Federal, State, and Non-Profit where she served in various roles to include, but not limited to, Human Resources Director, Deputy Director of Human Resources, Director of Administration, Senior Manager of Workforce Development and Talent Management, Personnel Psychologist, Recruitment and Examination Manager. She has extensively traveled throughout Europe and expressed a profound appreciation for the importance of learning, teamwork and diversity. Ms. Alejandro is an advocate for youth, the arts and cultural diversity.



You Can Help—Your Ideas Count! Let us know what you (and your staff) would like to learn more about, and we may be able to use the suggestions for future Wellnotes or campaigns. If you have an area of expertise, we'd love to hear from you. If your agency would like to partner with CommonHealth, let's collaborate. Please contact us at wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov.

Inside CommonHealth

CommonHealth Helped Employees Rise to the Challenges in 2018

In 2018, CommonHealth brought back the CHALLENGE in a big way to help Commonwealth employees have fun and support in healthy living. The challenges focused on the most of the pillars that CommonHealth believes is the foundation of a healthy lifestyle: sleep, nutrition, and movement. Sleep Better kicked off our year of challenges with Sleep Better, and CommonHealth followed it with Eat Well. We Walked the Wild Shore with Move More and will end the year with Maintain, Don't Gain. Each of the completed challenges brought positive changes for participants. VDH, VDOT, and DOC were the highest participating agencies in each of the challenges.

CommonHealth initiated a challenge with Commonwealth employees to focus on one of five beneficial sleep practices in an effort to improve the quality of rest participants experienced. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times helps you function well throughout the day. 1,288 state employees registered and 870 completed the 21-day **Sleep Better** Challenge successfully. Prior to the challenge, 509 employees ranked their sleep quality at a 5 or below; after the challenge, only 55 people ranked their sleep a 5 or below with 792 people showing a 6 or above and the majority of respondents reporting a sleep quality of an 8 or 9.



The **Eat Well** Challenge ran from July 10-31, 2018. We loved teaming up with VDACS during the On the Square Farmers Market on the last two Fridays in June to help increase awareness of the challenge. Roughly 1,750 employees signed up for the three week challenge. Participants could choose one of four health behaviors to work on daily: eat 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables, replace two drinks with water, get adequate dietary fiber, or pack a healthful meal/snack for work. Close to 1,200 employees completed the final survey and received a collectible Ginny B. Well pin. Feedback was positive; many employees found themselves working on more than one behavior. Some employees lost weight, many stated they felt better and had more energy throughout the day.

The **Move More** Challenge has employees "walking the wild shore" as they toured the Governor's homeland. Nearly 2,800 registered for the challenge, and almost 1,700 completed it. Most movement counted through a 1mile=2,000 steps=15 minutes conversion, so anyone could participate regardless of preferred form and tools. State employees moved more and felt better as the post-challenge survey demonstrated improvements in everything from sleep to stress to nutrition to energy, and even outlook!



The **Maintain, Don't Gain** Challenge is underway. The hectic pace and celebrations of the holiday season make it tough to avoid unnecessary weight gain. This 6-week program encourages employees to maintain their weight by following tips on nutrition and fitness. Weigh ins are completed at home at the beginning and end of the challenge and will not be submitted.

Program Notes

The **Best Foot Forward** campaign officially wrapped up on December 31, 2018. **Best Foot Forward** included tips and strategies to maintain and improve foot health. Contact your Regional Coordinator, if you have not scheduled yet. In 2019, we look forward to seeing you for the **Re-Learn to Relax** campaign, which includes suggestions to help you reduce stress. Thanks for helping to make Maintain, Don't Gain holiday challenge a success!

Sincerely,
The CommonHealth Team



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