

Dakota Wellness Program

OCTOBER 2025

Inside this issue...

**Declutter, Downsize and
Move Forward**

Monthly Book Club

**Aside From Water, What Are Other
Ways I Can Add Fluid To My Diet?**

What's your "Why"?

Exercise is Medicine

National Healthy Lung Month

Monthly Recipe:

Lemon Blueberry Baked Oatmeal

Join Sanford Health Plan
Wellness team members for
our monthly 15-minute
wellness webinar.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!](#)



NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

SANFORD
HEALTH PLAN

Declutter, Downsize and Move Forward

Decluttering and downsizing aren't just about organizing your space – they're powerful acts of self-care. Letting go of what no longer serves you can reduce stress, improve focus and create a sense of emotional freedom.

Clutter often reflects what we're holding onto mentally: past roles, memories, or obligations. But you are not your stuff. You are the person who lived those moments – and you get to decide what to carry forward.

Start small. One drawer, one shelf, one step at a time. With each item you release, you create space for peace, clarity and intention. Downsizing allows you to align your environment with who you are today – not who you were.

This isn't about loss – it's about choosing wellness, simplicity and joy. By honoring the past and making room for the present, you open the door to what's next. You deserve a space – and a life – that feels light and free.



Book Club

***Keep the Memories, Lose the Stuff* by Matt Paxton**

Keep the Memories, Lose the Stuff by Matt Paxton is a practical and heartfelt guide to decluttering while preserving what truly matters. Drawing from his experience helping people downsize on TV and in real life, Paxton emphasizes that letting go of physical items doesn't mean losing the memories tied to them. Instead of focusing on stuff, he encourages readers to identify what holds personal meaning and let go of the rest. The book offers emotional support, real-life stories and actionable steps to make the process manageable and even healing. Paxton's message is clear: your memories live within you and your stories – not your stuff. By releasing the excess, you make space for more intentional living and connection.

Discussion questions

- **What item was the hardest for you to let go of, and what memory or meaning was attached to it? How did reading this book shift your perspective on that attachment?**
- **Paxton emphasizes that “your stories matter more than your stuff.” In what ways can we preserve and share meaningful stories without relying on physical items?**
- **Paxton introduces the idea of downsizing as a gift to your loved ones. How does this concept change the way you view decluttering or organizing your belongings?**

Ask the Expert: Aside from water, what are other ways I can add fluid to my diet?

Aside from water, you can increase your fluid intake through various tasty and nutritious options. Herbal teas and infused waters add flavor without extra calories or caffeine. Fresh fruits like watermelon, oranges, and cucumbers have high water content and help hydrate. Soups and broths also contribute significantly to your daily fluids, especially in cooler months. Milk and plant-based alternatives provide hydration plus nutrients. Even smoothies and juices count, but choose those without added sugars. Remember, staying hydrated supports digestion, energy and overall health – so mix up your fluids to keep it enjoyable and consistent.



What's your “Why”?

What's your “WHY?” for wellness? It's the deeper reason that drives you to care for your body, mind and spirit. Maybe it's staying energized to keep up with your kids, aging with strength and grace, or showing up fully in your relationships and work. Your “why” gives meaning to the small choices – like choosing movement, mindful meals or rest. When motivation fades, your “why” is the anchor that brings you back to your goals. Take a moment to reflect: What truly matters to you? Let that purpose guide your wellness journey and remind you that you are worth the effort.



Exercise is Medicine (EIM)

Exercise is Medicine (EIM) is a 12-week program that empowers you to make exercise a habit and gives you the tools you need to decrease your health risks. It's ONLY offered virtually at this time. To qualify, you must be 18 years old or older.

EIM Price Guide

Virtual EIM program over Webex, which includes a fitness box: \$99
Non-Sanford Health Plan member virtual EIM program: \$199

A one-time fee unlocks:

- Group fitness classes
- Access to a personal trainer
- A fitness box will be mailed to your home, which includes:
 - EIM workbook
 - Mini loop resistance band
 - Recipe book
 - Handled resistance band
 - Pilates ball
 - Yoga mat

Virtual Class Options

Virtual EIM offers four weekly live virtual classes. Participants are encouraged to attend 3 live classes every week. New cohorts start in December.

- Afternoon Workout Session: Mon. and Wed. 6 to 7 p.m.
- Morning Workout Session: Tues. and Thurs. 5:30 to 6:30 a.m.
- Workbook Overview: Fri. 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Learn more and register at sanfordhealthplan.com/exercise-is-medicine.

Preventive Health

October is National Healthy Lung Month

Because our lungs keep us healthy, we don't have to think about them and can often take them for granted. Taking our lung health seriously is important.

Here are some ways to support your lung health:

- Quit or avoid smoking. Smoking narrows air passages making it more difficult to breathe. Chronic lung inflammation can lead to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. In addition, it can cause lung cancer.
- Exercise daily. During physical activity, the lungs and heart work together to supply additional oxygen demands to your muscles. When physical activity occurs regularly, the lungs and other muscles of the body become strengthened.
- Avoid outdoor air pollution. Outdoor air quality changes daily making it difficult to breathe on poor air quality days. Check out airnow.gov to see what the air quality is for the day. Avoid exercising on poor air quality days.
- Get regular check-ups. Even when we are not feeling ill, it is important to regularly see a trusted physician.

Lemon Blueberry Baked Oatmeal

Ingredients:

2 ¼ cups old-fashioned rolled oats	1 ½ cup almond milk
1 tsp cinnamon	3 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp chia seeds	1 tbsp lemon zest
½ cup shredded coconut (unsweetened) – or finely chopped almonds	3 tbsp dairy-free yogurt or almond butter
1 tsp baking powder	1 flaxseed egg (recommended but not required to be a flax egg)
½ tsp salt	2 tsp vanilla extract
½ cup maple syrup	1 cup blueberries – fresh or frozen

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Oil an 8-inch x 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray. Set it aside. In a small mixing bowl, prepare the flax egg – stir 1 tbsp. of flax meal and 3 tbsp. of lukewarm water. Set aside for 5-10 minutes until an egg-like texture forms. In a large bowl, combine the old-fashioned oats, baking powder, salt, chia seeds, coconut and cinnamon. Stir in the wet ingredients: flax egg made before, almond milk, plant-based yogurt, lemon zest, lemon juice, vanilla extract and maple syrup. Fold in fresh or frozen blueberries and stir to combine. Pour the lemon blueberry oat mixture into the prepared baking dish. If you like, sprinkle extra blueberries on top of the oatmeal. Bake on the center rack for 40-45 minutes at 350°F (180°C) or until the center is set, not soggy or soft. You know it's ready when the top is golden brown, and the sides are set and dry. Cool in the baking dish at room temperature until lukewarm before serving. To store in the fridge, cool down completely, cover the baking dish with a piece of foil for up to 4 days. Freeze in individual portions for up to 1 month in freezer bags.

Nutrition Facts: Calories per serving: 249 | Sugar: 14.7g
Sodium: 339mg | Fat: 7.5g | Saturated Fat: 3.4g | Trans Fat: 0g
Polyunsaturated Fat: 2g | Monounsaturated Fat: 1.2g
Carbohydrates: 41g | Fiber: 6.1g | Protein: 5.7g



Monthly Observances

Eye Injury Prevention

Health Literacy

Healthy Lung

National Breast Cancer Awareness

National Dental Hygiene

National Primary Care Week October 5-11

National Physician's Assistant Week October 6-12

QUICK LINKS

sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers

SET-UP A

mySanfordHealthPlan

ONLINE ACCOUNT

sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin

CONTACT US

NDPERSwellness@sanfordhealth.org
(800) 499-3416 (TTY: 711)



NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

SANFORD
HEALTH PLAN



Follow us on Facebook!