

Welcome to www.fundoffice.org!

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EMPLOYER TRUSTEES:

William T. Divane, Jr.
Thomas C. Halperin
Kenneth Bauwens
Michael R. Walsdorf
Kevin O'Shea

UNION TRUSTEES:

Timothy Foley
Michael J. Caddigan
Samuel Evans
James North
Lawrence Crawley

MANAGING EDITORS:

Sean Madix
Sherry Frankenbach

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Ed Holcomb
Thomas C. Halperin
Kevin O'Shea
Lawrence Crawley
I. Steven Diamond

FUND OFFICE:

 **Hours:** 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

 **Phone:** 1-312-782-5442

 **Fax:** 1-312-782-4431
SUB Fax: 1-312-782-7240

 **Website:** www.fundoffice.org

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In October 2006, EIT launched our new website: www.fundoffice.org. This project was a long time coming, and we hope you will be as excited about it as we are. The user-friendly website is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to both members and employers.

Information On Hand

As a member, you can check the status of your health and welfare eligibility, verify reported hours and update your personal information — all from the comfort of your home. You can also verify who is covered under your plan as a legal dependent. In addition, the website allows you to view the correspondence that was sent to you by the Fund Office. Keep in mind that any correspondence that was not system-generated is not available.

We've included the following information that you can access at any time:

- **The plan(s)** — Read a brief description of the benefit plans for which you are eligible.
- **Benefit books** — Access Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs) and Benefits Update notices for every EIT Health & Welfare and Pension Plan.
- **Frequently asked questions** — Find answers to your questions.
- **EIT Conduit** — Access archived editions of the *EIT Conduit* and its predecessor, the *EIT Communicator*.

Other Features

Read a brief history of EIT by clicking on "About Us" in the bottom right hand corner of the home page. Need to contact someone at the Fund Office but not sure where to start? Click on "Contact Us" in the bottom right hand corner of the home page.

Reach the websites of our providers: BlueCross BlueShield, Caremark, CIGNA, VSP (Vision Service Plan), Putnam and Global Med-Net, or link to industry sites such as Local 134, Electrical Contractors' Association, IBEW-NECA Technical Institute and the Chicagoland Electrical Industry Credit Union.

Logistics

The first time you log in to www.fundoffice.org, you'll need to register, which requires you to enter your Social Security number (SSN), last name, zip code and date of birth. After you log in for the first time, your SSN will not appear in its entirety for privacy purposes.



EIT's new website, www.fundoffice.org, is one more way that EIT can serve you better. 



TAKE ACTION TIP!

PREVENT HYPOTHERMIA

Many of us try to stay indoors in the winter, but for some it's part of our job. To avoid hypothermia, or your body's failure to maintain a normal body temperature, remember the advice that follows with the simple acronym **COLD**:

C is for **cover**. Wear a hat or other protective covering to prevent body heat from escaping from your head, face and neck. Cover your hands with mittens instead of gloves, because they keep your fingers in closer contact with one another.

O is for **overexertion**. Avoid activities that will cause you to sweat a lot. The combination of wet clothing and cold weather can give you chills.

L is for **layers**. Wear loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Outer clothing made of tightly-woven, water-repellent material is best for wind protection. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers hold more body heat than cotton.

D is for **dry**. Stay as dry as possible. In the winter, pay special attention to places where snow can enter, such as in loose mittens or snow boots.

During cold-weather months, keep emergency supplies in your vehicle in case you get stranded. Supplies may include several blankets, matches, candles and some food, such as granola bars or crackers.

Tips for Talking to Your Doctor When You're Dissatisfied with Care

It can be difficult to confront your doctor when you are dissatisfied with their fees, services or care they provide. However, most physicians want to satisfy their patients. They want you to let them know when you aren't happy with them or their office staff. You are entitled to respect, courtesy, compassion and high-quality care from all health care professionals.

Here are some tips for what to do if you aren't satisfied with a health care professional:

- **First, let them know as soon as possible about your dissatisfaction.** Remember, you're doing them a favor by letting them know about the problem. Also, this gives them a chance to correct it. Tell them clearly and specifically what it is that you are not satisfied with. Try not to lose your temper or feel intimidated. Think of your complaint as "constructive criticism."
- **Second, let them know what you consider to be an adequate remedy.** Would you like an apology? A reduced fee? Your money back? Ask for it. An apology is just normal human courtesy, not an admission of malpractice. Plus, it's your money — and your health.
- **Third, if you're dealing with an office staff person who is not able to adequately address your complaint, ask to speak to the office manager or patient representative.** Better yet, ask to speak with the physician. Often, your doctor will be your best ally in resolving the problem to your satisfaction.
- **Fourth, don't worry about repercussions.** Sometimes patients are afraid that if they complain to a doctor about the care they received, the doctor will retaliate in some way and provide bad care to them. However, most physicians appreciate constructive feedback. Physicians are professionals trained to provide the best possible care to all people, regardless of race, gender or interpersonal issues.
- **Finally, if your physician does not adequately respond to your concerns, get a new doctor!** Having a doctor who is attentive to your needs is an important part of taking care of yourself. 

A DAY AT THE FAIR

Thanks to you, and the staffs of both EIT and Local 134, the 4th annual Benefit Fair was a rousing success. Roughly 500 members and their spouses attended the 2006 Benefit Fair, and 317 doses of flu vaccine were administered. In addition, we introduced Health Risk Assessment screenings. Members and their spouses had their height, weight, blood pressure and BMI (body mass index) calculated, and had their non-fasting cholesterol and glucose levels measured. Trained medical personnel discussed the results with the "patient" and offered advice on how to improve problem areas or recommended a visit to the family doctor for treatment.

Twelve gift cards were raffled off during the Fair, and the lucky winners were:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Bob Crooks | ■ Gary Czemske |
| ■ Bob Fitzgerald | ■ Gerald Grendzinski |
| ■ Michael Hickey | ■ Chuck Ingolia |
| ■ Wendy Masino | ■ Dan Meyer |
| ■ James Mistro | ■ Michael Procopio |
| ■ Oscar Quiroz | ■ Gerry White |

Congratulations!

What would you like to see at next year's Benefit Fair? We sponsor this event for you, so if you have any suggestions, we would love to hear them. You can send an e-mail with your suggestions to askeit@fundoffice.org, or drop us a note at:

EIT Benefit Funds
221 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60601

Manage Your Lower Back Pain

Lower back pain is a chronic condition that affects millions of Americans each year. For some, the pain is just a subtle tightness that occurs when standing up after sitting at a desk all day or when getting out of the car after a long drive. For others, it may feel like a shooting pain that travels all the way down to the knees or ankles and may bring about numbness. Regardless of how the pain feels or how long it lasts, lower back pain can affect your mood, energy level and attitude. Consider the following tips as you manage your lower back pain or help someone in your family manage theirs.

Practice Prevention

Just because many Americans suffer from lower back pain doesn't mean you have to join them. Prevent lower back pain by following these easy guidelines:

- Don't lift by bending over. Lift an object by bending your hips and knees and then squatting to pick up the object. Keep your back straight, and hold the object close to your body. Avoid twisting your body while lifting.
- Push rather than pull when you must move heavy objects.
- If you must sit at your desk or at the wheel of a car or truck for long hours, break up the time with stops to stretch.
- Wear flat shoes or shoes with low heels (one inch or lower).
- Exercise regularly. An inactive lifestyle contributes to lower back pain.

Find Relief

If you suffer from lower back pain, either major or minor, these tips may provide immediate relief and should be worked in to your daily routine.

- To take the pressure and weight off your back, lie on your back on the floor with:
 - Pillows under your knees, or
 - Your hips and knees bent and your feet on a chair.
- Heating pads can help relax painful muscle spasms. Use heat for 20 to 30 minutes at a time. Ice packs and massages may also give relief.
- Nonprescription medicines that reduce pain or swelling include aspirin, acetaminophen, naproxen and ibuprofen.

See a Doctor

Lower back pain is hard to judge, because at times it may not be noticeable, and at other times, it may be piercing. Call your doctor if:

- Pain goes down your leg below your knee.
- Your leg, foot, groin or rectal area feels numb.
- You have a fever, nausea or vomiting, stomachache, weakness, or sweating.
- You lose control over going to the bathroom.
- Your pain was caused by an injury.
- Your pain is so intense that you have trouble moving around.
- Your pain doesn't seem to be getting better after two to three weeks.

Source: www.familydoctor.org

KNOW YOUR SYMPTOMS

Have health symptoms, but aren't sure what they mean? Turn to the *EIT Conduit* for a breakdown of common conditions and how your symptoms may be related.

Frostbite occurs when tissues freeze. This condition happens when you are exposed to temperatures below the freezing point of skin.

SYMPTOMS

Frostbite symptoms are divided into two main categories: superficial and deep.

- In *superficial* frostbite, you may experience burning, numbness, tingling, itching or cold sensations in the affected areas. The regions appear white and frozen, but if you press on them, they retain some resistance.
- In *deep* frostbite, there is an initial decrease in sensation, but sensation is eventually lost completely. Swelling and blood-filled blisters are noted over white or yellowish skin that looks waxy and turns purplish blue as it rewarms. The area is hard, has no resistance when pressed on, and may even appear blackened and dead.

You will experience significant pain as the areas are rewarmed and blood flow is reestablished. A dull continuous ache transforms into a throbbing sensation in two to three days. This may last weeks to months until final tissue separation is complete.

Second Semester Certifications Due

Don't forget that your student dependent(s), age 19 to 22, is covered for insurance for only 120 days from the date that EIT has verification that he or she was last enrolled as a full-time student. Most second semesters are underway, and your child must make arrangements with his or her school's registrar to have a second semester student certification sent to EIT to maintain coverage. Student certifications can be faxed to **1-312-782-4431** to the attention of the Eligibility Department. After you've sent your fax, please call the Fund Office at **1-312-782-5442** to verify that the fax was received and is legible. To help us identify a student, make sure that the name of the member is included. You can log on to our website at **www.fundoffice.org** to view your child's most recent "student thru" date. Remember, your child will be covered for only 120 days from the date in our files or until his or her 23rd birthday, whichever comes first. 

Take Charge!

Interested in finding ways to *Take Charge* of your health, but not sure how to get started? EIT is proud to present a new, free, voluntary program coming this spring. Our program will:

- Provide you and your family with health information, tools and resources, and
- Give you access to a personal coach to help you quit using tobacco.

Stay tuned for more information coming this spring! 



This newsletter contains information on various benefits, but it does not give you all of the details. The official plan documents have all of the details. If there are any differences between this newsletter and the plan documents, the plan documents will govern. If you have any questions about your benefits, please contact the Fund Office at **1-312-782-5442**.

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221 North LaSalle Street
Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60601-1214

