

## **FELLOW AND FUTURE MEMBERS**

**APRIL 1, 2011**

43% of all American workers reported that achieving better overall health was the reason they participate or would participate in a wellness benefit program. 33% wanted to reduce health care costs and 31% wanted to live longer and healthier lives. 53% of workers used weight management programs offered by employers.

The dramatic increase in workers taking advantage of these wellness benefits is indicative of American's greater sense of personal responsibility towards their own health, according to Lee Dukes, president of Principal Wellness Company. More emphasis on controlling dramatic increases in illnesses like diabetes and heart disease is causing more Americans to take action. Workplace wellness gives employees a convenient and easy way to get started.

I call on all active fire fighters and police officer to take advantage of wellness programs or exercise facilities offered by the city. It will take about three to six months of faithful workouts for the program to become a necessary habit in your daily life. Once you become accustomed to the daily workouts, you will notice that they become a part of your daily ritual. You will come to find out that missing a workout will make you feel guilty and uncomfortable the rest of the day. So come on Actives, let's get started.

To all the retirees who are members of the Fire and Police Health Fund, we also have our obligations to ourselves and our loved ones. Get your yearly physical exam. It's paid up to \$300.00. If you're due for a colonoscopy exam, let's get it done. One colonoscopy exam every ten years is paid in full. You can have more colonoscopy exams if they are deemed medically necessary; however, they will be subject to deductible and out of pocket costs. Cancer of the colon is a terrible ailment. It can be readily detected by a colonoscopy. The growth of polyps in the colon that usually become cancerous can be easily excised during the routine exam.

Again I must remind all our members to make sure that the physicians providing these exams are in-network. Check with the Health Fund office and ask one of the benefits specialists.

I read an interesting article in the Daily Health News the other day. The headline was, "The Longer You Sit, the Shorter your Life Span." The more Americans engage in one of their favorite pastimes—sitting around—the shorter their average life span. This effect remained even after researchers factored out obesity or the level of daily physical activity.

Further emphasizing the need to stay physically active was a study done measuring basic capabilities such as grip strength, walking speed, rising from a chair, or balancing on one leg, which measured a person's capacity to perform everyday tasks. The subjects who had poorer results on physical function tests had a consistently higher risk of death.

Three conclusions resulting from the study are:

1. The death rate for subjects with the weakest grip strength was 1.67 times higher than for those with a stronger grip.

2. The death rate for the slowest walkers was 2.87 times higher than for the fastest walkers.

3. The death rate was nearly twice as high for people who were slowest to rise from a chair than for those who were the quickest at this task.

While the researcher's study included older people, they also found the association between grip strength and death risk was also found in younger adults.

Moral of the study: "get up quick and hold on tight"