



## Appreciation for Donna Townes and the New PEEHIP Leadership

**W**ith 33 years of service for the state of Alabama, Donna Townes, CPA, CGBA, Director of PEEHIP, will retire December 1. After an accomplished career at the Alabama Department of Revenue, Donna joined PEEHIP in 2008 as Assistant Director, and soon rose to the position of Director. During her time at PEEHIP and in collaboration with the PEEHIP Board of Control, Donna led the implementation of several critical programs that improved the quality of PEEHIP benefits while further strengthening the fiduciary position of the plan to ensure its success for PEEHIP members for many years to come. Furthermore, Donna led the hospital medical, Medicare Advantage, optional, flex, and prescription drug benefits so that PEEHIP members can enjoy the highest quality benefits at the least possible cost.

PEEHIP has consistently been a national leader in drug price trends, despite increasingly higher price inflation in the industry. Donna also brought revolutionary improvements for how members interact with PEEHIP, such as the design and functionality of PEEHIP's Member Online Services (MOS) system. Among other features, this system allows PEEHIP members the ability to have real-time enrollment requests and confirmation of their coverages. For these achievements, Donna has earned national recognition and has spoken to audiences and other state plans all over the country. Donna has even led discussions at the federal policy level by addressing staff from the United States House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, as well as members of Alabama's delegation. PEEHIP has greatly benefited from

Donna's leadership during her time directing the plan, and PEEHIP members will continue to enjoy the benefits of her service for many years to come.

Dave Wales, formerly the Assistant Director, will assume the role of Director. An accountant by background, Dave has worked for PEEHIP for over 10 years, with the last 6 years working very closely with Donna and the PEEHIP/RSA leadership in his previous roles as Wellness Coordinator and Assistant Director. During this time, Dave has gained invaluable experience by working at an executive level to strategically help lead the implementation and management of all PEEHIP programs and vendor relationships. This includes the hospital medical, prescription drug, wellness, optional, flex, and Medicare Advantage benefits. Through this experience, Dave has developed a unique expertise to successfully lead PEEHIP in the future and ensure its continued success as a national leader in health plans. In addition to plan management over the years, Dave has also routinely traveled state-wide, speaking at PEEHIP member events and educating members about plan benefits and policies. Dave has lived in Montgomery, Alabama, nearly his entire life. He earned a Bachelor of Science in accounting and a Master of Business Administration degree from Auburn University Montgomery. Dave is also a Certified Government Benefits Administrator. Dave is well equipped to take over the role of Director due to his impressive skillset and experience alongside Donna in PEEHIP benefit and program management.

Stepping into Dave's prior role of Assistant Director is Erica Thomas. Erica has worked with PEEHIP for nearly 9 years and most recently served as PEEHIP's Medicare Retiree Benefits Manager. During her time with PEEHIP, Erica has risen from an entry-level employee to a position of great responsibility due to her exceptional qualifications, professionalism, and wisdom in regards to plan management. Erica has a Bachelor of Science in business administration and Master of Science in political science from



**Donna Townes**



**Dave Wales**



**Erica Thomas**

Auburn University Montgomery. Erica is also a Certified Public Manager. She is a veteran of the United States Army and served 8 years as a Transportation Management Coordinator. Erica is originally from Florida, and has lived in Montgomery, Alabama, for the past 12 years. Many members may recognize Erica due to her extensive experience in being amongst the membership providing countless presentations for meetings all over the state.

The PEEHIP staff wishes Donna a very happy retirement with her husband and family, and is thankful to have Dave and Erica to work in coordination with the PEEHIP Board in leading the plan to continued prosperity going forward. ●

# CLASS IS IN SESSION

## With Chews Wisely Alabama<sup>SM</sup>

While this year may be different from past years, the new school year is here...and Chews Wisely Alabama<sup>SM</sup> has some exciting things in store. PEEHIP has teamed up with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama for its Chews Wisely Alabama<sup>SM</sup> program – a health initiative aimed at helping Alabamians feel their best while still enjoying the foods they love.

Chews Wisely Alabama<sup>SM</sup> believes small changes can make a big impact. We are not asking you to clean out your pantry and run a marathon every day; we are just providing you with healthier meal options and the occasional ingredient swap to freshen up your favorite dishes. Enjoying what you eat and how you live is vital to being healthier.

### COOKIN' WITH KELSEY!

We're beyond excited to announce our new partnership with Alabama's own chef **Kelsey Barnard Clark**! Hailing from Dothan, Alabama, Kelsey was the winner of TV cooking competition **Top Chef** and has her own restaurant, KBC, in Dothan.



In the coming months, she'll be sharing tips on healthy eating, recipes for her signature dishes, plus healthy versions of Alabama classics.

**Don't forget to follow Chews Wisely Alabama<sup>SM</sup> on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter to see everything Kelsey has to share with us.**

#### SEPTEMBER'S MENU

##### A Healthy Lunch Equals Healthy Learning

It is officially back-to-school time! Not everything is going to look familiar this year, but it is still time to start the school year off on a healthy foot. A healthy lunch helps students focus and perform better in the classroom. Spruce up their lunch by choosing whole-grain breads, low-fat meats like tuna or turkey breast, and fruit for a snack.

##### Set Your Syllabus

If mornings are hectic, which they always are, try making healthy lunches the night before. You can use mason jars or other containers to store a salad in the refrigerator and can even make several days' worth of lunches at once so you will have them in the fridge, ready to go.

##### Show Us Your Menu!

At Chews Wisely Alabama<sup>SM</sup>, we celebrate the foods Alabamians love, so we want to hear about the foods Alabamians love...to cook. Head online to [ChewsWiselyAlabama.com/submissions](https://ChewsWiselyAlabama.com/submissions) and share your favorite healthy recipes with us. Let's eat healthy together!

For a little inspiration, take a look (and try out) our delicious Sautéed Green Beans with Garlic. ●

#### RECIPE OF THE MONTH



#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 lbs trimmed fresh green beans
- 1 1/2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced (or 1 tsp dried minced garlic)
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Blanch green beans in a large pot of boiling water with salt (approximately 1 1/2 minutes), then quickly remove and put into ice bath.\*
2. Cool, drain, and set aside.
3. Heat olive oil and garlic in a large skillet over medium heat and cook for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned.
4. Add green beans, salt, pepper, and toss.
5. Finish with soy sauce right before removing from heat.

\*Note: The ice bath stops the cooking process and maintains the beans' bright color.

## Flexible Spending Accounts Save You Money

Enrolling or re-enrolling in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a great way to budget and pay for eligible medical and daycare expenses while helping you save money. An FSA is a tax-advantage plan that allows members to put aside pre-tax dollars for anticipated expenses. PEEHIP offers two FSAs: A Health FSA to pay for out-of-pocket

medical expenses and a Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCRA) to pay for daycare expenses. If you are actively employed and PEEHIP eligible, you can elect to have a portion of your compensation set aside, pre-tax, to pay for qualified expenses for you and your dependents. On average, members save \$15 to \$35 for every \$100 they set aside.

##### Getting started is easy.

Simply estimate how much you will spend between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021, on medical expenses, such as deductibles, doctor visits, prescription drugs, dental care and orthodontia, vision exams, glasses, contacts lenses, medical supplies, and equip-

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ment. Then enroll in a Health FSA for your estimated amount (up to \$2,750). The annual amount you elect will be divided into 12 separate monthly pre-tax contributions that reduce your taxable income. In addition to tax savings, another benefit to participating in the Health FSA is the entire annual amount you elect will be made available on a Flex Visa Debit Card for you to start using on the first day of the plan year, October 1, 2020. Swipe the card and retain your receipts for your records.

### New ways to spend your Health FSA dollars.

The IRS recently expanded the list of qualified expenses to now include over-the-counter (OTC) drugs/medicines without a prescription (such as cold and allergy medicine) and men-

strual care products.

Members with dependent children or who are caring for their elderly dependents can enroll in a DCRA to cover daycare, preschool, before and after-school care, summer day camp, elderly daycare, or other dependent care expenses up to an annual amount of \$5,000.

For more information concerning eligible Health FSA and DCRA expenses or for help in estimating your expenses, go to [www.healthequity.com/peehip](http://www.healthequity.com/peehip).

### Open Enrollment for Flex ends September 30.

The 2021 FSA plan year runs from October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021. Enrollment in an FSA does not automatically renew each year. You must re-enroll and remain an active employee

to continue participation. Enroll online at <https://mso.rsa-al.gov> or complete a Flexible Spending Account Enrollment Application.

### Reminder for members currently enrolled in the 2020 FSA plan.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting unanticipated changes and delays in medical care and dependent care services, PEEHIP has extended the deadline to incur qualified expenses to December 31, 2020, for your 2020 Health FSA and DCRA that was originally set to expire September 30, 2020. This extension will not cancel or delay the flex Open Enrollment period taking place now or the start of the 2021 FSA plan year. ●

## Medicare-Eligible PEEHIP Members

The information below pertains to Medicare-eligible PEEHIP retirees or Medicare-eligible dependents of PEEHIP retirees. For more information, visit [www.rsa-al.gov/peehip/retirees/](http://www.rsa-al.gov/peehip/retirees/).



**T**he digestive system breaks down food into nutrients. These nutrients help keep us healthy and provide the energy we need to live. The digestive system also gets rid of food parts that can not be broken down.

Many people suffer from stomach troubles from time-to-time. When your digestion acts up, it may signal something else is wrong. That is why it is important to get screenings that can help find problems early, while they are easier to treat.<sup>1</sup>

### Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms<sup>2</sup>:

- ◆ Blood or pus when you have a bowel movement
- ◆ Unrelieved heartburn
- ◆ Black, tarry stool
- ◆ Unintended weight loss
- ◆ Stomach or rectal pain
- ◆ Ongoing vomiting or diarrhea

**Remember:** When in doubt, get checked out.

### Ask your healthcare provider about screenings<sup>3</sup>

If you have symptoms of digestive diseases, it is important to get the right screenings and treatment. Your provider can help you determine which test is right for you. They may recommend:

- ◆ **Endoscopy:** Looks at internal organs using a flexible viewing tube (endoscope). Doctors look for signs of irritation, ulcers, inflammation, or abnormal growths.
- ◆ **Colonoscopy:** Looks at the large intestine (colon) lining using a colonoscope. Ask your doctor how frequently you should have a colon cancer screening.
  - Through your PEEHIP Humana Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) Plan you can earn a reward from Go365<sup>®</sup> by Humana by completing a preventative colorectal screening. More details are included on page four.
- ◆ **Sigmoidoscopy:** Looks at the rectum and last part of the colon.
- ◆ **Stool analysis:** Looks at solid waste to find digestive problems, including an infection and even cancer.<sup>2</sup>

### Take control of your digestive health

If you have symptoms of digestive diseases, it is important to get the right screenings and treatment. Your provider can help you determine which test is right for you. They may recommend:

1. Keeping a daily journal of symptoms as this may help show if your symptoms are linked to stress, emotions, diet, or other factors. This will help you and your doctor decide how to treat your problem.
2. Ask your healthcare provider about screenings and tests you need. You could help make your life better by taking care of health issues before they become problems.
3. Write down your immunizations, screenings, and results to stay on track to better health.
4. Ask your healthcare provider specific questions about digestive health, such as:
  - ◆ Am I at risk?
  - ◆ How will my digestive problems affect me?
  - ◆ What screenings do I need?
  - ◆ What can I do to manage or prevent my digestive problems?
  - ◆ What are my treatment options?

This is for informational purposes only and does not replace treatment or advice from a healthcare professional. If you have questions, please talk with your doctor. Talk to your doctor before beginning any exercise program or making any changes to your diet.

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## Digestive diseases you should know about<sup>4</sup>

### Get Rewarded!

As mentioned on page three, through your PEEHIP Humana Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) Plan, you can earn a reward from Go365<sup>®</sup> by Humana by completing a preventative colorectal screening. This reward is valued at \$30, with a limit of 1 per year. Use your reward to redeem gift cards from a variety of popular brands including Amazon, Shell, Walmart, and Kohl's.

For more information or to get started with the Go365<sup>®</sup> by Humana Program, visit [MyHumana.com](http://MyHumana.com) and click on Go365<sup>®</sup> from your dashboard. (Your username and password will be the same as you use to sign in to [MyHumana.com](http://MyHumana.com).) If you prefer to participate by mail, you can request paper materials by calling your dedicated PEEHIP Humana Group Medicare Customer Care Team at 800.747.0008 (TTY:711). ●

Digestive disease	Symptoms
<b>Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequent heartburn</li> </ul>
<b>Inflammatory bowel syndrome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stomach pain or cramping</li> <li>▪ Diarrhea and/or constipation</li> <li>▪ Gas and bloating</li> <li>▪ A constant feeling of needing to have a bowel movement</li> <li>▪ Mucus in the stool</li> </ul>
<b>Inflammatory bowel disease (including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's Disease)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diarrhea (possibly with blood or pus)</li> <li>▪ Stomach discomfort</li> <li>▪ Urgent need to have a bowel movement</li> <li>▪ Weight loss</li> <li>▪ Nausea or loss of appetite</li> <li>▪ Fever and fatigue</li> </ul>
<b>Diverticulitis or diverticulosis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Abdominal cramping</li> <li>▪ Constipation or diarrhea</li> <li>▪ Bloating</li> </ul>
<b>Celiac disease</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diarrhea and/or constipation</li> <li>▪ Excessive gas</li> <li>▪ Abdominal pain and/or bloating</li> <li>▪ Nausea or vomiting</li> </ul>

### References

- 1 National Library of Medicine - MedlinePlus [medlineplus.gov/healthscreening.html](http://medlineplus.gov/healthscreening.html)
- 2 National Library of Medicine - MedlinePlus [medlineplus.gov/stomachdisorders.html](http://medlineplus.gov/stomachdisorders.html)
- 3 National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases - [niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests](http://niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests)
- 4 National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases - [niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases](http://niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases)

## Go365<sup>®</sup> by Humana Earn Rewards While Staying Safe at Home

With certain events occurring throughout the country, some individuals may be finding it more difficult to find social and community activities to complete within their area.

Your PEEHIP Humana Medicare Advantage PPO Plan provides alternative activities to assist in continuing to earning rewards with Go365<sup>®</sup> and encourage overall well-being. Check out ideas below.

**Social or Community Activities** - Will earn \$5 per event. You can complete up to 4 social events and earn up to \$20 in rewards each plan year.

- ◆ Communicate with friends and family (3 of the following within a week)
  - Phone call with friends and family
  - Video call with friends and family - FaceTime, Skype, Zoom etc.
  - Video chat with friends and family while playing a game (charades, etc.)
  - Write a letter to a few friends and/or family
  - Have your grandchildren interview you
  - Online tutoring or teach a class
- ◆ Join an online group or community and write 3 comments or posts within a week
  - Create a Facebook friends and/or family group
  - Join an online community

**Go365<sup>®</sup> Physical Fitness Activities:** Complete 8 daily workouts within one month and earn \$5 for that month. Earn up to a \$60 maximum per plan year.

- ◆ If you are unable to attend SilverSneakers<sup>®</sup>, you may complete items on the list below. Remember to complete them at least 8 times within the same month to be eligible for rewards.
  - Dance to your 5 favorite songs
  - Go for a walk (parks or outside in a less populated area)
  - Body weight exercises: (complete 3 sets of 15) examples include high knees, push-ups against the wall or counter, overhead hand press, and step-ups on the stairs are some examples
  - Stream an exercise video and follow the routine (SilverSneakers<sup>®</sup> has an app with videos available)
  - FaceTime or video chat with friends and family and follow a routine together
  - Depending on weather and location, you can do some yard work or gardening
  - Follow an exercise program on TV or video
  - Walk your dog

Continue to complete your daily workouts by reaching at least 500 steps per day and fill out the 2020 Medicare Fitness Workout Tracker on the Go365<sup>®</sup> website.

You may also connect your Garmin or Fitbit to Go365<sup>®</sup> to track your daily workouts.

Remember, earn at least \$10 in rewards for completing eligible healthy activities, and you can choose gift cards from a variety of popular brands including Amazon, Shell, Walmart, and Kohl's.

### How to get started

Choose whether you will be participating through the website or by mail, and then take the appropriate action below:

- ◆ **ONLINE:** Sign in at [MyHumana.com](http://MyHumana.com) > Click on Go365<sup>®</sup> from your dashboard. (Your username and password will be the same as you use to sign in to [MyHumana.com](http://MyHumana.com).)
- ◆ **MAIL:** Request paper materials by calling your dedicated PEEHIP Humana Group Medicare Customer Care Team at 800.747.0008 (TTY: 711).

Get started today and look for more information about the Go365<sup>®</sup> program coming soon in the PEEHIP Advisor.

Talk with your doctor before starting any new exercise activities or programs. Alternatives provided here are ideas and guidelines. Please be sure to exercise to your best capabilities and limits. ●