



State Of Illinois And Health Alliance Keep A Focus On Fitness With Second Virtual 5k/10k Challenge

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CHICAGO – The State of Illinois and Health Alliance today announced the second annual Fall into Fitness Virtual 5k/10k Challenge for State wellness plan members. The virtual walk/run, scheduled for September 19-26, 2021, is sponsored by the Illinois

Department of Central Management Services (CMS), Health Alliance, and Be Well Illinois, the State's comprehensive plan for wellness, to support the wellness needs of the State's workforce amid the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Making wellness simple, accessible, and engaging is our priority," Janel L. Forde, CMS director said. "Last year we found that this virtual option helped us unite our workforce statewide and we are excited to offer this opportunity to State employees and retirees again this year. We are excited to partner with Health Alliance to develop innovative ways to support a healthier workforce and support the wellness needs of employees and their families statewide."

The free virtual walk/run is open to all State of Illinois employees, retirees, and covered dependents and allows participants to move at their own pace and choose a date and time within the week to complete the challenge. Participants will walk or run a 5K or 10K distance and track and share their distance and time using the technology of their choice.

"The pandemic has changed how we exercise, so providing options that help people maintain their health and wellness are important," Alison Jones, registered dietitian and Health Alliance health and wellness coordinator explained. "The physical and mental health benefits of exercise are numerous -- improved energy levels, reduced stress, and anxiety, lower blood pressure, weight management -- all outcomes that are more important than ever as we face COVID-19."

Health Alliance and Be Well Illinois have developed on-demand digital tools to support challenge participants as they prepare for the event including resources for stretching, nutrition, training, and hydration.

"CMS and Be Well Illinois is excited to partner with Health Alliance and our other health vendors to bring this virtual challenge to our members, wherever they are," said Deputy Director Shiloah Tubbs. "Last year we saw retirees complete their first 5k, families -- including my own -- complete the challenge together and coworkers compete to see who could get the most steps. Be Well Illinois was created to support our members' health and wellness and this is an event anyone can do. Each participant can make it what they want to accomplish their own goals -- run or walk, 5k or 10k, break it up or complete it all at once."

"COVID-19 didn't just alter the workplace, it altered workouts, and we want to help people stay on track by providing opportunities and tools that encourage and support healthy habits," Sinead Rice Madigan, Health Alliance chief operating officer said.

“Whether people are just starting their wellness journey or have established health and fitness routines, we are meeting people where they are and doing everything we can to help keep their journeys successful.”

Registration is now open through Saturday, September 18th at <https://bit.ly/FallintoFitness21>. All finishers receive a certificate of completion and a pin to proudly display on their employee badge reel. Participants are encouraged to engage online through the [Be Well Illinois Facebook event page](#) and share their photos, signs, words of encouragement and celebrate their accomplishments on race day. Those who help inspire their colleagues by sharing a photo of themselves training for the event will earn a chance to win a \$200 voucher toward fitness gear.

“You can always find a reason not to get out there, but the fall season provides so many reasons to say yes – the leaves are changing, it’s cooler and winter isn’t far behind. Crossing that virtual finish line can have an amazing impact on your mood and health,” Jones said. “Plus, you can run, jog or walk in the early morning or over lunch, inside or outdoors. This is a great option for anyone who has wanted to challenge themselves but found it hard to commit to a date and time to start.”

Health Alliance provides high-quality insurance coverage to State employees and retirees that includes resources to help them prepare for their race day. This includes, among other offerings:

- A four-part video series about how to prepare to do a 5K or 10K (stretching, hydration, training, and nutrition).
- Health and wellness blog highlighting the importance of physical activity.
- Regular reminders with recipes, insight, and more on social media.
- Hally™ health, a suite of wellness offerings and personalized health tools for members and the general public. Available online at HallyHealth.com or download the Hally app on your mobile device.

Find these training resources at the new [Hally health](#) webpage.

About Health Alliance:

Based in Champaign, IL, Health Alliance operates in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, and Washington with additional licenses in Nebraska and Missouri. Health Alliance is part of Carle Health, an integrated system of healthcare services, which includes a five-hospital system, multi-specialty physician groups, as well as Carle Illinois College of Medicine and the Stephens Family Clinical Research Institute.

In Illinois, Health Alliance offers employer group plans, individual plans, Medicare plans, State of Illinois Employee plans and State of Illinois Retiree plans through Total

Retiree Advantage Illinois. Health Alliance has provided insurance to the State of Illinois for nearly 40 years. In Iowa, the Health Alliance offers employer group plans and Medicare plans. And in Washington, we offer Medicare plans and public individual plans. In Indiana and Ohio, Health Alliance offers Medicare plans.

About CMS:

Central Management Services (CMS) is the operational engine working behind the scenes to enable the State's more than 80 agencies, boards, and commissions to deliver efficient, reliable services to all Illinois citizens. The Agency's mission is to support the State by delivering innovative, responsive, and effective services that provide the best value for the Illinois State government and the people it serves.

The CMS Bureau of Benefits oversees the provision and administration of group health benefits for approximately 295,000 members and almost 450,000 covered lives, in four different insurance programs.

The Bureau also oversees the administration of basic and optional life insurance, dental and vision insurance, the Medical Care Assistance Program (MCAP), Dependent Care Assistant Program (DCAP), Commuter Savings Program (CSP), and the newly-implemented Health Savings Account (HSA), as well as several other programs for employees and retirees.

About Be Well Illinois

Be Well Illinois was launched in January 2021 by the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) to improve the overall health and wellness of the State of Illinois' workforce. Be Well Illinois uses a comprehensive approach to wellness and incorporates educational resources and activities designed to improve physical, financial, and mental health and raise awareness about the benefits of healthy eating, exercise, and cultural topics.

Each month, the program sponsors targeted events and provides new articles, wellness webinars, and resources on the [Be Well Illinois website](#), [Facebook page](#), and via direct email communications to participants to support their overall health and wellness goals.