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## Guidelines for NYSHIP Participation at New York State Agency Health Fairs

### Planning Your Health Fair

Are you interested in hosting a health fair? Health fairs or employee information/wellness days are popular events for personnel offices to schedule to meet employee's needs and interests. Many Employee Assistance Program (EAP) personnel and agency Health Benefits Administrators (HBAs) team up to sponsor these events. To ensure appropriate use of NYSHIP resources and avoid scheduling conflicts, any participation in an agency health fair by NYSHIP health plans (The Empire Plan and NYSHIP HMOs) **must be approved and coordinated through the Employee Benefits Division (EBD)**. When you plan your next health fair, please be sure to follow these simple steps.

1. To request an Empire Plan representative for your health fair **submit a request to EBD's Communications Unit at least 4 weeks prior to the event date**, using the [Employee Information Day/Health Fair Planning Information Form](#) available on HBA Online. This is the quickest, most direct way to submit your request. From the home page select: Publications and Forms> Employees of State of NY> Employee Information Day/Health Fair Planning Information Form> Choose the Format
2. After you have submitted your health fair request we will contact you either by phone or e-mail to confirm your request has been received. If you do not receive confirmation within 3-5 business days, please call the EBD Communications Unit at (518) 457-7577.

**Please do not contact The Empire Plan representatives directly.** The EBD Communications Unit will contact the representative in your area when your request is approved and will confirm the scheduling of The Empire Plan representatives with you. The scheduling process generally takes 3 to 5 business days.

**Remember, Empire Plan representatives do not give benefit presentations, or participate in 'town hall' style question and answer sessions; and they cannot assist employees with completing enrollment forms.** All representatives have a general knowledge of Empire Plan benefits; however, they do not represent any other NYSHIP benefit programs, such as the dental or vision. If you would like representatives from one or all of these programs to attend your health fair, please make this request in the designated field on the request form.

3. To prevent a delay in the scheduling of your event, please complete the request form accurately and in its entirety. Scheduling for health fairs is on a first-come, first serve

basis; incomplete requests will be returned and we cannot hold or reserve dates. Please be aware that due to limited availability, it may be necessary to reduce the duration of time an Empire Plan representative is available to staff your health fair. If this is necessary you will be notified prior to your event and we ask that you publicize to your employees the times our representative will be available.

4. Following the approval of your event and the scheduling of an Empire Plan representative by EBD, you may contact the NYSHIP Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in your area to invite them to participate. A courtesy list of NYSHIP HMO Contact Information is attached to assist you in the planning process.
5. **We require that the agency Health Benefits Administrator help coordinate and be present for the entire duration of the health fair to answer questions and provide support to employees.**

To ensure NYSHIP participation, please follow these general guidelines for coordinating health fairs:

- NYSHIP policy does not permit participation in events organized or sponsored by for-profit entities such as event planners, even if there is no charge to NYSHIP participants. NYSHIP information is provided free of charge to State employees and we will not pay event admission fees, allow raffles or contribute to gift baskets.
- We make every effort to provide representation at every event; however, multiple events from the same agency received within a one year timeframe will not receive priority scheduling. We strongly encourage agencies to work collectively, by location, to allow for the most efficient use of NYSHIP resources and to increase the likelihood that a representative will be available for all groups.
- Notify the EBD Communications Unit of any changes in date or location as soon as possible.
- If you are planning an outdoor health fair, you must provide coverage (a tent or similar structure); or designate an indoor location in case of inclement weather.

### **Promoting Your Event**

To optimize the use of State resources, we ask agencies to do everything possible to maximize the number of enrollees who attend the health fair. Work cooperatively with your EAP Coordinator and promote your event; invite other agencies in your area to increase attendance. Display posters with the date, time and location in lunch rooms or other high traffic areas, and advertise via email or on an agency intranet.

### **Using Handouts and Giveaways**

We arrange for a complimentary supply of the most recent benefit materials and publications as handouts at your health fair that reflect the group designation(s) of your population, including our popular web site illustration for NYSHIP Online, an assortment of Empire Plan *Reporting On* and other publications with current health benefits information. In most cases, we will also send Empire Plan giveaway items. If your attendee population has possible unique concerns or issues that may affect our selection of giveaways, please be sure to inform us of this ahead of time. EBD will ship these materials in advance and will provide specific information regarding delivery.