

# January 2024 HBR Update



## OE Exceptions Deadline Reminder

The deadline for submitting Open Enrollment exceptions is January 31, 2024.

## eBenefits Down Time

Please note that the eBenefits platform will be down starting 4:30 p.m. EST on Friday January 19, 2024, for required maintenance. It will be back up on Monday, January 22, 2024.

## Group Premium Billing Move Coming Later This Year

To better align services, the State Health Plan is transitioning the group premium billing and collections functions from the Third-Party Administrator (TPA), Blue Cross NC, to the COBRA Administration and Billing Services contract, which is currently held by iTEDIUM.

With this change, both individual and group billing will be managed by the same vendor, which allows the TPA to focus on benefit and claims administration. This transition is slated to begin later this year. We will provide more information about the transition throughout 2024.

Training on the new system will launch in June 2024. There will also be sample invoices and other resources available to make the transition from Blue Cross NC's eBilling tool to iTedium's new billing platform as smooth as

possible. As a reminder, groups are responsible for reconciling their monthly premium invoice each month. By doing so, groups will help to ensure a smooth transition. Stay tuned!



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## Enrollment Exceptions

### Types of Exceptions

Each year the State Health Plan reviews the enrollment exceptions from the previous year to determine whether there are any new trends that need to be addressed. Not surprisingly, Open Enrollment is the big winner. We still have members who either forget about Open Enrollment all together, or say they completed it but there is nothing to show for it and they didn't print a confirmation statement (if they have a valid confirmation statement, they generally do not need an exception because they enrolled appropriately).

The next two categories are not that surprising, either:

- **Reinstatements** – These are primarily dependents that are terminated for lack of dependent verification documentation or SSNs.

- **Retro Enrollments** – This is a combination of new hires/qualifying life events (QLE) that miss their enrollment window and newborn enrollment.

While we can approve most of the reinstatements, the retro new hires/QLEs are mostly denied. It is critical that you remind your employees to take action during their 30-day enrollment window. In the instance of a qualifying life event (QLE), they should process the QLE during the 30-day window whether they have the documentation or not. While the HBR cannot approve the QLE without documentation, the fact that the employee attempts to complete it during their enrollment window is important if an exception is needed.

### **Exception Submitters**

In addition to understanding the most frequent types of exceptions, it is important to know the percentage of exceptions as well as who is submitting them. We understand that “stuff happens,” so we’re not looking for perfection; therefore, an exception rate of 2% or less is the goal. In other words, we want at least 98% of each group’s enrollments to be successfully completed without the need for an exception. The enrollment model is employee self-service, and we want to address any impediments to the process. While the majority of groups have 1% or less exception rate, we had a few that exceeded the 2% goal in 2023:

Exception rate based on exceptions/enrolled employees – Groups with 100 - 1,000 employees:

- Chapel Hill – Carrboro City Schools – 3%
- Hoke County Schools – 3%
- Rockingham County Schools – 4%
- Martin County Schools – 5%
- Scotland County Schools – 5%
- Department of Public Instruction – 5%

Exception rate based on exceptions/enrolled employees – Groups with 1,000 - 5,000 employees:

- Durham Public Schools – 3%
- Nash County Schools – 3%
- Judicial Branch – 3%
- NC A&T – 3%

Exception Rate based on exceptions/enrolled employees – Groups with between 5,000 – 10,000 employees:

- Department of Transportation – 3% exception rate
- Department of Adult Correction – 5% exception rate

There are no groups with between 10,000 – 20,000 employees with an exception rate of greater than 1%!

The next time we review exceptions, we'll dig deeper into the root causes. We want to tighten the process up as much as possible before the next Open Enrollment period.

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## Payroll Integration Monitoring

The State Health Plan intends to introduce more payroll integration monitoring in 2024. The monitoring will focus on groups that have integrated files between their payroll systems and eBenefits. The Plan will produce a scorecard for payroll groups that highlights both the successes and the trouble spots.

These issues could be on the group side or the Benefitfocus side. We'll be monitoring root causes and resolution timeframes. At this point, it is a work in progress that we intend to fully roll out in April. The first step will be to implement the tracking. We hope to do that this month. More to come.

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## Annual HBR Re-Certification Reminder

As a reminder, the State Health Plan (Plan) requires that HBRs take a brief training to ensure that HBRs fully understand the rules and processes associated with the Plan and how to assist employees with qualifying life events and enrollment needs associated with the Plan.

The annual re-certification for HBRs began on Jan. 8, 2024, and will continue through Feb. 16, 2024. The training is available in [HBR University](#). HBRs must review the training for a minimum of 20 minutes to receive credit for completing the training.

In past years, the Plan has used this opportunity to have HBRs update their contact information. The Plan has been working diligently with groups to obtain correct contact information, so this step will not be necessary this year.

We appreciate in advance the due diligence in completing this training. Your role as an HBR and the work you do related to the State Health Plan is critical and we provide training opportunities such as this to make sure you're fully prepared to assist your employees with matters related to the Plan and their benefits.

HBRs are required to complete this re-certification by Feb. 16 or risk losing access to eBenefits.

## New Employee Materials Reminder

As a reminder and to better serve you and your new employees, the State Health Plan has updated the [New Employee Resources Page](#) on the Plan's website for 2024.

This page helps HBRs provide new employees with the information they need to make the best health benefit choices for themselves and their families.

The New Employee Resources include:

- Self-paced narrated PowerPoint presentation
- New Employee Guide (printable)
- Step-by-step enrollment instructions

HBRs are encouraged to use these materials to assist the Plan in providing consistency in onboarding materials for new employees.

## Your North Carolina State Health Plan

2024 NEW EMPLOYEE ENROLLMENT GUIDE  
JANUARY 1, 2024 - DECEMBER 31, 2024

"Welcome to the State Health Plan! We value your service. Let us help you evaluate your options to select the best health plan for you and your family. See inside for an introduction to the Plan and important information about benefits, plan comparisons and how to enroll. We wish you the best of health throughout 2024."

**Dale R. Folwell, CPA**  
State Treasurer

**OUR MISSION** is to improve the health and health care of North Carolina teachers, state employees, retirees, and their dependents, in a financially sustainable manner, thereby serving as a model to the people of North Carolina for improving their health and well-being.

Equal Opportunity  
**State Health Plan**  
FOR TEACHERS AND STATE EMPLOYEES  
A Division of the Department of State Treasurer

The Education  
DALE R. FOLWELL, CPA

## New Year, New You with Special Gym Membership Offers

Help your employees start 2024 off strong by setting sustainable goals they can stick to for the rest of the year. Employees can join now for \$0 enrollment and feel accomplished, energized and healthier than ever.



Working out should be accessible to everyone. Here's what's available as part of the Blue365 program:

- Four gym packages available starting at \$19/month, plus a no enrollment fee offer available now
- Join as many gyms as you want with access to 13,000+ fitness locations
- Digital only package also available for just \$10 a month (all digital content included with gym packages)
- On-demand videos available 24/7 and live virtual classes like cardio, boot camps, barre, and yoga from Burnalong®

This is a limited-time offer of \$0 enrollment fee until Jan. 31 with gym packages starting at \$19 per month. Employees can learn more [here](#). Use code FYWENROLL4FREEJAN when you sign up.



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**Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less!**

The Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less program includes 15 weekly online sessions delivered by a live Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. Each session will empower employees to make healthy lifestyle changes to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. This is available for all members on the Base PPO Plan (70/30) and Enhanced PPO Plan (80/20).



State Health Plan active members can participate at no cost! Plan members need to enter this coupon/voucher code during registration: GNC2024. Each weekly session is covered at 100% as a telehealth group nutritional counseling visit. To get started, visit [www.esmmweighless.com](http://www.esmmweighless.com) and click "Register Now." Then select "I received a code from my employer" and follow the prompts.

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This Month's  
Healthy  
Recipe

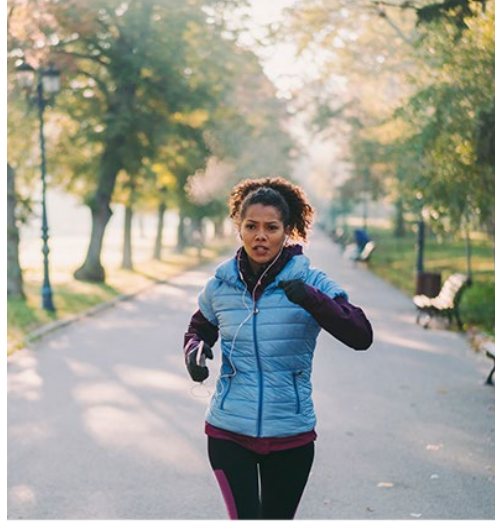


This Month's  
Wellness  
Tip



**Grain Bowl with  
Chickpeas & Cauliflower**

[Get the Recipe! >](#)



**Stay Active  
This Winter**

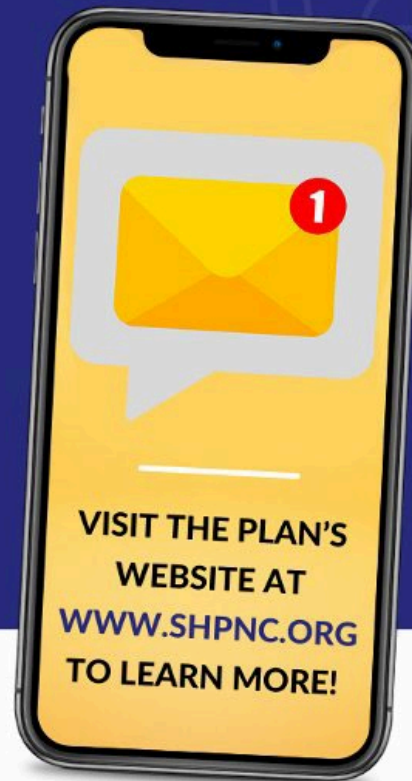
[Learn More! >](#)

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# TEXT "JOIN" TO 76971

- Sign up to receive State Health Plan updates by text! Just text "Join" to 76971.
- Text messages will be general information regarding your State Health Plan benefits.



**SIGN UP TODAY**

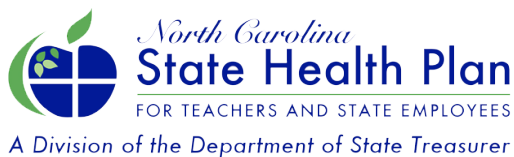


Message Frequency may vary. Message and Data rates may apply.  
Reply STOP to cancel.

Eligibility and Enrollment Questions: 855-859-0966

Prescription Questions: 888-321-3124

For questions on this newsletter, e-mail: [ppo.inquiries@nctreasurer.com](mailto:ppo.inquiries@nctreasurer.com)



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