

Regence challenges Oregon legislators to 'Move It!'

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Lawmakers will compete in walking contest to earn funds for local health-related school programs

Salem, Oregon -- With the 2007 session underway, members of the Oregon State Legislature will face many new challenges intended to improve the state's healthcare system. One that doesn't involve drafting a bill is the Move It! Program, sponsored by Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon. Move It! offers legislators the chance to improve their own health and that of their communities.

The Oregon health insurance company is again calling on the 90 members of Oregon's Legislature to help raise awareness about increasing obesity levels in the state by doing more of something they will likely do a lot of anyway this session: walking. The Move It! program is designed to mix awareness, action and a little friendly competition into the overall conversation about health. The program was previously known as Legislators on the Move.

To participate in Move It!, legislators will be asked to wear pedometers and record the number of steps they take for six weeks during the 2007 legislative session. They will report their progress after three weeks and at the end of the legislative session. The program runs from February 1 through March 16, 2007. The three legislators who walk the farthest will earn \$5000, \$2500 or \$1000 depending on their finishing place, for a school of their choice from their legislative district. Regence will donate the funds, which can be used for any health-related project.

"It's important that we teach proper fitness to our youth," said the 2005 Legislators on the Move winner Senator Ginny Burdick. "Our children are at a very impressionable age where healthy habits can be formed. This is one way to get them started on the right track to good health."

"The Move It program is one example of how Regence is leading by example in our community to help people get healthy," said J. Bart McMullan, Jr., M.D., president of Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon. "We look forward to a successful legislative session where our legislators will turn a little friendly competition into an opportunity to further serve their communities."

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