

Whole health



Stephanie Stewart

If you were unable to attend the national convention held in Los Angeles, CA, or participate in the Plan's scheduled class on Aug. 4, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about our workshop, "Whole Health Explained." If there was one key takeaway from the workshop, it was the understanding that whole health revolves around *you*!

Whole health involves taking proactive steps toward your health, engaging in health and wellness programs, and changing our mindset. While the NALC Health Benefit Plan (the Plan) has embraced this with our initia-

tives, I believe it is extremely important for our members to understand their role, and how embracing whole health can directly affect overall well-being.

In March 2026, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released the annual Carrier Letter, encouraging plans to focus on "well care," emphasizing the "physical and mental wellness of the whole person."

Keep in mind, I am not talking about treatment when you get sick, although our coverage does include sick care benefits should the need arise. Well care is similar to whole health. Both have the primary goal of disease prevention, early detection of health risks, and maintaining overall health.

The good news is that the Plan was well ahead of OPM. We started our whole health initiative several years ago. Today the Plan offers our members a variety of health and wellness programs. Our task now is to embrace whole health.

To further explain, I want to bring the subject back to you, our member, who remains at the center. Remember, we want you to live a fulfilled and meaningful life, and we are here to support you, but you must be involved.

For starters, think about why your health is important. It is crucial that your foundation for whole health be based on personal meaning, the "why" for making health decisions for the future. From there, let's talk about what you do next.

Explore your plan! We've been working to empower and equip members with health and lifestyle interventions. One of our main goals through the past few years has been to provide our members with a variety

of resources, benefits and/or programs so that they are equipped with the right tools they need once they identify their "why."

So, how do you know which programs are available, or which are appropriate for you?

Understandably, with all the program information available, it can be hard to find exactly what you need, or it can be overwhelming with so many options. We recognize this was an area where we needed to improve, so we created a new *NALC Health Benefit Plan Program Guide* to make finding information easier.

This new booklet will be added to the upcoming Open Season material. The booklet includes a brief overview and QR code linking you to more information on each program, or members can use the index to find certain health conditions and the associated program. This will be your go-to booklet, where you can find support and resources in one place and easily identify those that might work best for you.

If you are still unsure, still overwhelmed, don't know where to start, or just want someone to talk to, we have a solution for that as well. Our Priority Health Coaching Program is a no-cost program that serves as an entry point for our health and wellness programs. Speak with a coach about personalized access to programs offered by the Plan and learn more about how to make positive changes that lead to a healthier you.

Lastly, when you make the choice, we are here to help make sure you find success. From heart health, stress and weight management to family building and much more, our goal is to make sure you know and understand the benefits available—with confidence and without confusion.

Reminder: Each branch should have received a supply request form for the upcoming Open Season. If you have not received yours, please contact our customer service department Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time at 888-636-6252. To make sure we have enough material to accommodate initial requests, we will fulfill one supply order request per branch from the initial 2027 Open Season material shipment. Additional requests can be submitted for fulfillment but will ship at a later date.

Of note: The High Option and Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) booklets have been consolidated into one comprehensive booklet for 2027. Don't forget to order the new program book, which covers wellness resources and programs!