

# For Your Benefit



CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE BENEFITS • SPRING 2023



## Feel your best in 2023

As an educator, you're called upon to care for others day in and day out. But let's face it: Taking care of others can be hard to do if you're struggling yourself.

This year, take control with three new programs: Virta, GIThrive and Fern Health are app-based tools – with one-on-one live coaching – to help you address the health concerns that impact your daily life. All three programs are available at NO COST to employees and their adult dependents covered by the Certificated Employee Health Plan.

### 3 NEW PROGRAMS:



Treat and reverse your type 2 diabetes or prediabetes with Virta, a medically supervised, research-backed program that can help you focus on the root causes of high blood sugar. This program uses food as medicine to help you naturally lose weight and lower your blood sugar under the personalized guidance of your remote medical care team. | [See page 2.](#)



Nearly three-quarters of Americans have some sort of digestive trouble on a regular basis. If you're one of those people, you'll want to check out the GIThrive® program. This all-in-one program helps you work toward better gut health through virtual support, including nutrition, education, cutting-edge science and 24/7 expert support from real human beings. | [See page 3.](#)



If you live with chronic musculoskeletal pain, you know the toll it can take on your mental and physical health. When pain lasts for months – or in some cases, years – it gets in the way of how you live your life. Now, you can learn to manage your pain with Fern, a personalized, smartphone-delivered program for chronic pain. The program addresses both the physical and mental aspects of your pain, with the support of a certified health coach. | [See page 4.](#)

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[MNPSBenefits.org](https://MNPSBenefits.org)

For more information about these and our other health improvement programs, go to [MNPSBenefits.org/hip](https://MNPSBenefits.org/hip).

NEW  
BENEFIT!



# Reverse type 2 diabetes and prediabetes with Virta

If you struggle with type 2 diabetes or prediabetes, better health is within reach. MNPS has partnered with Virta Health to give you a better way to treat — and yes, even reverse! — type 2 diabetes, prediabetes and/or a BMI of 30 or greater.

## What is Virta?

Virta is a medically supervised, research-backed program that focuses on the root causes of high blood sugar. How? Virta uses food as medicine to help you naturally lose weight and lower your blood sugar.

Don't eat less; eat more better-for-you meals under the personalized guidance of your remote medical care team. There is no surgery or exercise required.

Even better, MNPS is fully covering the cost of Virta (valued at more than \$3,000) for you and your adult dependents (age 18-79) with type 2 diabetes, prediabetes and/or a BMI of 30 or greater who are enrolled in the MNPS Certificated Employee Health Plan.\*

## What's included?

- Virtual medical care from a physician-led team
- One-on-one health coaching
- Diabetes testing supplies like meters and strips, delivered right to your door
- Practical resources like recipes, food lists and meal plans
- Access to a private online patient community



For information or to schedule your free consultation, scan the QR code or go to [www.virtahealth.com/join/mnps](http://www.virtahealth.com/join/mnps).



In only one year,  
Virta patients see  
an average of<sup>1</sup>:

**63%** medication  
reduction

**1.3%** HbA1c  
reduction

**12%** weight  
loss

<sup>1</sup> Hallberg SJ, McKenzie AL, Williams P, et al. Effectiveness and Safety of a Novel Care Model for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes at One Year: An Open Label, Non-Randomized, Controlled Study. *Diabetes Ther.* 2018. DOI: 10.1007/s13300-018-0373-9

\* There are some medical conditions that exclude patients from the Virta program. Start the application process to find out if you qualify.

**NEW  
BENEFIT!**

# Improve your digestive health with GIThrive

If you suffer from a chronic digestive condition, you know all too well the impact it has on your day-to-day.

Research shows about 74% of Americans have some sort of gut trouble on a regular basis. For many, it's bloating, gas, nausea, diarrhea or food sensitivities. For some, it's a chronic condition like IBS, GERD, celiac disease, Crohn's or colitis. And, it turns out, more than 50% of people with gut trouble don't know where to turn for help.

Help is now available through a new virtual, digestive health program, GIThrive.



**Fully covered benefit for your digestive health**  
- no cost to you.

**GIThrive®**

**Get a free at-home gut microbiome test and analysis (\$150 value).**

**Work with a registered dietitian and health coach to get to the root cause of your digestive symptoms.**

**Experience better overall physical and emotional well-being!**

## Who can participate?

GIThrive is available to you and your adult dependents (age 18+) enrolled in the Certificated Employee Health Plan. The program is covered at 100% — no copays or out-of-pocket costs.

## What's included?

- Personalized meal plans, tailored to your body
- 24/7 access to your personal care team, including a registered dietitian and health coach
- Easy-to-use symptom tracker
- Free microbiome gut test and analysis (\$150 value)



For more information or to get started, go to **GIThrive.com/MNPS** or scan the QR code.

**NEW  
BENEFIT!**

# Relief is within reach

**Fern**

Chronic pain looks different for every person. Maybe your pain started because of an injury or illness. Or perhaps it was triggered by stress. It's possible you just woke up one morning with an ache that never went away.

Regardless of how your pain began, when it lasts for months — or even years — it can feel like you don't have control. It becomes harder to focus on what's most important to you.

## What is Fern?

Fern Health is a digital chronic pain program rooted in clinical evidence and developed by leading pain management physicians. After creating a free account and answering some questions about how pain impacts your life, you'll be paired with a certified health coach. You and your coach will work together to develop a pain management plan, customized to you, to help you reach your goals.

## Who can participate?

Fern is available to you and your adult dependents (age 18+) enrolled in the Certificated Employee Health Plan. The program is covered at 100% — no copays or out-of-pocket costs.

## What's included?

Personalized digital pain program focused on your lifestyle and behaviors that are related to pain

One-on-one support from a certified health coach (via phone and in-app messaging)

Regular check-ins to keep you on track

A welcome kit that contains everything you need to get started



## You deserve relief. Learn how Fern can help.

The Fern Health program officially begins in March. If you'd like to be notified when enrollment opens, follow the QR code to provide your email address.

# MORE

## MyHealth Bundles



- Maternity/delivery
- Cochlear implants
- Spine surgery
- Hip/knee replacement
- Osteoarthritis of hip or knee
- Shoulder pain
- Medical weight loss
- Surgical weight loss
- Kidney stones *NEW!*
- Substance use disorder *NEW!*

When you're facing a major medical issue like these, Vanderbilt's MyHealth Bundles ensure you receive the best outcome and an enhanced care experience so you can concentrate on what's most important — your health and well-being.

These programs bundle care — exclusively through Vanderbilt Health providers — for specific medical conditions using an innovative, patient-centered approach. MyHealth Bundles combine state-of-the-art medical treatment with concierge patient services to ensure that you and your dependents receive world-class care at no cost to you.

**This year, you can choose from two new bundles in addition to the eight already offered. See below.**

Learn more at [MNPS.MyVanderbiltHealthBenefits.com](https://MNPS.MyVanderbiltHealthBenefits.com). MNPS employees and their dependents enrolled in the Certificated Employee Health Plan are eligible.

## New bundles for 2023

### MyUrologyHealth *kidney stone treatment*

This bundle redefines kidney stone treatment and helps prevent them from returning.

Participants receive:

- Pre-surgery prep and education on kidney stone removal procedure
- Imaging, surgery and related hospital admission
- Non-surgical emergency room visits (if needed)
- Follow-up visits with your surgeon
- Preventive care education and interventions
- Concierge service with a dedicated patient navigator to help manage care at every step

### MyRecoveryHealth *substance use disorder treatment*

This bundle helps patients overcome substance use disorders, with treatment options ranging from standard or intensive outpatient to inpatient care. It addresses opioid use disorder (OUD) as well as disorders that involve alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine and other stimulants, sedatives, hallucinogens, inhalants and other psychoactive substances.

Participants receive:

- Office visits for outpatient support
- Inpatient coverage for related admission to Vanderbilt's psychiatric hospital
- Emergency room/observation admittance
- Partial hospitalization
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Anti-craving medications (clinic-administered drugs only)
- All group therapy, psychological evaluations and treatment
- Behavioral health-related services
- Labs



# Do MNPS Health Care Centers offer telehealth?

**A: We get that question a lot.**

The MNPS Health Care Centers do offer telehealth visits for many common health concerns, such as:

- Stomach viruses, rashes and chronic conditions like allergies and insomnia
- Follow-up visits if labs are not needed
- Some physical therapy visits
- Medication management with our behavioral health providers
- Health coaching with our onsite coaches

Because some concerns require testing and/or lab work, not all visits are appropriate for telehealth.

If you have a regular provider at any of our five clinics, you may be able to make a telehealth appointment with that provider. We suggest you connect with your provider through the patient portal or call us to ask if a telehealth visit is appropriate for your need.

As always, you pay \$0 to use the MNPS Health Care Centers if you're covered by the Certificated Employee Health Plan. If you have other coverage, we'll bill your insurance.



## FIVE CLINICS ACROSS DAVIDSON COUNTY

**BERRY HILL**

**Employee Wellness Center**

**MADISON**

**Taylor Stratton Elementary**

**ANTIOCH**

**Mt. View Elementary**

**NE NASHVILLE**

**Two Rivers Middle**

**BELLEVUE**

**Bellevue Middle**

Call for an in-person or telehealth appointment: **615-259-8755**

Learn more: [MNPSHealth.org/services](https://MNPSHealth.org/services)



**Vanderbilt Health**  
at Metro Nashville Public Schools  
Employee & Family Health Care Centers



## Get a bivalent boost against COVID-19

There's a new COVID-19 variant in town, and if you haven't gotten a bivalent booster shot, you're not fully protected. This variant, named XBB.1.5, is circulating in our region. In fact, it now accounts for about 20% of infections in Tennessee, and the original COVID vaccine does not protect against it.

Make an appointment for a free shot through the My Health at Vanderbilt patient portal.

You asked for it!

# MBSR course coming this summer



## Participants are saying:



This is a good course to help you get in touch with yourself and build skills and strategies to productively cope with stress, anxiety and depression.



This class helped me take ownership over my mind and body rather than repeating unhealthy cycles of survival mode.



If the reason you don't want to do it is because it's on Zoom, reconsider. If you can get a quiet space in your home and carve out the time for the course, it's really worth it.



Mindfulness was the missing link to my peacefulness. I didn't know I was in pain until I stopped and gave attention to my body in the body scans! Now, I am taking better care of myself.

If you've ever found yourself wishing you could take the popular Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course but didn't have time during the school year, help is on the way.

Now, for the first time, MBSR will be offered over the summer.

This nine-week course gives you tools to cultivate greater mindfulness and better manage stress in your daily life. Each weekly session is highly participatory and include an array of mindfulness practices, including sitting and walking meditation, mindful eating and mindful communication.

The class kicks off June 1 and runs through July, with eight morning sessions held virtually via Zoom and one Saturday retreat held in-person at the MNPS Employee Wellness Center.

This class fills up quickly. Visit [MNPSHealth.org/mindfulness](https://MNPSHealth.org/mindfulness) to learn more and sign up for our waitlist. Waitlisters will get advance notice when registration opens.

# Change of course makes principal a better, healthier person



Life was closing in on Ahmed White in ways the Smithson Craighead Academy principal could no longer ignore.

Once a college athlete, he had continued to eat like one years later. But without the physical activity to keep pace, the inevitable happened.

**“It’s a lifestyle change for me, and I like who I am.”**

“I really gained a lot of weight,” Ahmed admits.

He had slowed down and his medical problems were becoming serious. He was regularly seeing a cardiologist, and soon added a kidney specialist. Arthritis wracked his hips.

And Ahmed, a family man, wasn’t living up to his promise to himself to be the best father he could to the four sons he and his wife lovingly adopted.

**Register now! Next 90-Day Men’s Challenge kicks off March 27.**

Are you tired of feeling sluggish and unmotivated? The 90-Day Men’s Health Challenge is the perfect solution. You’ll learn how to eat and make lifestyle changes that help the body heal itself. You may also lose weight and reduce the need for medication. If you’ve tried and failed to achieve a healthier you, let us show you how this evidence-based approach can work for you.

To sign up for our March Challenge, scan the QR code or visit [MNPSBenefits.org/menshealth](https://MNPSBenefits.org/menshealth).



"I didn't have the energy to play ball. I didn't have the energy to be around my children," he says.

A visit to his parents proved pivotal. Ahmed's father, who never smoked or drank, now needed a walker.

"My dad couldn't go from one room to the next without losing his breath," he says.

His father's array of prescriptions also got Ahmed's attention.

"When I saw all the meds my dad was taking at 75, and I'm taking the same amount at 44 or 45 — I couldn't do that. I didn't want to be that person for my children."

Luckily, Ahmed had heard about the 90-Day Men's Health Challenge through friends and signed up. (The program is offered at no cost to men enrolled in the MNPS Certificated Employee Health Plan.)

Ahmed learned that despite his genetics, he didn't have to suffer his father's fate. The program focuses on a whole food, plant-rich diet to help control blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol and waist size. Participants in the 90-Day Challenge find ways to improve their mindset and identify triggers that spark unhealthy behaviors. They learn about nutrition from evidence-based sources and how sleep and exercise play a role.

"I'm now a lot better," Ahmed says. "My mental disposition is better. I'm more positive."

He's lost enough weight that he finally had to buy a new belt instead of punching more holes in the old one.

"And then little things started happening," he adds. "I *wanted* to go shopping. I *wanted* to buy clothes."

**"I want to live my next 50+ years better than my last 46."**

Ahmed is now there for his boys in the ways he wanted to be, playing outdoors with them rather than sitting on the couch. Work is better, too. He now walks a lot at school and moves easily in and out of classrooms. His smartwatch keeps count of his steps.

"I love this journey. I'm really excited," Ahmed says. "I'm just a better person to be around."

# SAVE THE DATE



## ADOLESCENT HEALTH FAIR

FOR MNPS EMPLOYEES  
& THEIR CHILDREN

Adolescent years can be a rollercoaster for parents and their kids. Learn to navigate the inevitable ups and downs with greater ease.

**Mark your calendars for  
Saturday, September 9, at the  
MNPS Employee Wellness  
Center at Berry Hill for:**

SATURDAY  
SEPT 9  
10 A.M. - 1 P.M.

- Panel discussion with experts on adolescent care topics
- Refreshments, activities, giveaways and raffle prizes
- Tdap and HPV vaccinations provided by Kroger Pharmacy
- Vendors and information on anxiety, stress management, social media use, nutrition, self-image and more!

This free event, presented by Vanderbilt Health and the MNPS Health Care Centers, is exclusively for MNPS employees and their children.

► **Watch your email for more details coming soon.**



These are eligible expenses under the Health Care FSA.

## Creative uses for your FSA dollars

If you contribute to the Health Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA), you already know it's a great way to pay for health care expenses with tax-free dollars.

But do you remember that March 15 is your deadline to spend your 2022 contributions?

If you have money left in your Health Care FSA — and don't foresee any eligible health care needs in the next

couple weeks — above are some creative ways to spend those dollars before you lose them on March 15.

### Important reminder

Because FSAs offer tax advantages, the IRS places restrictions on these accounts. That means you must use your FSA funds within a certain timeframe; if you don't, they're forfeited. Your Health Care FSA offers

a grace period to help you avoid the IRS "use it or lose it" rule. You can continue to incur health care expenses until **March 15**, file claims and get reimbursed until June 15.

### How to learn more

Check out [MNPSBenefits.org/fsas](https://MNPSBenefits.org/fsas) to learn more about the FSAs. For a detailed list of eligible expenses, visit [cigna.com/expenses](https://cigna.com/expenses).

# MNPS wins workplace mental health award



As an MNPS employee, your physical and mental well-being has always been our top priority. Now, that commitment has gained national attention!



MNPS recently received the **Carolyn C. Mattingly Award for Mental Health in the Workplace**.

This prestigious award celebrates organizations

that advance the mental health and well-being of their workforce and serve as role models for other employers.

While we're excited our efforts have been noticed, we're not resting on our laurels. We're committed to continuing our work to improve mental health support and resources available to you.

You can now see those resources in a single place: in our new online **Mental Health Resource Guide**. It's available at [MNPSBenefits.org/mhrg](https://MNPSBenefits.org/mhrg).

Here are some of the no-cost benefits listed in the guide:

- Employee assistance program, with confidential counseling
- Virtual and in-person office visits with behavioral health staff at the MNPS Health Care Centers
- Telehealth counseling
- Stress management courses
- Lifestyle management programs

## A Q&A with fitness associate Kreg Kinnaman



What goals did you set for 2023? If being more active is one of yours, you'll want to know this: Kreg Kinnaman, lead fitness associate at the MNPS Employee Wellness Center, understands that just getting started can be the hardest part. So *FYB* asked Kreg how a fitness associate can ease the way.

He gave us the inside scoop on how fitness associates help new clients over the hump — from walking them through

their first visit to helping them stick with a program and, ultimately, achieve success. And all at no cost to you!

Read Kreg's Q&A at [MNPSBenefits.org/articles](https://MNPSBenefits.org/articles) > click "Fitness associates take the worry out of getting active."

Want to learn more about fitness services at the Employee Wellness Center? Visit [MNPSHealth.org/fitness](https://MNPSHealth.org/fitness).



METROPOLITAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF  
NASHVILLE DAVIDSON COUNTY  
2601 BRANSFORD AVENUE  
NASHVILLE, TN 37204-2811

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT SERVICES

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PERMIT 1

INSIDE:

**3** new no-cost-to-you  
benefits launching



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sessions



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