

APA January/February 2012 Newsletter

MSU Moves

Have you signed up for MSU Moves yet? If not, now is the time as you can register for the first MSU Moves Me 2012 Challenge! Registration is open until January 19, 2012. The challenge runs from January 23, 2012 through March 4, 2012.

Join the all-campus challenge to have fun, win prizes and move more!

MSU Moves is a customized, online movement/fitness tracking system with the goal of encouraging participants to maintain or increase their overall daily/weekly activity level. The program activities reflect the understanding that all movement counts. Participants are not graded and their information is confidential.

The goal of the challenge is to establish engagement in movement and fitness activities as a campus community. To participate in the challenge, join MSU Moves at msumoves.msu.edu and complete a registration profile, identify a team captain, and have your captain create the team in MSU Moves.

Teams may be composed of all-faculty, all-staff, all-students or a mix of the members of these groups. Spouses and OEs are eligible to participate as part of the 5-25 members of each team.

The winning team of the MSU Moves Me 2012 Challenge will be the team that achieves the highest percentage increase in minutes of activity over the team baseline minutes of activity during the six-week challenge. Prizes will be awarded to the grand prize team along with the 1st through 10th runner-up teams!

Visit this information page to learn more. If you have questions about the MSU Moves program, contact the Health4U Program at health4u@msu.edu or 517-353-2596.

So, form a team of colleagues and get moving with MSU Moves!

House Bill 4770 – OEI Benefits

Several members have contacted the APA office inquiring about the passage of Michigan House bill 4770 that prohibits a public employer from affording domestic partner health care benefits, raising concern of the impact to APA members currently receiving the benefit and those in the future.

Prior to signing the bill, and in a letter to the legislature, Governor Snyder clearly stated “that higher education institutions [including MSU] would not be included in H.B. 4770 as the constitutional autonomy of universities has been reviewed and affirmed many times by the courts since the adoption of the 1963 Michigan Constitution.” This rationale, among other reasons, leads the APA to conclude the law should not result in a change of benefits at MSU.

To date, through statements in interviews and issued through email, the University Administration, including President Simon, has indicated they do not believe the enactment of this law will result in any change to the current health care benefits program at MSU.

Yet, several legislators have asserted that this bill is intended to apply to MSU and other constitutionally identified universities. Such a disagreement could result in the matter being litigated in Michigan courts leaving the Michigan Supreme Court with final authority whether this bill can and should be applied to MSU and therefore APA members.

In the immediate, it does not appear the bill will result in a change of Other Eligible Individual benefits. Furthermore, the APA has a current health care agreement in place into 2014. Therefore, no change could even occur until the expiration of the current agreement in 2014.

The APA continues to be engaged on this topic and will communicate with the membership if there are any future developments.

APA Benefits News – Best Doctors

New Best Doctors service comes to MSU

You should have recently received a welcome letter from “Best Doctors” at your home mailing address. Best Doctors is a new service you can use to easily and confidentially get second opinions from medical experts all around the nation. When you are facing a serious diagnosis or making decisions about surgery, chemotherapy, radiation or any number of other complex treatment options, please consider calling Best Doctors at 1-866-904-0910. There is no out-of-pocket cost to you for using this new service and any benefits-eligible member of your family can also use the service (regardless of whether they are actually enrolled in your benefits.) If you missed the welcome materials from Best Doctors, you can view a copy of what was sent at:

http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/benefits_docs/BestDoctorsKit.pdf

You also can learn more about Best Doctors and even initiate a contact with them by visiting their website at: www.bestdoctors.com/members.

Want to talk to your Health Plan in Person?

Representatives from both the Community Blue and BCN MSU health plans maintain office hours in the Human Resources office each week. Krystal Williams from Community Blue is available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursdays in Suite 30 of the Nisbet Building. Jasmine Henry from BCN is available on Mondays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the same location. You can call 517-884-0128 to make an appointment with Krystal or Jasmine. Both also see walk-ins during their office hours, but those with appointments are seen first. Krystal and Jasmine can help you figure out claims issues or just answer your questions about your health plan coverage.

2012 Reminders

Please remember that as of January 1, 2012:

- Any changes you made in your health plan selections during Open Enrollment in 2011 became effective (and the clock started over for the new plan year on any services that have deductibles in the plan you selected.)
- If you are enrolled in Health Care Spending Accounts (HCSA) and have an HCSA debit card, that card is now drawing from your 2012 account. You can still use funds left over in your 2011 account until March 15, 2012. However, to access 2011 funds, you have to pay bills first and submit receipts by April 30, 2011 for reimbursement. Only use the debit card to draw on 2012 funds.
- Retirement plan consolidation changes took effect. The University’s approved vendors for new contributions are Fidelity Investments and TIAA-CREF and a new core investment menu is in place.

Questions? You can always contact the MSU Human Resources Benefits office with questions about your benefits. Call 517-353-4434 or 800-353-4434. Or email benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu. Visit www.hr.msu.edu for additional information.

Your Fellow APAs

Interview with APA member Jodi Potter
Administrative Assistant, Dean's Office | MSU College of Education

How long have you been at MSU?

I started working at MSU in the fall of 2008 at CSTAT (Center for Statistical Training and Consulting).

Have you been a member of APA the whole time?

No. When I began working at CSTAT in 2008, I was an on-call temp in a 19 hour per week position. In June 2010, the College of Education posted a 50% time APA position in the Dean's Office which I filled. Since an APA cannot also be employed on campus in an on-call position, CSTAT created a 50 % CT position in September 2010. I currently work both jobs – as far as I know, I am the only person on the entire MSU campus to be both a CT and an AP!

Can you tell me a little bit about what you do?

In my APA position, I am the graduate records secretary for the College of Education. I monitor paperwork related to PhD and master's students' academic progress throughout their degree. I also crunch data for the College so our programs can be ranked against other colleges of education nationwide. I also function as the secretary for the curriculum of teacher education certification programs. When the State of Michigan changes the rules about how educated a teacher must be, our programs have to change and I am responsible for making sure the materials are turned in.

At CSTAT I do a bit of everything; since there is just one secretary – me – I am the office administrator in charge of HR, hiring, the service center, managing clients, record-keeping, and organizing training workshops. Our faculty give presentations to others about statistical software and I am in charge of registration and making sure the workshops go as planned.

What brought you to your job at MSU?

I was forced into a career change from my previous position off campus. I was drawn to MSU because of its positive workforce, and the structure of positions is well-defined.

What do you love about working at MSU?

I like that there are clear expectations with no drama.

What are the challenges of working two separate jobs on campus?

At both jobs, the workload at times doesn't fit into 4 hours a day. It is hard having to walk away from a project because you do need to leave for the other

job. I like to finish things and do them well but I feel rushed sometimes because I have to leave. There is a delicate balance between quality and time allotted.

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

I like working on my home, especially working in the garden. I also like spending time with my neighbors – they are a good group of people – and my friends and family.

Community Based Events

The APA Community Based Events Ad-Hoc Committee is proud to announce over 600 books were collected during the November 30 – December 2 children's book drive. Members contributed books at 15 locations across campus with the support of APA members and their units. A special thanks to the College of Osteopathic Medicine should be noted for their inclusion of the drive in their "Simple Gifts" program. All books were delivered to the Capital Area Literacy Coalition, better known as the "Reading People," to support their efforts toward improving at-risk youth literacy.

The CALC is a non-profit, non-religious, volunteer literacy organization founded in 1985 and directed by Dr. Lois Bader, MSU Emeritus Professor of Education. CALC provides a variety of services to enable people to achieve personal goals through literacy, believing the ability to read is critical to personal freedom and the maintenance of a democratic society. Further opportunities to volunteer and donate can be found at www.thereadingpeople.org.

The CBE Committee is seeking for opportunities to support the Greater Lansing Community. Ideas and inquires should be made to Debra Porter porterd@msu.edu or Nick Bourland bourlan2@msu.edu.

Read Across America – March 2 – Goes Green

This year marks the fourteenth annual celebration of reading and Dr. Seuss's birthday! As NEA's Read Across America Day gears up, community members are asked to put aside the many hats they wear for work and play and don the ultimate reading hat, the red and white striped stovepipe made famous by the Cat in the Hat, on March 2.

To add to the celebration, the 2012 theme is GREEN. NEA's Read Across America campaign will showcase the Lorax book as well as NBC/Universal's The Lorax (featuring the voices of Taylor Swift, Zach Efron, Danny Devito and Betty White). For a sneak peek, here's the latest trailer. The film opens nationwide March 2, 2012 and Universal, Dr. Seuss Enterprises, and Random House have joined NEA's Read Across America, creating new posters and classroom guides for the NEA campaign.

Be a part of this flurry (or furry) of reading excitement! Get involved in supporting children's literacy in our community:

Since this NEA supported endeavor is designed to put every child in the company of a book, take the opportunity to read and enjoy! Read to a child in your life.

Help set a good example. Contact a local preschool or Head Start program and volunteer with your child to share a story with younger children.

Bring children to your public library. From story hours for toddlers to career planning for teens, the library has something for everyone.

Make sure those who are in need have plenty to read. Donate books to local organizations.

Resolve to make March 2 the first of many days you volunteer to read at a school, afterschool program, community center, library, or daycare facility. You can make a difference to future generations of readers.

NEA estimates that last year almost 45 million children and adults celebrated the joy of reading on Dr. Seuss's birthday. This year they hope to bring a nation of readers together to really drive home the message about the importance of reading.

For more information on Read Across America, please visit www.nea.org/readacross.

Let's all join together on March 2, and every day thereafter, to ensure that children have caring adults to share books and rich reading experiences.