

# APA January/February 2015 Newsletter

## What The APA Has Done For Me Lately: Wages & Healthcare

*by Maury Koffman, APA President*

Look around you. While fully funded health care is a cultural norm at MSU, with no out-of-pocket monthly premium, few places of employment offer the same quality of care and access as bargained by our union for members on campus. But, our benefits did not come without a fight.

In the last round of contract negotiations, the University spent months trying to jam through what they called a 'consumer driven health care plan.' In function, what it meant was a high deductible plan that would have required members to pay the first \$4,000 for single coverage or \$8,000 for family coverage before insurance would kick in.

Additionally, they were pushing for a total elimination of prescription drug coverage and a 20% co-insurance for all costs above the deductible. That co-insurance would have meant that in a catastrophic medical incident that cost \$250,000, the individual would suffer a second injury when hit with a \$50,000 co-insurance health care bill. I don't know about you, but I'm not familiar with any APA member who could absorb an \$8,000 deductible, let alone a \$50,000 medical bill, without it drastically impacting the member's life.

In addition to fully funded health care through December 31, 2017, the APA is proud to have negotiated wage increases each year and additional lump sum bonuses. The APA contractually negotiated salaries work as a floor and there is no ceiling. The intention is to ensure all union members receive recognition for their contributions on campus by guaranteeing a wage increase.

In 2014, APA members received an October 2% base wage increase and an additional lump sum payment of \$1,032 earlier in that year in January. For most members, that equated to roughly a 4% wage enhancement in 2014.

In 2015, APA members are slated to receive a January lump sum payment of \$961 and an October base wage increase of 2.5%, yet again equating to another 4% wage enhancement in one year.

We all have a passion and love for MSU. And we all want to believe that the University will do right by its employees. The harsh reality is that MSU is still an employer, with a billion dollar annual budget, and the union is the only way to balance the power and have an equal voice to ensure a fair and equitable workplace.

A strong union with an active membership is our only opportunity to have a forum that compels MSU to engage us and address member benefits and concerns.

If you ask me, our union dues are a great bargain when compared to my wage increases each year, lump sum bonuses, fully funded health care, and a vibrant 403(b) retirement program among many other benefit.

Again I say, look around you. Where unions don't exist or have reduced power, the benefits we realize at MSU are not even a consideration. I cherish what my union has negotiated for me. It impacts my life everyday. And that's why I am so proud to be a member of the APA.

## APA Election Information

Per the APA Constitution and Bylaws, the annual APA Executive Board election shall be conducted by March 31 of each year. The 2015 election is scheduled to run from March 19 – March 31, 2015.

The 2015 election will include:

### APA Executive Board

Five (5) seats on the APA Executive Board with terms ending in 2018

### MEA/NEA/RA Delegate

Five (5) MEA/NEA/RA delegate positions with terms ending in 2018

This communication serves as notice of the election and the opening of candidate nominations. All nominations must be submitted via email to the chair of the APA 2015 Elections Committee, Sue Brandt, at brandts@msu.edu no later than 12:00pm (noon) on Thursday, February 12, 2015.

Individuals must be APA members in good standing to nominate or be nominated for office. After the close of nominations, properly nominated candidates will be contacted by the Elections Committee Chair to confirm their willingness to run for office. The APA Elections Committee includes: Sue Brandt (Chair), Dave Graff, Carol Graysmith, Pat Hampton and Grimaldo Robles.

Each year, the APA Nominations and Elections Committee works diligently to operate an efficient, accurate and transparent election in compliance with the APA Constitution and Bylaws. In doing so, the Committee has scheduled an open ballot testing on March 10, 2015 at 5:15pm at the APA Office, located at 3474 Alaiedon Parkway, Suite 400, Okemos, MI 48864. Election results will be done on March 31, 2015 at 5:15pm at the APA Office. Both of these public election events are open to full members of the APA. An election results announcement will be communicated with the membership March 31, 2015.

Further announcements around the election will be provided in future APA newsletters and via the official APA ListServ. Please watch your email for important election information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sue Brandt, brandts@msu.edu.

## Expanded Autism Coverage

*by Melissa Sortman, MEA Uniserv Director*

The MSU self-funded health care coverage will include autism claims for children age 0-19 beginning January 2015. Previously, the coverage was limited to autism claims for children age 0-8. Due to the Mental Health Parity Act and standard of care required under the Affordable Health Care Act, the Joint Health Care Committee (a coalition of Labor and Management) expanded autism coverage.

The APA, in partnership with the Coalition of Labor (CLO) on campus, identified the need for autism coverage for our respective membership. The APA and CLO had been advocating within the Joint Health Care Committee to provide autism coverage. We were successful in achieving the first critical step in autism coverage through bargaining the Wage and Health Memorandum of Understanding 2014-2017.

Michigan mandated under Public Act 101 of 2012 that commercial and non-profit insurance carriers provide autism coverage. Michigan State University is a self-insured provider and does not have to comply with the coverage requirements of insured plans. Any autism coverage had to be bargained in the Wage and Health Memorandum of Understanding.

The autism coverage commenced on January 1, 2014. It covers Autism Diagnosis, Pharmaceuticals, Psychiatric, Psychological, and Therapeutic services (Speech, Occupational, Applied Behavior Analysis, and Physical therapies; and social workers) for children that have been assessed and diagnosed by three Center of Excellence on autism: Spectrum Health System, University of Michigan Health System or Michigan State University.

The Legislature appropriated funds for self-insured employers like MSU by creating an Autism Reimbursement Program. The fund was originally appropriated with \$15 million dollars in 2012-2013 fiscal year, an additional \$11 million dollars for 2013-2014 fiscal year, and no funds were appropriated to the fund in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. As of September 30, 2014 the balance in the fund was \$22 million.

MSU has an expert on autistic medical coverage in Dr. Jane Turner, a professor at the College of Human Medicine, Department of Pediatric and Human Development. Dr. Turner is on Governor Snyder's Autism Council charged with overseeing Michigan's Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) State Plan. Having a leader in the field on campus assisted MSU's agreement to expand autism coverage to the self-insured plan. She is a true advocate for children with autism.

If your family has any concerns regarding the autism coverage and related behavioral, speech and occupational coverage, please contact the APA office at (517) 999-4004 or

email msuapa@msu.edu. The APA would like to work with you to ensure the coverage is implemented for the best outcome for your family.

For more information:

1) Senate Fiscal Agency Analysis of PA 101

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billanalysis/Senate/pdf/2011-SFA-0414-N.pdf>

2) Frequently Asked Questions about PA 101

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/LARA\\_Autism\\_Fund\\_FAQ\\_FINAL\\_400157\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/LARA_Autism_Fund_FAQ_FINAL_400157_7.pdf)

3) Autism Coverage Reimbursement Fund

[http://www.michigan.gov/difs/0,5269,7-303-13047\\_13049-297217-.00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/difs/0,5269,7-303-13047_13049-297217-.00.html)

4) Autism Coverage Fund Senate Fiscal Analysis 2014

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billanalysis/Senate/pdf/2013-SFA-5742-L.pdf>

5) For additional information and resources, families may want to contact Autism Alliance of Michigan, [autismallianceofmichigan.org](http://autismallianceofmichigan.org) or Autism Speaks, [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org).

## Questions from the Trenches

For this installment of APA Questions From The Trenches, we asked APA President Maury Koffman to highlight the main questions raised by members in response to the communications regarding the January 2015 Lump Sum bonus payment.

**What is the gross payment members will receive now that the University has chosen to unilaterally violate our contract and issue only partial payment in January 30, 2015 paycheck?**

Members should receive a gross, lump sum payment of \$961.81 subject to taxes, deductions, and any other garnishments. Per the ratified contract, the \$961.81 will be issued in full for 100% full-time equivalent (FTE) status employees and reduced on a proportional basis for part-time employees.

**I understand we are only going to be paid a portion of the full payment on January 30, 2015. What was the full amount that should be paid if the University complied with the mutually ratified Wage and Health Care Agreement?**

Had the University proceeded with the legally binding contract, the APA anticipated full payment to have been \$1,056.39 for 100% FTE bargaining unit members.

**How much is being unilaterally withheld by MSU?**

In a disappointing unilateral action by the University, the APA has been informed that MSU intends to withhold roughly \$100 from each member's payment under the theory that should the plaintiff prevail in his legal appeal regarding the January 2015 lump sum bonus payment (fully explained in the December 11, 2014 APA email), the same impact would apply for the upcoming January 2015 payment. Rest assured the APA is using all necessary and legal avenues to enforce our ratified collective bargaining agreement.

**What makes someone eligible for the payment?**

To be eligible for the payment, the individual must have been (1) actively employed on January 1, 2015, (2) be MSU health care benefits eligible, and (3) a member of the APA bargaining unit. Even if a member invoked the health care waiver, s/he is still eligible for the lump sum payment if s/he met the eligibility criteria. And, if both an individual and his/her spouse/OEI were eligible for the payment, both APA members should receive the payment.

**How will the January 2014 payment be issued?**

The payment will be noted as special pay and should be included in the member's January 2015 regular paycheck slated to be issued on January 30.

**If I was eligible for the full payment as of January 1, 2015 but I subsequently leave MSU before the amount in dispute is distributed, will I still receive the amount that was wrongfully withheld by the University?**

Yes. The eligibility criteria will remain the same and therefore if an individual satisfied the eligibility criteria as of January 1, 2015, the full amount must be issued to the APA member even if that individual leaves MSU before the withheld amount is distributed.

**What are the steps from here?**

In an effort to enforce our contract as ratified, the Michigan Education Association is providing full assistance to the APA and using all legal means necessary to ensure the Wage and Health Care Agreement is enforced as ratified by the APA membership and the University. The APA will continue to keep members informed of any substantive updates related to the payment.

**Who should I call with my additional questions?**

APA members should feel free to contact the APA office at 517.999.4004 or via email at [msuapa@msu.edu](mailto:msuapa@msu.edu) with any questions or concerns.

## Your Fellow APs

*Interview by Laura Wise, APA Executive Board*

**The featured APA Member for this newsletter is Dean Matsudo who is an Operations Coordinator for the East Neighborhood through Residence Education and Housing Services.**

*How long have you been at MSU?*

In 1979, my first job was doing pots and pans as a student employee at Case Hall. I was promoted to a student cook, then to a student supervisor. I became a full time supervisor in 1980 after graduating. I trained at Kellogg Center, then worked at West Circle as a Food Services Supervisor. I worked at McDonel Hall, Snyder-Phillips & Mason-Abbot Halls as a Night Manager, Assistant Manager at West Circle and Brody Halls, Manager of Holden, Wilson, Holmes & Shaw. I have also worked as a Conference Coordinator and Operations Coordinator after University Housing and Residence Life combined to become Residence Education and Housing Services. I have worked in ALL Residence Halls at MSU.

*Have you been a member of APA the whole time?*

I have been a member of the APA for 2 ½ years.

*What brought you to your job at MSU?*

I came to Michigan State because I met the Department Chair of Communications while I was doing research at the East West Center at the University of Hawaii. Bradley Greenberg recruited me to MSU. I transferred to MSU after 4 years at the University of Hawaii and I graduated from MSU in 1980 with a Bachelor's in Communications (with Honors).

*What do you love about working at MSU?*

Special memories:

- As a student cook – making 1,000 Grilled Cheese and Ham & Cheese sandwiches on one shift.
- As a student supervisor – all halls had Special Dining Rooms – students would dress up in suits and dresses to be served a special meal, like going out to eat at a fancy restaurant. We would have special meals and groove to the disco music.
- As a manager – taking the staff of Holden Hall to U of M and Eastern to see their halls and food services – I learned that if we could put napkins on the tables, we would save the department over \$50,000 a year (over a million dollars has been saved by changing one item).

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

I have a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do and am a Bronze Certified Coach in United State Bowling Congress. I am also a Certified Youth Volunteer Coach, Director on the USBC Greater Lansing Youth Bowling Association and Youth Representative on Greater Lansing USBC Bowling Association. I have been involved in youth bowling for over 25 years. I enjoy Disney World and Disney Land and love roller coasters. I also enjoy spending time with my family – Wife – Sheryl, Son's – Tim and Tom, Dogs – Oreo (Black Pug) and Vega (Scottish Terrier)

## Answers Nearby! Your Area Representative Resource

*by Nicholas Bourland, APA Vice President*

What does my contract guarantee? How do MSU procedures affect me? Can my supervisor do that? These and countless other questions are asked every day by APA members about the wages, benefits, terms and working conditions of their MSU employment.

The MSU Administrative Professional Association works hard to provide a multitude of resources to help meet the every day information needs of our fellow members. In addition to the support provided by the main APA office, community and information sessions, and new member welcomes; a focus has been placed on the steady expansion and training of the Area Representative program.

### **Q: What does an Area Representative do?**

A: Area representatives are members meant to be local, first points of contact with other APA members. ARs typically welcome new members to the Area, assist in organizing APA events, answer basic member questions, connect members with the right resources at APA and MSU, and provide information updates about the APA/MEA/NEA.

### **Q: How do I contact an Area Representative?**

A: The APA website has a page devoted to the AR program ([Area Representatives](#)). MSU is divided into four large areas ([map](#)) and has trained ARs serving in each area. Please feel free to contact any area representative listed, regardless of Area. New ARs are continually added to the site as they finish the training. Any AR will be happy to assist you.

### **Q: Does my supervisor have to know I contacted an Area Representative?**

A: No! APA routinely and confidentially counsels and advises members, even if there's no grievance pending. ARs will always be discrete and will not discuss your circumstances with anyone else, other than to ask further questions to the APA Officers. ARs understand the importance of your privacy.

### **Q: If my supervisor informed me to contact my union representative, whom do I contact?**

A: Please call the APA Office right away [517-999-4004](tel:517-999-4004). ARs may aid the APA Officers and Staff in a disciplinary process, but will rarely replace them.

### **Q: How do I learn more about or volunteer to become an Area Representative?**

A: Please contact the APA Vice Chairperson, Nick Bourland at [bourlan2@msu.edu](mailto:bourlan2@msu.edu) for

more information about the AR Program. A training series to add more ARs to the cadre is set to begin late this month.

## Winter Coat Drive Update

*by Elias Lopez, Executive Board Member & Community Based Events Ad-Hoc Committee Chairperson*

Michigan's cold, icy weather can be a challenge, even for many individuals already accustomed to it at MSU. New students from warmer climates often quickly realize the need for several crucial additions to their wardrobes as the snow starts flying. However, the associated expenses are often beyond the means of some students, including many from migrant labor families coming to MSU for the dream of education, but with few funds and no experience with freezing temperatures.

Thanks to many APA members and supporters, winter has become a little easier for a number of at-need students. Over 300 coats and articles of winter apparel were donated during the 2014 APA Winter Coat Drive. Clothing contributions were collected by APA volunteers at several locations across campus during the December/January initiative.

Donations have been sorted and are being distributed to worthy student programs, including MSU Migrant Student Services, MSU Family Resource Center, and Lansing Public Schools. The APA Community Based Events Committee would like to thank all those individuals, groups, and departments joining in the drive. If you wish to donate any additional items, they can be dropped off at C249 Holden hall.