

# APA July/August 2013 Newsletter

## Health Care & Wage Tentative Agreement

Serving as co-chief negotiator, MEA UniServ Director Melissa Sortman lead efforts on behalf of the APA and the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU to negotiate a successor health care and wage agreement with the University. Throughout negotiations, updates were provided in our newsletter articles, discussions took place during official APA meetings, and 36 APA small community luncheons were held around campus.

The bargaining team reached a tentative health care agreement with the University on June 24, 2013 at 11:50p.m. The agreement includes no concessions.

The tentative agreement contains a four-year plan that provides quality health care coverage with a fully funded option for the period starting January 1, 2014 and ending December 31, 2017.

Under our current health care and wage agreement, our annual health care spend was to remain under a 5% increase each year. Due to the effective stewardship of APA members and other support staff, we saved millions of dollars below our annual targets.

Through having an equal voice with the University at the bargaining table, the APA and other unions were able to achieve recognition of our health care stewardship. As a result, current APA bargaining unit members as of January 1, 2014, will receive a health care savings disbursement provided in their January 2014 paycheck for health care savings achieved between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2013.

An additional health care savings disbursement will be provided to members in their January 2015 paycheck for all current APA bargaining unit members as of January 1, 2015, for health care savings achieved between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

The final savings has not been finalized so we do not currently know the exact amount of the disbursements. Yet, we are confident it will be hundreds of dollars to each union member.

Through the tentative agreement, we will return to the historical practice of tying salary increases to increases in health care using the following matrix:

| HEALTH CARE COST EXPERIENCE |   |       | BASE WAGE FACTOR AVERAGE |
|-----------------------------|---|-------|--------------------------|
| 0.00%                       | - | 1.00% | 2.60%                    |
| 1.01%                       | - | 2.00% | 2.50%                    |
| 2.01%                       | - | 3.00% | 2.30%                    |
| 3.01%                       | - | 4.00% | 2.20%                    |
| 4.01%                       | - | 5.00% | 2.00%                    |
| 5.01%                       | - | 6.00% | 1.90%                    |

| HEALTH CARE COST EXPERIENCE |   |        | BASE WAGE FACTOR AVERAGE |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|--------------------------|
| 6.01%                       | - | 7.00%  | 1.70%                    |
| 7.01%                       | - | 8.00%  | 1.50%                    |
| 8.01%                       | - | 9.00%  | 1.30%                    |
| 9.01%                       | - | 10.00% | 1.20%                    |
| 10.01%                      | - | 11.00% | 1.00%                    |
| 11.01%                      | - | +      | 0%                       |

We also made significant progress to our health care plan by adding Autism coverage for children 0-8 years of age. Complete details of the coverage can be found in the tentative agreement posted on the APA website ([www.msuapa.org](http://www.msuapa.org)).

The APA Executive Board reviewed and discussed the tentative agreement during the meeting on Tuesday, July 23, 2013. The APA Executive Board unanimously voted to transmit the tentative agreement to the APA membership with recommendation to ratify.

The APA has posted a copy of the complete health care tentative agreement on the APA website as well as a summary page to help explain the main elements of the tentative agreement. The tentative agreement and the summary can be found under the Health Care and Wages link on the APA website ([www.msuapa.org](http://www.msuapa.org)) or by clicking on the following link: [http://www.msuapa.org/?page\\_id=1530](http://www.msuapa.org/?page_id=1530)

The APA has scheduled information sessions as an opportunity for members to openly discuss questions and concerns regarding the tentative agreement. The APA information sessions will be held:

Thursday, August 1, from 5:15pm – 6:30pm in Com Arts room 147  
Friday, August 2, from 7:45am – 8:45am in Berkey Hall room 117  
Friday, August 2, from 12noon – 1:15pm in Wells Hall room B122

In addition to the APA member sessions, the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU will be hosting several sessions, which will cover the same information presented in the APA sessions, which you are also invited to attend:

Tuesday, July 30, 5pm-7pm, Erickson Room 252  
Wednesday, July 31, 11am-1pm, Vet Med, Room A174 N&S  
Monday, August 5, 5pm-7pm, Comm Arts, Room 171  
Tuesday, August 6, 11am-1:30pm, Int'l Center Room 117  
Tuesday, August 6, 8pm-10pm, Phys Plant  
Friday, August 9, 11am-1:30pm, Admin Bldg, Room 155

The health care tentative agreement requires ratification by each constituent labor union. The anticipated calendar for the APA health care and wage tentative agreement

ratification vote is August 2 – 15. Once electronic balloting opens, you will receive an email with the link to the online ballot.

Please take time to review the health care tentative agreement as well as the summary provided for you on the APA website.

The APA and Coalition bargaining team is proud to recommend the tentative agreement, believing that it exemplifies the value of unions. The employer, the students and the taxpayers of Michigan benefit as we continue to explore the most effective way to steward our health care.

At the same time, the unions protected workers from the impact of major cost shifting and benefit cutting measures being implemented by other Universities and public and private employers throughout Michigan. Without the hard work of the APA/MEA/NEA and other unions, and by having an equal voice at the table with MSU, the employees would be paying far more for health care.

Please feel free to attend an information session or contact us at the APA office at 517.353.4898 if you have questions or concerns you would like to discuss.

## New MSU 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 the CLO have 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 fall under the stipulations of the new law. Any coverage had to be bargained in the Wage and Health Memorandum of Understanding.

The new coverage shall commence on January 1, 2014. It will cover 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 one of three Center of Excellence on autism: Spectrum Health System, University of Michigan Health System or Michigan State University (this new assessment center is anticipated to be operational by January 2014).

Diagnosis and assessment prior to January 1, 2014 may include assessments from Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit Children's Hospital, Spectrum Health System or the University of Michigan Health System. If your child has already been assessed and diagnosed through these centers, your claims will be covered as of January 1, 2014.

Research shows that early assessment and treatment of autism has the best medical and behavioral outcomes. The coverage will focus on the early childhood years. The coverage will be up for children up to and through age 8. The annual maximum for services will be \$40,000.

The Legislature appropriated funds for self-insured employers like MSU by creating an Autism Reimbursement Program. The fund was appropriated with \$15 million dollars in 2012-2013 fiscal year and an additional \$11 million dollars for 2013-2014 fiscal year.

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 newly created Autism Council charged with overseeing Michigan's Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) State Plan. <http://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-281766-.00.html>. Having a leader in the field on campus will assist MSU in agreeing to add autism coverage to the self-insured plan. She is a true advocate for children with autism.

If your family will benefit from MSU covering autistic claims and related behavioral, speech and occupational coverage, please contact the APA office at (517) 353-4898 or email [msuapa@msu.edu](mailto:msuapa@msu.edu). APA would like to work with you to ensure the coverage is implemented for the best outcome for your family.

For more information:

- 1) 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).
- 2) Autism Reimbursement Program information  
<http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-62954-287554-.00.html>
- 3) Senate Fiscal Agency Analysis of PA 101  
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billanalysis/Senate/pdf/2011-SFA-0414-N.pdf>
- 4) 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)  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/difs/Autism\\_Reimbursement\\_FAQ\\_416096\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/difs/Autism_Reimbursement_FAQ_416096_7.pdf)

## Your Fellow APs

Laura King, Unit Human Resources Administrator for Residential & Hospitality Services (RHS)

*How long have you been at MSU? Have you held other positions prior to your current one at the University?*

I started in 1999 as a Food Supervisor in Dining Services at Owen Cafe. In 2002 I moved to Akers and Hubbard where I received my first promotion to a Dining Service Manager I. I stayed there for 5 years. In 2006 I moved to South Complex to be a Human Resources Manager. In 2007 I received my next promotion to be the Housing Operations Manager at the newly opening University Village. In 2008 I had an opportunity to become the Divisional Trainer for RHS and I have been here ever since.

*Can you tell me a little about what you do? Any specific projects you are working on?*  
Currently I am in charge of training our 900 Full-time Team Members in a variety of professional development classes. I also assist with training the 6000 students we have here in RHS on Celebrate State our Divisional Guest Service Program. Currently my biggest project is assisting MSU HR with the implementation of The Spartan Experience, which is a Customer Service Program that started in RHS as Celebrate State. The University's Program The Spartan Experience will launch in September of 2013. I am helping to teach content and facilitation to the trainers who are helping us.

*What brought you to your job at MSU?*

My husband. Being a CMU graduate I was looking to move from CMU and MT. Pleasant to MSU and East Lansing. He was a Spartan and thought it would be really neat to have a wife work at his favorite University ever.

*What do you love about working at MSU?*

The PEOPLE. I get to work with the most amazing people every day and they teach me something new in every class. Working at MSU has also helped me to identify that I have a passion for Student Development. I just started graduate studies in HALE (Higher, Adult, & Lifelong Education) in May 2013 and I am going to go all the way to my doctorate.

*Can you share a little about the challenges of working at MSU/RHS?*

Changing so fast.....sometimes it hard to adjust that fast to the new direction and expectations. It is also what makes working here so amazing though too. We always have something new on the horizon that keeps things fresh and interesting.

*What are your favorite things to do when not at work?*

Indoor Spinning. I am an instructor at IM West. I also love biking. I usually do a couple charity rides in the summer. On August 3, 2013 I will do a 102 mile ride for the Susan G. Komen in Ann Arbor.

## Outraged Yet?

by Leo Sell, Legislative Committee Chairperson

If you aren't, you probably should be. At this point, here in Michigan, it appears that costs for uninsured people will continue to be covered indirectly by the insurance premiums for your medical insurance and mine. Expanding Medicaid, as envisioned by the Affordable Care Act, is supposed to help alleviate that cost to hospitals (which ultimately adjust their charges against medical insurance to reflect un-reimbursed care costs). The expansion didn't happen in a timely manner, and quite likely won't happen at all.

Add to that efforts across the country to reduce women's rights and voting rights. The Supreme Court effectively finding that racism is not an issue anymore and vacating the key provision of the Voting Rights Act, is heinous. But the decision plays into the hands of those currently with redistricting power in the states.

Add attitudes from the uber-wealthy, like Charles Koch, who sit upon their billions of dollars and state nonsense about how elimination of the minimum wage would be beneficial to the poorest of us.

Wealth has gone up in this country, but average income has been declining notably. The income disparity is larger than ever. And those with wealth and power appear to be controlling the outcome. We have only our vote – for now.

I hope you are paying attention. Every election is an important one, from the minor school and municipal ones, to those that elect our state and national legislators. We all need to be paying attention to actions, positions, and our own collective best interest as we consider which candidates to support and vote for.

MEA's political activities are oriented toward identifying those candidates who are most supportive of our interests as parents and educators. You can get involved in those efforts. I'd be happy to help you.

## Questions from the Trenches

### **What is the probationary period for a new employee in the APA?**

APA members new to campus or entering into APA from other University employment serve a twelve-month probationary period. The probationary period can be completed earlier than twelve months by your supervisor.

### **Do I have to serve a probationary period if my position was reclassified into an APA position?**

A member whose current position was simply reclassified is not required to serve either a probationary or a trial period.

### **How do I get professional feedback on my work performance while I'm on probation?**

Under the APA contract, after a six-month time period, an interim written evaluation should be prepared by your supervisor and reviewed with you so you have adequate time to address any concerns.

### **When am I eligible for benefits and leave time?**

Your contractual benefits commence at the start of your employment. Health care and dental benefits begin on the first day of the month following your hire date. Benefits beginning immediately include: vacation accrual, sick leave, bereavement rights, pro-rated personal leave, matching contributions to 403(b) retirement plans (if enrolled), ability to contribute to a 457 supplemental retirement plan, and coverage by/access to contractually agreed insurances.

If you are age 35 or older, you must contribute 5% of your base salary to your 403(b) plan and the University will contribute an additional 10% of your annual salary to your plan. There is no vesting period for the retirement plans.

### **What changes once I have successfully completed my probationary period?**

#### *Job Protection*

Just cause is in place for all discipline following completion of the probationary period. Just cause is contractually guaranteed and enforced job protections requiring all discipline be based on just, equitable and reasonable actions.

#### *Compensation Increases*

After one year of service, a member whose salary is less than the progression level salary for the grade level and has satisfactory performance will receive a progression level



raise. Members also receive annual wage increases during their probationary period. To find your progression level amount go to [www.msuapa.org](http://www.msuapa.org) and review contract Article 17.

In addition, an annual wage increase is provided each year on our contract year with the October paycheck. Departments may also give out-of-cycle wage increases. The contract provides a minimum base wage, not a maximum.

#### *Education Assistance*

Members are eligible for educational assistance after 12 months of continuous full-time equivalent service months. The educational assistance benefit covers a percentage of MSU tuition fees at the life long learning credit hour rate, for up to 14 credits per academic year. The percentage of coverage is based on graduate or undergraduate class level.

For non-credit courses and technology/certificate training, Human Resource Development classes are offered and members have up to \$800 that may be used per year.

#### **How do I get more information about APA?**

- Go to [www.msuapa.org](http://www.msuapa.org) for a copy of your contract, the most recent newsletter, and pertinent information related to your work environment.
- Call the APA office at 517-353-4898.
- Email [msuapa@msu.edu](mailto:msuapa@msu.edu) if you would like to get more involved with the APA.

## APA Day at the Lansing Lugnuts

The APA invites you to join fellow APs for the Lansing Lugnuts game at the Cooley Law School Stadium on Sunday, August 25th at 2:05pm. This event is designed to bring APA members and their families together for a day of fun and baseball.

For every adult ticket purchased by an APA member, up to 2 children's tickets (ages 3-17) will be provided free of charge. Each adult ticket is \$11 and may be purchased at: [https://www.what-if.com/SECURE/LLB/grouporder/LL\\_13\\_MSU\\_åAPA.html](https://www.what-if.com/SECURE/LLB/grouporder/LL_13_MSU_åAPA.html)

August 25th is also Kids Day where families can play catch on the field from 1:00pm – 1:30pm and kids get to run the bases for free immediately following the game. An APA member is guaranteed to win a Lugnuts gift during the Group Raffle! Also, our group photo will be taken and posted on the Lugnuts website where it can be downloaded for free.

We hope you will join us for a day of fun and baseball.

For more information, please feel free to contact Todd Ring at [ringt@msu.edu](mailto:ringt@msu.edu)

## Face the World



Face The World is not well known to many people across America, however, Ann & Curt Eure found out exactly what it was when Ann received an email at work from the Face the World Organization asking for a family to host an exchange student from Sweden. Ann, the mother of 5 daughters, and a foster mother of more than 17 foster children across Michigan looked at this as another opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child. The first thing Ann wanted to know was, “What do I need to provide for this young lady?” Ann was disappointed when she called the phone number listed, and learned that the Sweden girl had been taken by another host family. She was also told that more than 200 students were on a waiting list, for a host family to be placed. Face the World is a nonprofit educational and cultural exchange organization with the main headquarters in Novato, California. For over 15 years, Face

the World’s Mission has been to provide International Exchange student participants with a quality educational experience in America that will enhance their growth and encourage friendships for a lifetime both here and abroad.

Face The World – place students with volunteer host families who provide the student with a stable and secure home environment. Students will attend high school in the local school district of the host family. Host families can experience firsthand the joy of sharing in a new friendship and learning about a new culture. Ann and Curt chose to host a student from Korea. She is 15 years old, and enjoys many of the same activities as the Eure’s such as playing piano, movies, game night, eating out, and going to church. American host families are expected to provide the student with meals, a bed, love, and care. Students are to be treated in the home with the same rules and manner as your own child. Exchange Students cover their own personal expenses and have their own health insurance. The Eure’s have enjoyed their cultural exchange experience so much that they are now International Exchange Student Spokespersons for the Face the World Organization. The goal is to assist in placing every student who desires to experience the American culture in the best homes and loving families across America. If you would like to assist in making a dream come true for an International student by hosting a student next semester, please email [sparklesuccess@yahoo.com](mailto:sparklesuccess@yahoo.com) for an application and interview. You will be so glad you did.

## Saving Money Through Your Membership

Are you getting the most out of your APA membership? Many members are aware of the contract, benefits, and representation and just-cause protections guaranteed by their union membership, but may not know of the opportunities for savings we gain as members of MEA & NEA. Free or discounted services for life/home/auto insurance, shopping, dining, wireless plans, travel and more can be accessed through your membership card. APs have been known to recoup the equivalent of their dues through the savings programs offered to MEA/NEA members.

Free Life Insurance – Members are encouraged to activate their completely free life insurance policy that comes with membership. [www.neamb.com/insurance/nea-complimentary-life-insurance.htm](http://www.neamb.com/insurance/nea-complimentary-life-insurance.htm)

MEA Financial Services – Purchase auto and homeowners insurance at a discount, buy annuities and mutual funds, long-term health care, and a VISA card through MEA Financial Services at [www.meafs.com](http://www.meafs.com) or [517/351-2122](tel:5173512122) or [800/292-1950](tel:8002921950).

MEA/NEA Membership Card – Use your membership card to get savings around town. Show your card at restaurants, stores, and services to receive MEA discounts. To request a replacement card, please visit [www.mea.org/contact/meacard\\_request.html](http://www.mea.org/contact/meacard_request.html).

MEA Member Services – Locate discounts on shopping, dining, dry cleaning, and other savings online in the “Members Only” tab at [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org). Have your membership number ready.

NEA Member Services – Find even more savings on financial products, travel, shopping, wireless plans, and other goods and services can be found at [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com).  
Passageways Travel – Airline tickets and travel packages at low group rates and discounts, and can be reached at [800/684-7384](tel:8006847384) or [517/353-9898](tel:5173539898).