Available Savings Programs for MSU Health Plan Enrollees

MSU health plan enrollees and their dependents may be interested in exploring the Healthy Blue Xtras and Blues 365 programs.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network members can obtain exclusive savings on a variety of healthy products and services in Michigan and across the United States. Enrollees may show their Blues ID card at participating retailers or type in the offer code online to take advantage of the discounts.

One Healthy Blues Xtra participant to note is TruHearing, an exclusive hearing aid savings vendor. The average savings from this vendor ranges from 30 to 50 percent off the retail price of digital hearing aid models from some of the industry’s leading manufacturers. TruHearing has negotiated a discounted rate of $75 for the first office visit that includes testing, a full evaluation, recommendation and three follow-up visits with your purchase at no additional cost. Each hearing aid purchase comes with extra benefits, such as free batteries and a manufacturer’s warranty.

Visit [http://healthybluextras.com/](http://healthybluextras.com/) to access available savings offers on everything from hearing aids to gym memberships to groceries.

MSU Retirement Plan Fee Credit

Last spring we explained that MSU has had great success in working with our retirement vendors to reduce the expenses of the investments in the MSU retirement plans. We’ve not only reduced the retirement plan administrative costs for new contributions in the new accounts that began January 1, 2012, we’ve also been able to reduce the total fund expenses that MSU faculty, staff and retirees are being charged in their retirement accounts for contributions prior to 2012, which we call the legacy accounts.

Similar to the fee credits that were allocated to participant’s legacy accounts in May 2014, there will be fee credits allocated this month. This fee credit (also referred to as plan servicing credit or revenue credit) represents the excess of fees you have already paid above the necessary administrative expenses by the two vendors for 2014. The fee credit is only for those that have a balance in either a Fidelity or TIAA-CREF legacy account. You will see this fee credit in your March quarter-end retirement account statement from either Fidelity or TIAA-CREF.
Seeking Nominations for 2015 Clerical-Technical Award

Is there an outstanding CT in your unit who deserves special recognition for his or her skills, abilities and dedication to excellence? Nominate that special person for the 2015 Clerical Technical Recognition Award! The winner will receive $1,000 in recognition of their outstanding service, along with a special recognition reception. The award is sponsored by the Thomas and Concettina Gliozzo Endowment Fund. Criteria for the award include:

- Respect of their peers and continuous diligence in attending to their daily responsibilities;
- Concern for students, faculty, staff and colleagues in their respective units, particularly (but not limited to) those assisting overseas U.S. students and faculty, international students, international faculty, etc.;
- Extraordinary and significant contributions to the community or public service;
- Innovative thinking in facilitating unit tasks and responsibilities.

Individuals may be nominated by any member of the university community. To nominate an individual you will need to complete a nomination form and collect a minimum of two support letters (maximum of five) by MSU colleagues. You may include additional information if it supports the applicant’s nomination. You can find nomination forms at [http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/CTrecognitionAward.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/CTrecognitionAward.htm). Submit the nomination form and attachments (preferably PDF) by 5 p.m. on June 8, 2015 to ServiceAwards@hr.msu.edu, Attn: CT Recognition Award Selection Committee.

Social Media & Labor Relations

During the past five years, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has ruled on several cases which involve social media usage in the workplace. The NLRB’s focus has been to maintain an employee’s right to improve wages or working conditions, even when the employee uses social media outlets to exercise those rights.

In the August 2014 case of Triple Play Sports Bar and Grille, the NLRB found in favor of two employees who were terminated for Facebook posts which criticized their employer’s failure to appropriately withhold taxes from their paychecks. The NLRB concluded the purpose of the posts was not to criticize the company but to encourage the employer to address problems which are considered a condition of employment.

In Durham Schools Services, the employer’s policy stated employees were not allowed to share information related to the company or any of its employees or customers on social media outlets. The NLRB found the policy unreasonably broad as it could be perceived as preventing employees from communicating freely with others regarding work issues and conditions.

Does this mean employees are allowed to post anything they want about work on social media sites? Of course not. The NLRB has ruled employers have the right to:

1. Forbid employees from making statements which can be viewed as the employer’s official position.
2. Prohibit employees from posting threatening comments about coworkers or posting comments that could create a hostile environment based on a protected class (e.g., age, race, gender, etc.).
3. Require employees refrain from disclosing relevant confidential information in any forum, including social media.
4. Restrict employees from using social media for personal use during company time and with company equipment.

MSU developed the following social media guidelines in April 2013: [http://cabs.msu.edu/documents/msu-guidelines-for-social-media.pdf](http://cabs.msu.edu/documents/msu-guidelines-for-social-media.pdf). If you have any questions about an employee’s use of social media please call Employee Relations at 517-353-5510.
MSU Police Has Launched a New Alert Portal

As part of its continued efforts to improve campus safety, MSU Police has unveiled a new portal for its alert and notification system that gives users both on- and off-campus more flexibility in how they receive information during a threat or emergency.

The portal, which can be found at alert.msu.edu, allows users to more easily review, add and modify existing contact information and/or manage the ways in which they receive emergency and outreach messages.

Users automatically are set to receive emergency notifications, which are urgent messages asking people to take specific actions. Users also can receive outreach messages, which are important notifications given during non-emergency situations.

For help with the MSU Alert Portal, contact alertsupport@police.msu.edu. Users also can complete a survey at http://msupd.link/msualertsurvey1.

MSU Police also has implemented a new “one-button” alert system that allows them to make notifications even quicker. The system allows a basic emergency message to be sent in seconds, until a more detailed message can be crafted.

MSU also is finalizing a mass notification outdoor speaker system on the main campus. The new speakers will replace current siren technology and allow for the launching of either a severe weather warning siren and/or an audible message detailing actions to take. The speaker system is scheduled to be ready by April 1.

Travel Benefits for MSU Employees

The MSU Travel Office is pleased to offer a variety of discounts to faculty and staff, both for MSU business travel and for personal travel.

Personal travel discounts include:
• Delta Air Lines airfare
• National and Enterprise car rentals
• Detroit Metropolitan Airport parking program
• East Lansing-vicinity hotels
• Delta Vacations Program
• TripIt app
• Passport and visa services

Business travel discounts include:
• Delta Air Lines airfare
• Sun Country Airlines airfare
• United Airlines airfare
• National and Enterprise car rentals
• Detroit Metro Airport parking programs
• “State Rooms”
• East Lansing-vicinity hotels
• Michigan Flyer motor coach to Detroit Metropolitan Airport
• MSU Travel Hub
• TripIt app
• Passport and visa services
• Direct billing of airfare/rail
• Mileage reimbursement

View more details on each of these discounts at http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/travel_discounts/.

If you have questions, please contact the MSU Travel Office at 517-355-5000 or travel@ctlr.msu.edu.

Watch for the Financial IQ Challenge Beginning April 1!

We’re teaming up with one of our retirement vendors, TIAA-CREF, to bring you the What’s Your Financial IQ Challenge 2.0! April is Financial Literacy Month, and we wanted to offer this challenge as a fun way to learn important information about financial planning. All MSU employees are invited to play. Watch for an email announcing the challenge on April 1.
What you may have missed this month on our blog...

Spring 5k Races on MSU’s Campus!

There’s no better way to kick that cabin fever than lacing up those running shoes and participating in a 5k for a great cause. There are plenty of 5k races taking place right here on MSU’s campus in East Lansing this spring.

- The MSU Tower Guard Shamrock 5k will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2015, at 101 Conrad Hall, East Lansing, MI. Check in begins at 10 a.m.
- The IRONDOG 5k will be held on Saturday March 28, 2015, at 736 Wilson Road, East Lansing, MI. Race begins at 4 p.m.
- The Healthy Hustle 5k will be held on Saturday April 11, 2015, at 101 Conrad Hall East Lansing, MI. Check in begins at 9 a.m.
- The Breaking Barriers 5k Run/Walk is on Saturday April 18, 2015, at the MSU Rock at 149 Auditorium Road, East Lansing, MI. The race begins at 11 a.m.

You can find registration links at this blog post.

Electronic I-9 Tips: Hiring International Employees Correctly

Our electronic I-9 system is now fully-operational and has made on-boarding duties much easier for the MSU community. In order to keep the I-9 procedure running as smoothly as possible, please keep these tips in mind when processing international employees:

- International employees cannot use an “unclean” social security card. “Unclean” social security cards will display the phrase “VALID FOR WORK ONLY WITH DHS AUTHORIZATION”. Do not accept “unclean” social security cards as valid documentation.
- Very few employees fall under the non-citizen U.S. national category. Only those born or with ties to the outlying U.S. possessions of American Samoa and Swains Island are born as non-citizen United States nationals. Verify if these characteristics apply before accepting an I-9 with non-citizen U.S. national citizenship.

Read the rest of the blog post by clicking here.

Personalized Cancer Care Webinar

Are you interested in learning more about some of the recent developments in personalized cancer care? On Friday, March 27, 2015 at 1 p.m. you can listen in on a webinar presented by Best Doctors where you will learn what personalized cancer care is, how it is different from current practices, what types of targeted cancer therapies are available and who can benefit the most.

View the blog post for more details and registration!
Professional Development Services’ Education Opportunities

To register or get more information on all upcoming HR Professional Development Services (PDS, formerly HRD) courses, look at the SpartansLearn.msu.edu catalog on the Human Resources website at www.hr.msu.edu or go to SpartansLearn.msu.edu. The current catalog is available under the “What’s New” section of the HR website.

Proving Value: Introduction to Assessments
Wednesday, March 25, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
How do you know the programs you offer are adding value? Assessments provide a method for determining what to measure, how to measure and who to ask. This session will cover a wide range of assessment topics, such as the different types of assessment, various research methods, developing an effective assessment plan and more.

Managing Confrontational Customers
Thursday, March 26, 8:30 a.m. – noon
Presenter: Pam Wyess. $100.
People have high expectations, and often place extreme demands upon those who serve and work with them. In this workshop, you’ll learn techniques to manage stressful interactions so customers walk away feeling positive about their Spartan Experience.

Proving Value: Designing Effective Surveys
Monday, April 20, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
What is the best way to get feedback from your customers to ensure your programs are adding value? How can you gather evidence to get funding and support for a new program? A survey is a commonly used assessment tool, but writing and designing effective surveys is an art that requires careful thought and planning.

New Supervisor Essentials
Thursday, April 16, 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Presenters: Kathie Elliott and Jennie Yelvington, MSU Human Resources. Free.
This session is designed to provide you with support and information to help you get off to a good start in your important role as a leader at MSU. Content includes an overview of leadership skills, administering Employee Relations and a panel discussion with current MSU supervisors. Lunch is provided.

Contact HR
For most HR-related questions or concerns, you should contact our HR Solutions Center at:
• 517-353-4434
• SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu

The following areas of HR can be contacted directly:
• 517-355-0183 or ProDev@hr.msu.edu for questions related to professional development courses.
• 517-353-5510 or hr.er@hr.msu.edu for questions related to unions, grievances, arbitration and employee discipline.