

HR LIAISON NETWORK NEWS



Please make the following information available to employees in your department as appropriate.

August 8, 2016

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PAYROLL REMINDERS

August 10:

- Biweekly PVDs available online

August 11:

- Biweekly EPAs due at noon

August 12:

- Biweekly Pay Day
- PPRs print

August 15:

- Biweekly EPAs due at noon
- PPRs available online

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HUMAN RESOURCES

Benefit Enrollment and iBenefits – Newly Hired International Graduate Student Employees (GSEs)

International students are required to maintain health insurance. Important benefit information has been added to the Human Resources website to address benefit enrollment for international graduate student employees *newly* hired into a benefit-eligible position. For more information regarding the two recommended options for their benefit enrollment, please visit Benefit Information for International Employees available here: <http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/insurance/>.

Because of the time constraints for international students to enroll in coverage to be included in the ISS waiver process, departments should enter these individuals as a priority into iBenefits, ensure the EPA is completed before September 05, 2016 and encourage employees to make their benefit selections as quickly as possible (preferably no later than 7 days from date of hire).

Please share this information with your new international student hires. Contact Benefit Services at benefits@tamu.edu or (979) 862-1718 if you have questions.

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New Semester Means New Employees for iBenefits

At the beginning of each new semester there is an increase in newly hired benefit-eligible employees. Please review these [Processor Tips](#) and remember:

1. New employees must complete the enrollment process within 60 days of their benefit-eligibility date; otherwise, they will default into the A&M Care Plan as a tobacco user.
2. Employees wanting coverage for date of hire must complete enrollment within 7 days of date of hire;

- otherwise, the next available coverage effective date would be the first of the month following submission.
3. If the employee is a Graduate Student Employee, emphasize that the Graduate Student Plan is *NOT* the default plan. They will incur an additional out-of-pocket premium if they do not specifically enroll in the Graduate Student Plan or waive coverage.
 4. Encourage new hires to register for the [New Employee Benefit Orientation](#) and [New Employee Welcome](#).

Please contact your designated Benefits Representative (<http://employees.tamu.edu/findliaisons/>) if you have questions or need additional assistance.

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Understanding Benefit Enrollment Windows for New Hires

Are you confused by the enrollment window for new hires to select their benefits? It can be confusing at times and is frequently misunderstood by new employees. All new benefits-eligible employees have a waiting period for the employer contribution unless they are a direct transfer from another State agency or Institution of Higher Education.

The employee has a 60-day enrollment window from date of hire in a benefits-eligible position to elect and enroll in benefits. During the benefit selection process, the employee will be able to choose the actual effective date of their coverage in iBenefits and will have the following options:

- Date of Hire – only available if the department HR Liaison creates the iBenefits document within 7 days of hire, a new month is not crossed before the selections are made and the employee submits their iBenefits document within the first seven days.
- 1st of the Month Following – makes the effective date of coverage the first day of the month following when the benefit enrollment selections are submitted through iBenefits. It is very important to understand that benefit enrollments are not processed retrospectively. If the month has already begun then the coverage effective date will roll to the next available 1st of the following month.
- Employer Contribution Date – date that the employee qualifies for the employer contribution and is the first of the month following the waiting period which is now available the 1st of the month following 60 days of employment in a benefits-eligible position.

Do you have additional questions or are you uncertain if your employee is a direct transfer? Remember that your designated benefits representative (<http://employees.tamu.edu/findliaisons/>) is available to assist in answering your benefits questions to help ensure that the employee has the correct iBenefits record for their benefit enrollment.

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Does Your New Employee Have Previous State Service?

The beginning of a new semester means a lot of new hire processing. Do any of your new hires have previous State employment? When previous State employment is documented and recorded properly in the University database, it may increase the months of service used to calculate any potential leave accruals and longevity pay. On a monthly basis, Payroll Services sends all new hires a notification requesting their previous state service. State Service forms can be found at <http://payroll.tamu.edu/> under the Employment Verification tab.

Additionally, if the employee is a transfer from another State agency, the Leave Transfer from Other State Agency form found at <http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/leave/vacation/> should be completed for any leave balance transfers. Individuals with previous State employment will need a little extra attention to ensure their leave is administered properly. Department leave administrators will need to 1) access LeaveTraq to check the accrual rates and make any manual adjustments once previous State service has been verified, 2) update the flag for the six months of service completed, if applicable, and 3) process the transaction for any sick or vacation leave balance transfers. Employment with an Independent School District (ISD), Junior or Community College does not count as previous State employment for leave or State service credit. A list of state agencies can be found [online](#).

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FMLA Recertification for New Fiscal Year

It is that time of year again to review leave records of those employees with FMLA-related. Texas A&M University administers the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) on a fiscal year basis; therefore, administrators should review and note the leave records of those employees whose FMLA-related absences (continuous or intermittent) will carry into the next fiscal year. The employees will have to have their family and medical leave recertified to requalify for FMLA benefits.

Please refer to the Human Resources [webpage](#) for important information and a streamlined notification form to use as your employees' FMLA leave transitions into a new fiscal year. Contact Benefit Services at benefits@tamu.edu or

(979) 862-1718 if you have questions.

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Please forward the following five (5) articles to employees in your department.

WELLNESS WORKS! Fitness Sessions

Looking for opportunities to maximize your [Wellness Release Time](#)? Check out our free, on-campus fitness sessions for Texas A&M faculty and staff. Click on the links below for additional scheduling and location information.

- [Fitness Sessions - Summer RecXercise Schedule](#) (now through August 8)
- NEW! [Fitness Sessions - INTERIM RecXercise Schedule](#) (August 9 - 25)
- NEW! [Fitness Sessions - FALL RecXercise Schedule](#) (August 26 -December 8)
- [Fitness Sessions - Ongoing Schedule](#)

For the most up-to-date information about our fitness sessions, please visit

<http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/wellness>.

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New Graduate Student Employee Benefits Orientation

A special benefits orientation has been developed for newly hired Graduate Student employees working in benefits-eligible Graduate Assistant positions. The sessions on Monday, August 22, will provide a benefits overview, important information regarding the enrollment process and a presentation from a Graduate Student Health Plan representative. Please share the [orientation flyer](#) with your new Graduate Assistants and encourage them to attend. Questions can be directed to Benefit Services at benefits@tamu.edu or (979) 862-1718.

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COVIA Mobile Wellness Days - August 24 & 25

Covia Health is providing on-site, state of the art 3-D mammography and bone density screenings right here on campus. By bringing these screening services to the workplace, we are encouraging our employees to take control of their health. On August 24 and 25, the mobile suite will be located the Horticulture Building. For additional information including registration details, see [flyer](#) or [FAQs](#).

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TRS Member Contribution Rate to Increase Effective September 1, 2016

Legislation passed during the 83rd Texas Legislative session included a bill that impacts the member contribution rate for members of the Teachers Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Senate Bill 1458 – increases the member contribution rate phased over a three year period. The final phased increase is effective September 1, 2016 in which the contribution rate will increase from the current rate of 7.2% to 7.7%.

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WELCOA Health Awareness Bulletins

The Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) is one of the nation's premier resources for workplace wellness. The August monthly WELCOA Health Awareness Bulletins are posted [online](#) for your use. Read the monthly bulletins then take the quiz for a chance to win prizes!

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PAYROLL SERVICES

Tentative Prep Budget Roll to Active

Tentatively, Prep Budget Roll to Active is scheduled for the weekend of August 13, 2016 but users may not enter FY2017 budgeted EPAs until Monday, August 15, 2016. The Wage Pins are scheduled to roll to the Active Budget on the weekend of August 20, 2016.

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Roll to New FY Canopy Feature

The Roll to New FY feature in Canopy will be available Monday, August 15, 2016. The feature can be activated by selecting the "Roll to New FY" box when creating an FY2016 EPA. It allows FY2016 EPAs created after the weekend of August 13, 2016 to automatically roll to FY2017 without creating an additional EPA in FY2017. Make sure the annual term for the employee is reflected as either 9 or 12 in order for the feature to work.

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Estimated Time

The arrival of the new fiscal year creates early deadlines in regards to the bi-weekly payroll for the pay date of August 26 (period covered – August 4 thru August 17) and the pay date of September 09 (period covered – August 18 thru August 31). Payroll Services does not recommend that estimated time be submitted for employees unless they have sufficient leave accumulated to cover the estimated days; nor should student workers submit estimated time.

If an employee has an adjustment to his/her estimated time which results in additional pay or work time which was not estimated, the department should adjust the hours on the next bi-weekly payroll. Then the payment for this time will be included on the next scheduled bi-weekly payday. If an employee does not work all the time estimated, leave should be recorded or an adjustment should be made to decrease the hours on the next bi-weekly payroll. Be sure to document any adjustments made in your records.

Payroll Services will not process an emergency check due to changes in estimated time. If you have any questions or concerns about this matter, please email payrollprocessing@tamu.edu or call the Payroll Processing Team that services your department.

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EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2016 Leadership Institute - Applications Due Monday, August 15

Applications for the 2016 Leadership Institute are due Monday, August 15. Please direct employees to EOD's website for information on the cost, description, expectations, eligibility and selection criteria, and application process. The most frequent questions we receive are: 1) I can't attend all the sessions, can I still apply? (Answer: No, 100% attendance is required); 2) Who is making the selection? (Answer: The review committee, comprised of former participants, will receive application packets with identifying information removed; they will score using the selection criteria stated on the website and provide their recommendations to EOD); 3) What is the cost? (Answer: \$650 Texas A&M University (part 02) and Health Science Center employees; \$1,050 System employees). The application packet and more information about Leadership Institute can be found at <http://EODinfo.tamu.edu/LI>. If you have questions, please contact Employee & Organizational Development at EODinfo@tamu.edu or (979) 845-4153.

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TIP OF THE WEEK

Need to Know Who to Call in HR? Use the Online Directory

Now that annual enrollment for benefits has ended and the new year is right around the corner, employees may have lingering questions about any number of benefits, retirement or human resource-related issues. HR Liaisons, who receive comprehensive training on hr-related topics, may be comfortable answering many questions, but probably not all questions; that's when employees can turn to their assigned representatives in Human Resources. Use the online HR contact directory (<http://employees.tamu.edu/findliaisons/>) to know exactly who to call or email for assistance with any HR need.

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Next Network Meeting:
TBA

HR Liaison Network News (LNN) is distributed weekly to departmental HR Liaisons at Texas A&M University. If you have questions about LNN contact:

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