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

February 3, 2014

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

- **Save the Date:** A Silver Celebration Honoring the HR Liaison Network
- **Wellness Exam Incentive – Employee Communications to Ramp Up this Week**
- **Walk Across Texas – It’s Not too Late to Join**
- **Helpful Hints and Resources for Interpreting Medical Bills**
- **Summer Insurance Premiums – Are Employees Planning Ahead?**

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- **New Employee Welcome (TAMU NEW) – Registration Required**
- **Coffee Conversations – Spring 2014 Schedule**
- **PATHways Performance Management – Important FAQs**

**TIP OF THE WEEK**

- **In the Event of an Emergency**

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**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Save the Date: A Silver Celebration Honoring the HR Liaison Network**

Please mark your calendars for the HR Liaison Network Spring Meeting – A Silver Celebration – on Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at the Memorial Student Center. The day-long event will feature a motivating keynote speaker, breakout sessions and a special dessert bar. Join Human Resources as we honor our 25 year partnership with you…the HR Liaison Network! Watch for details in upcoming editions of HR Liaison Network News.

**Wellness Exam Incentive – Employee Communications to Ramp Up this Week**

The Texas A&M System Wellness Exam Incentive communications were delayed from our original intentions announced last week to allow the BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) website programing updates and the most recent data to be loaded into the BCBS system. Direct email communications providing details of the Wellness Exam Incentive will be sent this week. In summary, the Wellness Exam Incentive establishes a requirement for individuals enrolled in the A&M Care plan to complete an annual wellness exam (also referred to as annual check-up or physical) in order to qualify for the lower medical premium rate for the FY2015 (beginning September 2014) benefit plan year. Employees and spouses who are enrolled in the A&M Care plan must satisfy the requirement for the wellness exam incentive to qualify for the lower premiums. If the requirement is not satisfied, the employee (and spouse, if enrolled) will pay a higher monthly premium that includes a wellness differential of $30 per month for each individual (employee and spouse).

If your department is holding a staff meeting and you would like a representative from Benefits Services to speak about the wellness exam incentive or another benefits related topic, please contact Benefits Services at benefits@tamu.edu or 979-862-4956.
Walk Across Texas – It’s Not too Late to Join

Employees and their friends and family have the opportunity to participate in the annual Walk Across Texas! program which kicked off on February 1, 2014. This physical fitness program created by our own Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an 8 week program that encourages individuals and teams to monitor and track physical activity with the goal of earning enough miles to walk across the entire state of Texas (830 miles).

Interested in participating? Form a team of eight, choose a team captain, complete the registration process by Friday, February 14 (select Texas A&M University as the organization) and start logging those miles! Additional information on the program along with registration links may be found at http://brazoswat.com online.

Helpful Hints and Resources for Interpreting Medical Bills

Our office has received a number of inquiries related to questions on insurance billing especially related to Scott & White Clinic. Scott & White has a new billing system and a few instances of incorrect billing has come to the attention of Benefits Services. As always, employees are encouraged to review the explanation of benefits (EOB) provided by the insurance carrier and compare that information against the medical bill from the provider’s office for accuracy prior to paying charges to a provider’s office. If you have questions on how a claim was paid or processed, the health plan has a dedicated customer service department that can answer your questions – simply use the member services number on the back of your ID card. Below are a few situations A&M Care members should be aware of:

1. Flu vaccines at the Texas A&M Flu Vaccine Clinic in October should be paid at 100%. If you received a bill from Scott & White, please contact Benefits Services at benefits@tamu.edu.
2. A clinic that is located in close proximity to a hospital may charge a hospital facility charge because they are licensed to operate as a department of the hospital. For example, an individual may go to a Primary Care Provider (PCP) or specialist and pay a $30 or $45 copay but also receive a bill or be asked to pay an additional amount (for example, $60) which is billed under the hospital services ID. Employees with A&M System coverage through the A&M Care plan seeing a clinic provider will not have to pay the additional hospital facility fee as BlueCross BlueShield has coded this charge to pay at 100%. If you have been or are charged a fee, contact customer service for further research and potential reprocessing of the claim.
3. As part of the A&M Care plan design, preventive services are covered at 100% when seeing a network provider. It is important that the medical claim filed with the insurance plan indicates the preventive service and includes a “V” code for processing to ensure a copayment is not charged. If a diagnosis or treatment for a condition is performed at the same time, a co-payment may be required for the medical services. Employees with questions on preventive services or with questions on how a claim was filed or paid should consult with member services at 1-866-295-1212.

Summer Insurance Premiums – Are Employees Planning Ahead?

As a reminder, summer premiums are collected in advance for employees who work less than a twelve (12) month appointment and meet summer insurance eligibility. Therefore, these employees will pay their portion of the entire summer insurance premiums (June through August) with their May premiums to be deducted from the paychecks received for their May earnings (June 2 if paid monthly, or May 9 and May 23 if paid bi-weekly).

Why are we sending this announcement now? The answer is to give you time to:

1. Consult with your employees who work less than 12 months to assure that they are aware of the summer premium collection process.
2. Encourage these employees to plan ahead for the extra summer premium deductions in their paycheck.

Individualized notices will be sent in April to employees who are listed in the payroll system with an appointment less than 12 months as of the date that report is run. The notice will include the actual summer premium to be deducted from the May earnings paycheck.

PAYROLL SERVICES

Attachments Needed for EPAs
A copy of the background check email notification, PATH approvals (reclassifications, new positions, etc.) and the
hiring certificate from Human Resources need to be attached to the EPA. Please refer to Standard Administrative Procedure 33.99.14.M1.01, Criminal History Record Information – Non-faculty Employees and Applicants, for details on the criminal background check requirements and to the EPA Document Checklist (http://payroll.tamu.edu/media/17814/301epadocumentchecklist.pdf) for references on the hiring certificate and PATH approvals.

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EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training Compliance Reports for February – as of February 1, 2014
Attached are the monthly compliance reports for System-required employee training: 1) Required Employee Training Assignments Report, and 2) Required Employee Training Departmental Progress Report. The latter report lists, by ADLOC/Departments (M Workstation), the completion and past due percentages on all five required courses.

Summary
- 93 (55%) of the 169 M Workstation ADLOCs have 100% of employees up-to-date or current on training assignments.
- The total number of past due assignments decreased 13.8% from 1806 to 1557.
- The total number of past due employees decreased 9.4% from 1326 to 1202.
- The total number of past due Faculty employees increased 2.2% from 232 to 237.
- The total number of past due Budgeted Staff employees decreased 19.4% from 134 to 108.
- The total number of past due Wage Staff employees decreased 4.6% from 801 to 764.
- The total number of past due Graduate Assistant employees decreased 17.3% from 52 to 43.
- The total number of past due Student Worker employees decreased 53.3% from 107 to 50.

Required Employee Training Compliance Key Performance Measure
- Percentage of employees in M Workstation ADLOCs up-to-date or current on five required courses:
  - Creating a Discrimination-Free Workplace, EEO – 98.7%
  - Ethics – 98.4%
  - Information Security Awareness – 97.4%
  - Orientation to the A&M System – 99.3%
  - Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse – 99.1%
  - Required Training for Athletics Task Workers – 31.7%

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New Employee Welcome (TAMU NEW) – Registration Required by Noon Thursday
Please forward this information to all hiring supervisors and encourage them to register their new employees.
The next session of New Employee Welcome (TAMU NEW) will be held Wednesday, February 12 from noon to 4:30 p.m. (lunch included) in the General Services Complex. All employees welcome. Registration is required by this Thursday, February 6, at noon. Employees can register on EOD’s registration site: http://training.tamu.edu/schedule/(Employee Orientations). If you would like to hold a seat for an incoming employee who is not yet on TrainTraq, please call EOD at 845-4153.

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Coffee Conversations – Spring 2014 Schedule
The spring session of the "Coffee Conversations: Hot Topics in Higher Education" series includes the following presentations:

**February 21:** Offices of the Dean of Student Life – Supporting [YOU]  
Presenter: Dr. Anne Reber, Dean of Student Life, Division of Student Affairs

**March 21:** It's Real, It's Us, and It's Going to be Bad*  
Presenters: Dr. Gunnar Schade, Associate Professor of Atmospheric Chemistry, and Dr. Gerald North, Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Sciences and Oceanography, College of Geosciences

**April 18:** Texas A&M University School of Law: The Past, Present & Future  
Presenter: Mr. Aric K. Short, Interim Dean, Texas A&M University School of Law

Free conversation! Free coffee! For information including full descriptions, times and location, please access: http://EODinfo.tamu.edu/coffee online. Questions can be directed to EODinfo@tamu.edu or (979) 845-4153.
Registration is required: [http://training.tamu.edu/schedule/](http://training.tamu.edu/schedule/) (Seminar Series). Please [download a flyer](http://training.tamu.edu/schedule/) for your break room.

**PATHways Performance Management – Important FAQs**

Please make note of the following FAQs and share with employees in your department as relevant.

**Other User:**

*What is the Other User function in PATH?*

A supervisor can delegate certain PATH functions by adding an Other User. The Other User has all the functionality that the supervisor has for the specified employee except entering progress notes (i.e., an Other User is able to Create a Plan, Create a Performance Evaluation, and Close a Performance Evaluation as the supervisor’s delegate for the specified employee). While the Other User can add Progress Notes, the Other User cannot read Progress Notes that were entered by the Supervisor, and vice versa. Detailed step-by-step instructions and video for Other User can be found at [http://eodinfo.tamu.edu/PATHways](http://eodinfo.tamu.edu/PATHways).

*Will PATH show what changes or additions were made by the Other User in an employee’s evaluation versus what the supervisor entered?*

PATH does not differentiate between Other User and the supervisor of record, nor does it track who made entries (e.g., if a supervisor asks her assistant to enter comments and/or submit an evaluation for one of her direct reports, it will appear in PATH that the entries/submit were made by the supervisor, with no record of which entries were made by the Other User). Therefore, it is suggested that anyone who makes entries as an Other User should add his/her name in a comment field indicating that the entries were made on behalf of the supervisor.

**Progress Notes:**

*What are Progress Notes?*

Supervisors and employees can track and record their own private notes during the review period using the Progress Notes function in PATH. The progress notes can be used at the end of the review period to “jog” their memory when completing the year-end evaluation. The supervisor’s Progress Notes are not considered part of an employee’s official personnel file and should not be used as a substitute for documents generally found in an employee’s personnel file.

*How long will Progress Notes remain in PATH?*

Individuals can delete their Progress Notes at any time during the current performance review period; once the review period is complete, they can no longer be revised or deleted. Employees will always have historical access to the Progress Notes they entered, even after the performance review period has ended. Supervisors will have historical access to the Progress Notes they entered for their respective employees only as long as they continue to be their supervisor of record (i.e., when an employee terminates or changes positions, the supervisor’s Progress Notes are no longer available in PATH).

*Who can enter and view Progress Notes?*

Progress Notes can be entered by the supervisor, employee, and Other User. They can only be viewed by the person who enters them. While they are intended to serve as “private memory joggers” throughout the year, they are subject to an Open Records request. Care should be taken they be written objectively and appropriately, as for any other employee documentation.

**Next Level Review:**

*Is “next level supervisor review” required for certain ratings?*

HR does not have a requirement of a next level supervisor signature, nor is this a requirement in PATH. However, departments/divisions/colleges certainly have the latitude to add their own internal procedures.

*How do we do a “next level supervisory review”?*

The next level higher supervisor automatically has “view only” access in PATH to an employee’s evaluation since supervisors can view their own reports as well as the “reports of their reports.” If signed documentation is required, here are a couple of procedural suggestions:

1. **Online:** The evaluating supervisor could designate the next level supervisor as “Other User.” This will allow that supervisor to not only view the evaluation, but also to enter comments. Note that the system will not record who made which comments, so the next level supervisor should indicate his/her comments (for example, next level supervisor could type, “Joe Supervisor: I approve this evaluation”). There would need to be an internal communication process (e.g., email) to alert the next level of the need to check the evaluation in question.
2. Paper: The evaluating supervisor (or “Other User” delegate) could print the evaluation and route it to the next level to sign, who would then route it to the next level again, and return. The signed document could be scanned (by supervisor, next level supervisor, or supervisor’s designated Other User) and added in PATH as an attachment to the evaluation.

**IMPORTANT** – Please remind your supervisors (and yourselves) to **not** try out the system by completing a performance evaluation (i.e., no “test runs”). PATH permits only one evaluation per year per employee, so once an evaluation is submitted, it becomes permanent.

For assistance with PATHways and the online PATH Performance Management system, visit the website at [http://eodinfo.tamu.edu/PATHways](http://eodinfo.tamu.edu/PATHways) or contact the PATHways support team at HRPATHways@tamu.edu or (979) 845-4153.

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**TIP OF THE WEEK**

**In the Event of an Emergency**

Did you know that HR Liaisons have emergency contact information for employees at their fingertips? In the event of an emergency, HR Liaisons with administrator access to HRConnect, can look up the personal contact and emergency contact information for their ADLOC’s employees. No need for HR Liaisons to keep a separate list or database of employees; only gentle reminders that employees keep their information up to date for the benefit of all.

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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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