About Your Health Plan: Don’t Overlook These Issues!

by Ellen Schuler Mauk

Although Suffolk County regularly issues “All Employees Memorandum” (AEMs) with enhancements and updates to our health plan (*see page 4), what the AEMs do not alert you to are some of the procedures required to access EMHP benefits, which are all too often overlooked by members. Three issues have come up frequently at the EMHP Labor/Management Committee meetings that I would like to bring to your attention:

1. It is important to verify whether a provider or hospital is in-network, especially the first time you are accessing their services. To do this either visit the Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield website at www.empireblue.com/emhp or call 1-800-810-BLUE (2583). Do not rely on the participating provider booklet distributed by Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield, since providers are added or dropped on a regular basis.

When in doubt, call!

2. Before you use a physical therapy provider, it is absolutely critical that you FIRST VERIFY with Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield by calling 1-800-810-BLUE (2583) that the provider will be in-network for the physical therapy services you require. This information is not available on the website and, all too often, physical therapy centers are NOT aware of our plan’s requirements for physical therapy centers.

PLEASE NOTE: Physical therapy centers that are affiliated with hospitals, use hospital billing services or are connected with hospitals in any way (even though they may be physically separated from the hospital or have no name resemblance to the hospital), will be considered in-network only if you have had surgery within the last six (6) months.

Free-standing physical therapy centers that are participating providers are available to perform medically necessary physical therapy treatment prescribed by your physician for conditions that have occurred with or without surgery. If you do not want to incur additional expenses for your physical therapy needs and to make sure you access the appropriate treatment center for your needs, call 1-800-810-BLUE (2583) first.

see Health on page 4
Where do we teach when we teach online? Here at Suffolk, most faculty interact with their students in either the course management system (CMS) provided by the SUNY Learning Network (SLN) or by Blackboard. And, while some refer to the CMS as “just a tool,” many experienced distance education faculty can attest that which CMS you’re using matters. The CMS with which you develop and teach your DE course shapes the entire teaching and learning experience, based on everything from its features to its layout and design.

Thus, with the recent announcement by SLN that they will soon migrate from the current IBM LotusNotes platform to ANGEL as their sole CMS, DEC has taken advantage of the opportunity to consider whether ANGEL will best serve our faculty’s needs, or if perhaps we should move to Blackboard or another CMS at this juncture.

At our November meeting, the DEC faculty representatives agreed that we couldn’t make an informed recommendation without first learning more about and actually seeing both CMSs in use by an experienced practitioner. DEC was therefore especially busy in December, since—well, you know what happens when you put a group of good academics in a room together—we engaged in several spirited debates about the importance of where we teach when we teach online.

During our December 7th meeting, Carey Hatch, Interim Director of SLN, gave a presentation to provide updates on and respond to questions about SLN’s transition to ANGEL. Hatch noted that SUNY has decided to maintain the current system until no later than June 1, 2009. During this time only minimal enhancements to LotusNotes will take place, and SLN will begin transitioning individual campuses to ANGEL. Numerous questions were raised about costs to Suffolk, training for faculty and staff, and assistance with the migration process.

After Hatch’s presentation, the committee returned to its agenda and the DEC faculty representatives noted that, while comparisons of the feature sets of various CMSs are available at a number of websites, we still wanted to see both ANGEL and Blackboard demonstrated by experienced DE practitioners. We needed to know if there were significant differences between ANGEL and Blackboard that might make one more pedagogically compelling than the other.

DEC Chair Randy Manning offered to invite several current Blackboard faculty to make a presentation about Blackboard. Finding an experienced faculty member who has used ANGEL, however, was going to prove more difficult, given its relative newness in the CMS arena.

That’s when I realized that I could turn to our extensive network of NYSUT colleagues and that one of the members of the NYSUT Community College Distance Education Committee would be the perfect presenter. Karl Klein, Assistant Professor of Computer Studies at Onondaga Community College, not only has extensive DE experience but also has served as a multimedia instructional designer for SLN and for ANGEL. I called him immediately, and he most graciously agreed to make the 600-mile round trip from Syracuse to Selden.

On December 14th, Karl spent two hours showing our DEC members and invited guests the ins and outs of the ANGEL course management system. His presentation was thorough and impressive. He responded to questions fully and honestly; for example, while he declared ANGEL the best CMS he has ever used, he also freely noted those areas in which he felt that Blackboard offers superior features or services that might make it a smarter choice for Suffolk.

Everyone expressed gratitude to Karl for his presentation, but I’d also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank him for his time, his expertise, and his kindness in responding to a union colleague’s call for help at such short notice. His willingness—no, eagerness—to do so reminds me that, while there are obvious benefits to the kinds of technological networking that make distance education possible, it can never substitute for the personal networking that takes place in our on-campus classes and in professional organizations like NYSUT.

Also at the December 14th meeting, presentations about the Blackboard system were given by Anthony Napoli and Robin Barber, and afterwards we discussed the criteria and procedures by which each DEC member would cast their CMS vote. By the end of
SPRING ADJUNCT/OVERLOAD CHECKS
Faculty teaching the Spring 2007 semester will receive seven adjunct/overload paychecks beginning March 1 and ending May 24.

RA DELEGATE ELECTION RESULTS
On December 19, 2006 the Elections Committee counted the ballots for the additional NYSUT Representative Assembly Delegate. The results are:
- Cynthia Villanti, English (E) 193
- Judy Travers 7.5
- Steve Clark 2.5
Committee Chair Marie Hanna thanked committee members Rebecca Turner, Sean Tvelia, and Jennifer Farquhar for their help.

PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS
As it was stated in the 2005 - 2011 Stipulation of Agreement, effective January 1, 2007, prior approval by your campus dean is required for all coursework taken and substitution credits requested to meet the educational requirements for promotion.

PROMOTION WORKSHOPS
Executive V. P. Kevin Peterman, along with campus deans, will be conducting Promotion Workshops in March. This workshop is a must for any faculty member interested in the promotion process. So, Save the Date!
- Grant  March 14
- Ammerman  March 21
- East  March 28
More information will be in the March issue of THE WORD.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
The deadline for 2006 FA/SCC Benefit Fund Prescription Drug claims is April 30, 2007. NPA will mail prescription drug printouts to faculty in March. If you do not want to wait for this printout, you also have the option of getting a printout from your druggist, or from http://www.express-scripts.com. The Prescription Drug Claim Form is available from the Fund Office, Southampton 224D, Ammerman Campus or you can call Mary at 732-6500 or go online: http://www.fascc.org/benefits/prescription1.pdf

EMHP CLAIMS DEADLINE
Faculty must submit all unpaid 2006 medical claims to Empire Blue Cross by March 31 in order to receive reimbursement for covered out-of-pocket expenses.

GVS PROVIDER CHANGE
Effective immediately, General Vision Services (GVS) will no longer consider Cohen Optical at Smith Haven Mall as one of its participating providers.

BOOK DRIVE
On Friday, February 9, just in time for Valentine’s Day, the Community Outreach Committee of the FA is offering a cooking demonstration and four-course meal with Chef Matthew Wahl. Tickets are $50 per person, and space is limited. The demonstration and meal will be held at the Lakeshore Adult Home, which is graciously donating the space and the ingredients for the menu. All proceeds will benefit the Affordable Housing Fund, which will allow the Community Outreach Committee to become another Sponsor for a Day at a local Habitat for Humanity House site.

COOKING DEMO & MEAL TO BENEFIT AFFORDABLE HOUSING
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3. Appeals MUST be submitted within 60 days after the receipt of the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) that is being contested in order for the appeal to be considered. If you fail to submit your appeal within the 60-day timeframe, your appeal will be denied. The 60-day clock runs even if you are having conversations with customer service representatives at Empire BCBS.

There are three levels of appeals within EMHP, each with a 60 day time frame. There are two (2) levels through Empire BCBS to review the claim internally for coding, documentation or benefit level interpretation errors. Empire BCBS, though, cannot change the plan benefits as stated in the Benefits Booklet. If you receive a 2nd denial from Empire BCBS, you will be informed that you have a final appeal through the EMHP Labor/Management Committee. (Address your appeal to the EMHP Labor/Management Committee, Att: Jeffrey Tempera, Director of Labor Relations, H. Lee Dennison Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788. In order not to delay the final appeal process, you should also include all supporting documentation from your provider with your appeal.) Many of the appeals at the committee level are referred to a third party medical review provider that ultimately advises the Labor/Management Committee. Once the Labor/Management Committee decides on the appeal, the member will be informed of its decision.

**FA officers use EMHP benefits, too!**

*You should all have received in your paychecks or through distribution in your departments the most recent AEM (dated 12/11/06) that includes benefit updates on hearing aids, foot orthotics, specialty drugs, Gardasil HPV vaccine, routine care of newborns and the new hospital benefits program that now includes in-network coverage for radiologists, anesthesiologists, pathologists and emergency room staff physicians when you use an in-network hospital. If you have not received this update, contact HR or the FA Office.

You should also have received your new ID cards in the mail. If you have or when you do, please discard the old cards as these new cards reflect the fact that EMHP now has a new hospital benefits program. Stay well—but if you can’t, thank goodness we have an excellent health benefits plan!

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**Online from page 1**

the following week, after much discussion and debate about the benefits and drawbacks of ANGEL and of Blackboard—ranging from costs, to training, to migration, to faculty support, to student support, to ethical considerations regarding patent lawsuits—all of the DEC members had cast their votes.

The Distance Education Committee has recommended that the college adopt Blackboard as its course management system.

Of course, I’d like to note here that while faculty members have the contractual right to use another course management system “for the purpose of pedagogical innovation”—as I noted in the November 2006 issue of The Word—the college is under no obligation to support more than one course management system. In fact, DEC faculty representatives support the college’s decision. We hope that if college resources, in terms of funding and staffing, are directed toward a single CMS, faculty experiences in developing and teaching DE courses could improve significantly.

Dean Manning has forwarded our committee’s recommendation to the college, and once the official decision is announced, DEC will proceed with drafting policies and procedures for migration to the new DE course management system.

Stay tuned for updates in a future Word article or contact a DEC member for more information. Sean Tvelia is the union representative to DEC, and your elected faculty representatives are as follows:

**East:**
Mary Ryder (Dining Services)
Cynthia Villanti (English)

**Grant:**
JoAnn Brandes (Bus/Info Tech)
Steve Epstein (Communications)

**Ammerman:**
Anindita Ghosh (Physical Sciences)
Stephen O’Sullivan (Philosophy)
But Wait, There’s More!

by Kevin Peterman
Now that Ellen has updated you on your health insurance benefits, and we have a contract which expires in 2011, this is no time to be complacent. In the news we hear more and more that “the public” is upset with teacher benefits and I feel we need to be vigilant to safeguard what the FA and all of organized labor has fought so hard to get.

All employees should have health care and reasonable pensions. We must strive to convince both policy makers and the public that these benefits should be given to all Americans. There are some who feel “if I do not have it, then neither should you.” When someone chooses this profession it is not just about salary. It is the total package: salary, benefits and pension. Yes, these are all quality of life issues that people prioritize differently and choose accordingly.

Historically, entry level salaries are lower for educators than they are for similarly educated employees in the private sector. The trade off is for the long term benefits. Everyone has to make that choice, but once it is made, promises should be kept.

Nationwide there are rumblings about health care and pension costs. We have worked too hard to have anyone even think they can renge on that promise. What is the best way to prevent outside forces from interfering with our agreement? We cannot let our guard down. We all must work in concert to help all workers achieve decent benefits.

Let’s be realistic. If everyone had health care and pensions, there would be no divide between the haves and have nots. Unfortunately, as we know, this will not happen any time soon. Do we sit back and say “it’s not my problem” or do we work to move in a direction where, someday all Americans will not have to worry?

As Tip O’Neill, a former Speaker of the House of Representatives said, “All politics is local.” As we saw in the election results this past November, there was a major shift in Washington as a result of local efforts. We cannot stop now. We need to continue to educate our local officials and elect or re-elect representatives who are willing to support our issues.

This is not a Democrat or Republican issue. As you know, the FA on the local level, NYSUT on the state level and AFT nationally support candidates from both parties. To be sure we do not become “have nots” we must continue to support candidates who share our values. How? By giving to VOTE/COPE (V/C).

What is VOTE/COPE? As NYSUT’s V/C pamphlet for community colleges states:

“For good or for bad, the future of your profession, your retirement and your health care is bound to decisions coming out of Albany and Washington [and Suffolk County]. ...By donating... V/C has won a permanent cost-of-living adjustment for retiree pensions; ... spearheaded an historic override of vetoes that restored $1 billion in education and health-care funding, and much more. NYSUT continues to work for further pension improvements, such as 3 percent contribution relief for higher education members...”

At Suffolk, faculty can give to V/C through payroll deduction. This voluntary contribution is the most effective way we can participate in the political process. We cannot use FA dues for political purposes. This is why contributing to V/C is critical. Please fill out the form below to either begin (suggested $6 per paycheck) or increase your contribution.

VOTE/COPE PAYROLL DEDUCTION

The undersigned authorizes the Comptroller of the County of Suffolk to deduct from each of my paychecks (not to exceed 21 checks per year between the first paycheck in September through the last paycheck in June) the sum of $___________ and to forward that amount to VOTE/COPE, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, N.Y. 12110-2455 This authorization is made voluntarily and without fear of reprisal and with the understanding that the making of payments to VOTE/COPE are not conditions of membership in any labor organization or of employment with the County of Suffolk or Suffolk County Community College and that VOTE/COPE will use the money it receives to make political contributions and expenditures in connection with federal, state and local elections. This authorization shall remain in full force and effect for all purposes while I am employed at Suffolk Community College, or until revoked by me in writing between Sept. 1 and Sept. 15 of any given year.

Name (print)____________________________________ Date ___________________

Signature ______________________________________

Return this form to: Faculty Association, 224J Southampton Building, 533 College Road, Selden, NY 11784
New Member
by Dan Linker

Doreen Coppa
Nursing, Ammerman

Upon first meeting and speaking with Doreen Coppa, Instructor of Nursing at the Ammerman Campus, my initial impression was that through her education and extensive experience, she is certainly a real asset to the department. However, by the end of our conversation, I learned the true proof of her abilities. Doreen has helped keep a pet tortoise alive and healthy for 42 years and counting. From scientifically waking him at the appropriate times during his hibernation cycle to feed him, to proper nutrition, to exercise in general, I can say that if she is able to give this kind of treatment to a reptile, I can only imagine the quality of care she provides for patients, as well as the level of instruction she offers her students.

Although new to her position here at Suffolk as of last spring, this native of Smithtown is far from new to the college. In fact, it was here that she began her career as a nurse, graduating as an RN from Suffolk. Further, she received a BS in Nursing from Adelphi, and a MS in Nursing from Stony Brook. Along the way she worked at the old St. John’s in Smithtown, Syosset Hospital, and Stony Brook Hospital. Her forte is in Critical Care and Medical-Surgical Nursing.

Also, Doreen is not new to teaching. She has taught an Introduction to Critical Care Nursing course at University Hospital at Stony Brook and LPN courses at Western Suffolk BOCES in Northport, but felt that she was ready to transition to an RN program. She is currently teaching Medical Surgical courses as well as Health Assessment and Fundamentals of Nursing. When not teaching, Doreen can be found cooking and gardening. Although she’s particularly fond of vegetable gardening, she’s also the master of the African Violet (her trick: use caffeinated water). She has two sons, one in high school and one in middle school, and two guinea pigs: one for each son. I can only imagine that if she’s able to keep that family happy and healthy, our collegiate family is lucky to have her.

Faculty Input Required

The College is in the hiring process. The FA’s contract language is repeated below to address the many concerns faculty have as to the rights, procedures, etc. of faculty committees.

**Article IV (Conditions of Employment), J (Vacancies), 3 (Faculty Vacancies)**

- **a.** Unit III members shall be notified by the college of Unit III openings by utilization of individual faculty mailboxes and/or postings on the College’s Human Resources home page. Such notification shall include a statement of required qualifications and whether the vacancy is a term line. This notification will be provided two (2) weeks in advance of publication elsewhere, except with the concurrence of the Faculty Association.
- **b.** Whenever an opening for a full-time position within Unit III occurs, the following procedure shall be followed:
  1. The department/discipline faculty shall be notified and a joint faculty/administration search committee shall be appointed for the purpose of determining applicable academic qualifications for the position within approved academic policy, reviewing applications and credentials, interviewing candidates, and making recommendations to the appropriate dean.
  2. The joint search committee shall consist of appropriate departmental/discipline administrators and between 3 and 5 full-time faculty members as determined by the full-time members of the department, by mutual agreement with departmental/discipline administrators. Faculty appointments to the committee should include at least one faculty member with the specific expertise in the discipline that is the subject of the search.
  3. This search committee shall forward the names of at least three recommended candidates to the appropriate dean for review and recommendation to the president. If a search does not result in three successful candidates, the president may waive the requirement for three candidates. If none of the candidates is found acceptable, the president may direct that the committee reopen the search.
- **c.** Upon written request, interviews of available applicants shall be offered to full-time faculty, adjunct faculty and outside applicants, in such order.
- **d.** Every effort will be made to hire minority group members.
Where can Adjuncts find Office Space for their use?

by Frank J. DiGregorio

On each of the three campuses and at the Sayville Center, there is office space (a total of 13 areas) provided specifically for adjunct use. These offices are designated as centers for adjuncts to meet with others from the college, and to be utilized as work areas. In addition, these areas can be used for lounging and as a place to put personal materials.

Typically these areas have a phone, computer with a printer, desks and chairs, tables, cabinets and in some of the bigger areas, a lounge area. One of the bigger areas (H127) in the Southampton Building at Ammerman Campus even has a kitchen area. Each adjunct office space should also have a framed print depicting an important event from the Labor Movement provided by your union.

As a result of the recent contract settlement between the FA and the college, daily lockable storage space will be added on ALL the college sites for adjuncts. When the particulars are worked out as to when and where these lockers will be installed, you will be informed.

When you need a place, feel free to use one of these areas. I hope you use them, whether it be to do work or just to relax between classes. Below is a list of the offices for adjuncts. If you need to speak to me on this issue or for any other reason, please feel free to call me at the FA office at (631) 451-4151.

Ammerman Campus
Southampton Building H127, H214
Smithtown Science Building T103
Islip Arts Building I1B
Riverhead Technology Building R324
Kreiling Hall M108

Grant Campus
Caumsett Hall H220E
Health, Sports and Education Center MA209
Sagitkos Building S220

Eastern Campus
Shinnecock Building S119, S229
Orient Building O117

Sayville Center
Room E130

NORA NOTICE
NORA will be available online March 5. March 30 is the deadline for submitting summer and fall overload requests. The last available date for accepting/declining assignments is May 11.

EMAIL REMINDER
Please remember to check your email at least twice a week and delete all unwanted mail from the Inbox AND Deleted boxes.

Make it a point to delete all messages from the Delete box weekly. You are given a limited amount of space on the server and if your mailbox is full, it will prevent you from receiving emails.

If you have any questions please email BarbaraAnn Mattinson at: mattinb@sunysuffolk.edu

NEW ADJUNCT HEALTH RATES
The new 2007 EMHP rates for adjuncts who buy into the Employee Medical Health Plan of Suffolk County (EMHP) have been established as follows:
Individual $500.30 per month
Family $1,067.07 per month
**FACULTY ASSOCIATION**
**SUFFOLK COMMUNITY COLLEGE**
Southampton 224J, 533 College Road
Selden, New York 11784-2899
(631) 451-4151

**2006 - 07 Executive Council**

**OFFICERS**
Ellen Schuler Mauk ............................................... President
Kevin Peterman ............................................ Executive Vice President
Marie Hanna ..................................................... Secretary
Joyce Gabriele .................................................. Treasurer
Sean Tvelia .......................................................... Grievance Officer
Frank J DiGregorio .......................................... Adjunct Coordinator

**ADJUNCTS**
Doug Cody .................................................. BY,CH,NR,ES,FS,HOPH,AT,TE,EN,TT
Garrett Lacara .................................................. CS,AC,BF,BA,BL,BD,BU,OT
Michael Trezza .................................................. EGLR,CO,TH,RT
Danielle Zahm .................................................. EGLR,CO,TH,RT
Jerry Fallon .................................................. For. Lang.,EF,SL,MU,VA,PL
Pauline Pharr .................................................. For. Lang.,EF,SL,MU,VA,PL
Russell David .................................................. Math
Joy Borrero .................................................. NR,HC,FM,HI,CD,OD,ED,PE,OS
Carol Powers .................................................. NR,HC,FM,HI,CD,OD,ED,PE,OS
Barbara Leek .................................................. PA/Specialists - Acad. Skills Ctrs.
Maureen Sandford .............................................. PA/Specialists - Programmatic, Tech & At-Large
Mary Ann Ellinger .............................................. PA/Specialists - Instructional Labs
Christopher Ghenadti ........................................... Retiree/Guild
Charles Grippi .................................................. Retiree/Guild

**PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANTS**
Kathy Massimo .................................................. Programmatic
Michael Agresti ........................................... Technical Areas/Instructional Centers
Deb Kiesel .................................................. Instructional Labs

**AMMERMAN CAMPUS**
Brian Zamek .................................................. Music/Visual Arts
Samantha Sinclair ........................................ Nursing/Health & Human Services/PE
Darryl Butkos .................................................. Biology/Physical Sciences
Michael Bonanno .................................................. Math
Karen Wolf .................................................. Comm./Languages/Reading/Philosophy/Theater/TV, Radio, Film
Krista Gnuber .................................................. Library/Central
Scott Giaccone ........................................... Accounting/Business Admin./Business Information Systems

**EASTERN CAMPUS**
Laurey Russo ............................................. Library/Humanities/Social Sciences
Louise Johnston ........................................... Counseling/Science/Math & Business

**GRANT CAMPUS**
John Burgess ............................................. Natural & Health Sciences/Math
Gayle Sheridan ........................................... Liberal Arts/Counseling/Library
Mohini Ratna .................................................. Liberal Arts/Counseling/Library
Peter DiGregorio ........................................... Business & Technology

**NYSUT**
Jonathan Rubin ........................................ NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist

**AMMERMAN CAMPUS**
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Samantha Sinclair ........................................ Nursing/Health & Human Services/PE
Darryl Butkos .................................................. Biology/Physical Sciences
Michael Bonanno .................................................. Math
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