

## Political Activities of Employees

As we embark upon this year of elections, employees may be considering participation in the political process. In the event this occurs, it is important to understand University policy.

It is the policy of the Board of Regents that all employees enjoy full rights and privileges as citizens to participate in political activities in the State of Oklahoma and the United States. However, constituencies of publicly supported universities and colleges may rightfully expect competent services from employees. Each employee has a first priority to perform the duties and responsibilities assigned to his or her position.

Employees are permitted to freely engage in lawful political activities of any kind provided such activities are conducted on the individual's own time, do not interfere with official duties and responsibilities, and are consistent with other parts of the University policy.

Employees are permitted to campaign for and hold non-partisan offices, such as member of a school board, city council and/or other local offices.

An employee may accept an appointed position in government requiring full-time service, provided, before accepting such position an employee is required to request and be approved for leave without pay or resign.

An employee who wishes to assume a major role in a partisan political campaign is obligated to discuss such plans well in advance with the appropriate supervisor. If the supervisor determines that the activity would impinge to any extent upon the employee's work

responsibilities, the proposed political activity must be reviewed and approved through regular administrative channels to the President's Office.

The political activities may not involve the institution's name, symbols, or in any way imply institutional support or support of the Board pertaining to the political interest supported by the employee.

Full-time political activities are prohibited while serving as an employee.

Any employee intending to conduct a personal candidacy for a partisan elective office must obtain approval by the President's Office prior to any announcement by the employee for such office. If elected, the employee shall resign.

## Keep O-Key Directory Current

The online OSU/A&M Directory helps you find contact information for OSU departments, faculty, staff and students on all campuses.

It is important that this information is up-to-date. Please remember to periodically check your contact information. Updates to your campus address, telephone number and e-mail address can be made through the O-Key System, [www.it.okstate.edu/](http://www.it.okstate.edu/).

The directory can be found at <http://directory.okstate.edu>.

Questions? Send an e-mail to [telecom@okstate.edu](mailto:telecom@okstate.edu), or call (405) 744-7174.



## Human Resources

## News You Can Use! Important Information for Employees of Oklahoma State University

September 2008

### 2009 Health Care Update

Last spring both Faculty Council and Staff Advisory Council passed recommendations to change the structure of health care premiums to lower the cost of dependent coverage, more closely compare with the Big 12 Schools, and enhance recruitment of faculty and staff.

Faculty Council recommended that OSU pays health care premiums for employee-only coverage at 100% and OSU pay 70% of premiums for employees with dependents (employee/spouse, employee/child(ren), family). While the budget would not permit payment at 70% this year, OSU will pay employee with dependent premiums at 65%, resulting in a cost savings to employees who cover dependents. Part of the funding for this change will come from elimination of the health care allotment.

Staff Advisory Council was in favor of the lower employee premiums for those with dependents but was also concerned that employees making less than \$30,000 with employee only coverage would be disadvantaged by the change. Many lower paid employees do not have dependent coverage. The extra \$34.44 per month they received as part of the health

care allotment is helpful in paying out-of-pocket medical expenses or purchasing dental or vision coverage. Therefore, employees making less than \$30,000 per year with employee-only coverage will receive \$0.20 per hour increase effective January 1, 2009. This will replace the \$34.44 per month these employees currently receive as part of the health care allotment. Employees are encouraged to use the increase in pay for other health insurance or contribute to a flexible spending account or health savings account which will also provide for tax-sheltering of this money.

Online *Annual Benefits Enrollment* will be held from Monday, November 3, 2008, to Wednesday, December 3, 2008. Employees will use *Web for Employees* to enroll in or make changes to health care, dental, vision, and flexible benefits.

*OSU Human Resources developed this information for the convenience of OSU employees. It is a brief interpretation of more detailed and complex materials. If further clarification is needed, the actual law, policy and contract should be consulted as the authoritative source. OSU continually monitors benefits, policy and procedures and reserves the right to change, modify, amend, or terminate benefit programs at any time.*

## 2009 Health Care Premium Rates

	Employee Only		Employee/ Spouse		Employee/ Child(ren)		Family	
	OSU Cost	Employee Cost	OSU Cost	Employee Cost	OSU Cost	Employee Cost	OSU Cost	Employee Cost
<b>BlueChoice PPO</b>	\$346.30	\$0.00	\$563.66	\$303.50	\$408.02	\$219.68	\$741.36	\$399.18
<b>BlueEdge HSA</b>	\$346.30	-\$65.76	\$563.66	\$138.82	\$408.02	\$100.50	\$741.36	\$182.62
<b>BlueLincs HMO</b>	\$346.30	\$28.24	\$563.66	\$349.20	\$408.02	\$276.48	\$741.36	\$481.46

Employees with employee-only coverage with a pay rate of \$30,000 or less will receive a pay increase of \$.20 per hour or \$34.44 per month effective January 1, 2009. The increase can be tax sheltered by participation in the Flexible Benefits Plan. Employees who have continuous single child coverage since 1-1-08 will continue to receive the \$44.54 as a single child additive in 2009. Note: An OSU employee cannot be insured as a dependent of another OSU employee.

### BlueCross BlueShield 2009 Health Care Premiums

BlueCross premiums for 2009 will increase 5%. The BlueChoice premium for employee-only will be \$346.30 per month. This increase compares quite favorably to premiums recently announced by the State Plan HealthChoice. The 2009 premium for HealthChoice for employee-only coverage will increase to \$409.12 per month.

Family coverage with BlueChoice will increase to \$1140.54 per month. However, HealthChoice family coverage will be \$1340.14 per month. Substantial savings to both OSU and employees have resulted from the change to BlueCross BlueShield of Oklahoma.

### Dial 1-877-BLU-OSU1 (1-877-258-6781)

If you have questions about BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS), you can call toll-free, 1-877-BLU-OSU1 (1-877-258-6781) and speak to a BCBS representative. The BCBS representatives are familiar with the OSU health care plans and can answer your questions.

You may want to note to whom you spoke, and the date, for future reference.

### New Format for BlueCross BlueShield Identification Cards

In October 2008, BlueCross BlueShield of Oklahoma will gradually replace member identification cards with a new card that has a magnetic strip on the back. The magnetic strip will allow BlueCross BlueShield to take advantage of new technologies.

The current identification format is valid until January 1, 2011. However, if you misplace your current card, or are a new enrollee, you will most likely receive one of the new cards.

### Staff Leave Survey Questionnaire

The Staff Leave Subcommittee of the Flexible Benefits Compensation Benefits Committee would like your thoughts on the OSU Staff Leave Program, which currently includes both annual and sick leave.

Within the next couple of weeks, you will receive an e-mail with information of completing the on-line survey. The survey will be sent to all continuous regular staff.

## 2009 Dental and Vision Coverage

In a continuance of reviewing and updating OSU benefits for employees, a *Request for Proposals* for dental and vision insurance was issued earlier this year. OSU received five dental and four vision bids in response. The proposals were analyzed by a consultant. Three dental and two vision companies came to campus for presentations. Members of the OSU Health Care and Wellness Task Force, Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee, Faculty Council and Staff Advisory Council attended the presentations.

A request to the OSU/A&M Board of Regents to change the dental and vision vendors for calendar year 2009 will be made later this month. If approved, choices will be simplified by offering one dental plan and one vision plan. Communications will be tailored specifically to OSU employees and employees will participate in a single annual benefits enrollment period.

The premiums and benefits are similar to the plans currently preferred by employees. While there will be some individual provider changes, overall the networks are very comparable. Also, employees will be able to cover eligible dependents up to age 26 and the “cover-one, cover-all” requirement will no longer apply.

Employees currently enrolled in dental and vision coverage will be automatically transferred to the new plans. If they wish to change or cancel coverage, they can do so in the Annual Benefits Enrollment Period in November.

## Online Flexible Spending Account Reimbursements

Filing flexible spending account claims by using the online claim submission process is now quicker and easier.

1. Go to [www.cci-pbs.com](http://www.cci-pbs.com). Click on the Planned Benefit Systems (PBS) name, then “Filing Claims” under the Participants heading.
2. Log In: Click on *Online Claim Submission* - remember to disable your pop-up blocker by holding down the Control key. Next, enter your PBS Employer code - PBSOSU - Employee ID, your name, and e-mail address. Agree to the e-mail disclaimer by entering your initials, then select type of claim you wish to submit. This page verifies you as an FSA participant and brings you to the claims entry page.
3. Enter Your Claim: Tab through the form and type in your claim information. The sum total is automatically calculated. Initial and save.
4. Print and Fax: Print the Confirmation Summary for your files. Then, for health care claims only: print the Substantiation Cover Sheet, attach your receipts, and fax to Planned Benefit Systems (one claim at a time). Note: Dependent Care claims do NOT require any faxed receipts.

### Important Contacts

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