
Please Do the PHA!

Taking the personal health assessment (PHA) *annually* is essential to the negotiated wellness and health education program. The deadline is December 15.

Why Every Year?

The PHA provides you with confidential information about your health status, including risks, and individualized, voluntary program options that contribute to healthy living. The PHA is like an annual "State of Your Health" address - reviewing "issues" and offering program choices for your future GoodHealth.

Quick PHA Access

To meet the deadline, you and your spouse should complete the PHA online. For quick access, go to mtea.org and click on the "Take the PHA" Quick Link.

Very Important Reminders

Be sure to hit "**Send**" and to print out the **confirmation number** for your records.

Motivating a Spouse

Taken the PHA yourself, but your spouse has not? We suggest that you stress the immediate, financial reason.

If both you and your spouse do not complete the PHA by December 15, a **\$200** annual health care premium contribution will be deducted as follows:

- ◆ **\$100** on your February 19, 2010 paycheck.
 - ◆ **\$100** on your March 19, 2010 paycheck.
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Autism Now Covered by Health Plans

Effective November 1, 2009, state law requires health insurance plans to cover medical services to treat autism disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorders. The law applies to the MPS group plans – the Aetna PPO and the UnitedHealthcare HMO.

Overview of Mandated Benefits

The law requires plans to provide a minimum annual benefit of \$50,000 for intensive level services (a minimum of 30-35 hours of care per week) for a minimum of four years.

For non-intensive level services, the minimum coverage is \$25,000 per year. Children diagnosed between the ages of 2 and 9 are covered. Speech therapy is an example of a covered service.

The annual deductible, co-pay, and coinsurance provisions for the Aetna plan apply. The UHC co-pay and coinsurance provisions also apply.

Implementation Advice

If your child is covered, ask your medical provider to submit treatment claims to your insurance plan. You should check your EOB statements to make sure the claims are properly paid. For questions, contact Joan Heithoff of the MTEA staff at heithoffj@mtea.weac.org or 259-1990.

"BR+" Is a Plus for Your School

Your union has received an NEA grant for a pilot program designed to help a select group of MTEA Building Representatives strengthen their skills and knowledge. The "BR+" leadership development program offers substantial training in contract enforcement (including grievance initiation), conflict management, and other areas. The 30 participating BRs will also receive staff support and networking opportunities designed to enhance their ability to represent you!

Two all-day training sessions for the participating BRs are scheduled for December 14 and January 15. They will be released from school both days (with pay covered by the grant).

Interested BRs need to apply by Monday, November 16. The form is at mtea.org (or call 259-1990 for a paper copy). Urge your BR to apply for a program that will be a plus for your school and your union.

WEAC Convention Stipend Reminder

WEAC members, in their first three years of teaching, are eligible for a \$50 stipend for attending the WEAC Convention for the first time. To qualify, you needed to sign the roster both days at the Midwest Center.

If you signed in, be sure to e-mail your home address to WEAC at gruendemancindy@weac.org. If you have questions, please call Cindy at 1-800-362-8034.

King Writing Contest

Deadline - November 17

The deadline for submitting student essays in the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Writing Contest is Tuesday, November 17. Entries may be dropped off at the MTEA Building, 5130 West Vliet Street, or given to the children's librarian at any Milwaukee Public Library.

MTEA flyers detailing the contest rules were sent to all schools in October. BRs were asked to distribute the flyer, along with the October 22 Sharpener. The October 25 (Sunday) Milwaukee Journal Sentinel included a special section on the three annual King contests – writing, speech, and art. (The MTEA and the Journal Sentinel have cosponsored the writing contest for many years.)

Copies of the flyer and newspaper section are available upon request at the MTEA Building.

MTEA Election In-School Voting November 16-18

If you are an MTEA member who works in special education, **or** in regular education in pre-school through grade three or at the middle school level, please note:

◆ A special edition of TEAM, presenting the candidates who are running for an MTEA Executive Board position which represents you, was sent to you with today's Sharpener. (The special edition TEAM was separately mailed to the homes of speech pathologists; DTs; itinerant, low-incidence program teachers; and a few other member categories.)

◆ BR will receive ballots to conduct the voting process in schools during three days - Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday, November 16-18.

Got Disability Insurance?

If you need to protect your salary income during an extended illness absence, the MTEA's disability insurance plans are worth considering. Good protection, very competitive rates, and hassle-free (minimum pain) convenience of paycheck deductions.

The October 22 Sharpener explained your coverage options. Copies of the Union Security Insurance Company booklets, with a tear-out application (the inside back cover), were sent to the schools with Sharpener in mid-October.

◆ For individual counseling on enrolling for coverage that best fits your needs and pocketbook, please stop by the MTEA Building from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Monday, **November 9**.

◆ You may enroll at any time during the school year, but the deadline for open-enrollment is Friday, **November 13**.

A Celebration of Teaching!

Your union is leading a month-long campaign of telling stories about the extraordinary and ordinary steps teachers take every day to make our schools great. The kick-off event at the UWM Hefter Center on October 23 featured two MPS teachers who are great examples of why we celebrate teaching.

Lisa Sanford is a special education teacher at Northwest Secondary School. Her story was published in Teaching Hope, a collection of teaching narratives gathered by Erin Gruwell, author of The Freedom Writers' Diary. A brief description of Lisa's inspiring story is at mtea.org during week two of MTEA's celebration (Nov. 1-7).

JoAnn Lens is a 4th grade teacher at Hawley Environmental School. She was selected 2009-10 Elementary Teacher of the Year, through the DPI's annual recognition process. The third week of celebrating great teaching (Nov. 8-14) will feature JoAnn's story at mtea.org.

Join in the Story Telling

You can participate in the campaign by submitting a story of teaching success. The story can be about yourself or another staff member who has demonstrated a commitment to great teaching, but whose contribution is overlooked because "that's what teachers do."

Please take a few minutes today to share a story at mtea.org (and enter to win a special prize)!

Date Book Updates

All Members should have received their copy of the 2009-10 MTEA Date Book. If you have not, please call us at 2591-990. (If you are a retiree and have not received yours yet, it will be mailed to your home when we receive your 2009-10 membership check.)

There are a few changes in the MTEA Executive Board listings on pp 6-7. MTEA Treasurer **Debbie Karow** is now at Curtin Elementary, 902-7700. **Robin Bean**, a kindergarten-primary representative, is at Longfellow, 902-9800. **Barbara Brown**, a middle school level representative is at Morse, 616-5800, and Marshall, 393-2560. MEAA President **Tommie Lee Glenn** is at the Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language.