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### Health Care Cost Tips

With both the Aetna PPO and UnitedHealthcare HMO plans, there is a \$10 "co-pay" for some doctor visits. But you should **not** pay the \$10 during the visit (unless the office staff insists).

The main reason not to pay right away is that some doctor visits will not require a \$10 co-pay. For some visits, there will be no charge to you at all. Others will require an out-of-pocket payment, but **not** the \$10 co-pay.

Ask your doctor to submit the claim to your health insurance plan, and let Aetna or UHC process it **first**. If and when you get a bill, you should review it and pay only if it's correct.

This is the same advice if you need emergency or urgent care. Unless the medical provider requires up-front payment at the time of service, **wait for a bill**.

### Talk to Your Doctor

Aetna participants are responsible for paying a deductible of up to \$100 per person per year. (This is limited to a maximum of three family members each year.)

If the deductible is charged for a visit to a doctor, chiropractor, physical therapist, or other medical provider you see regularly, you should ask **not** to be billed for any deductible amount.

Many doctors understand the \$100 deductible is a hardship. They also value you as a patient with excellent insurance - which pays them well. Your doctor may agree not to bill you for the \$100 to help you, and keep you as a patient.

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## Preparing for the 2010-11 School Year: Positive Start With New Superintendent

On his first day as the district's superintendent, Dr. Gregory Thornton met with MTEA President Mike Langyel. The July 1 conversation was frank and productive. Several topics were discussed including layoffs, contract bargaining, and how our union and the new administration can work together.

During the following two weeks:

- ◆ Representatives of our union and Dr. Thornton's administration reached agreement on modifying the 2010-11 calendar. (See details below.)
- ◆ MPS finally provided health insurance claims data which our union's bargaining team had requested months ago. The data is necessary for negotiating complex health care cost issues, and the district's refusal to provide it has been a major obstacle to progress in contract talks.

## Layoffs Rescinded for 77 EAs

In mid-July MPS rescinded the layoffs for 48 paraprofessionals and 29 general EAs. The main reason: vacancies created by attrition - leaves, retirements, and resignations. Nine paraprofessionals and one general EA volunteered for layoff, which accounted for ten other members returning to work in the fall.

At this time, there are 56 paraprofessionals and 110 general EAs on layoff.

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## Spring Break Changed to Before Easter

### Background Information

During the past few years, MPS has conducted the ACT testing districtwide on a school day - to facilitate the participation of all high school juniors. ACT sets the date for school day testing, and in the spring of 2011, the date is April 27, the Wednesday after Easter.

However, the district's negotiators were unaware of the ACT date when they reached a tentative agreement with MTEA negotiators on June 8. MPS agreed to the MTEA's proposal for the traditional spring break, which was based on our union's survey of the membership. (Member surveys are **not** binding votes, but do set the MTEA's position for bargaining the calendar.)

The ACT testing conflict was not raised until the tentative agreement on the calendar was brought to the School Board for final approval at its June 24 meeting. Instead, the Board directed the administration to ask the MTEA to change the calendar to avoid the ACT testing conflict.

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### Reimbursement for Vacation/Travel Plans

With a decades-long pattern of spring break the week **after** Easter, you may have made financial commitments for travel/vacation based on the initial calendar agreement. The MOU changing spring break allows you to submit a reimbursement claim to the School Board for travel, hotel, and other expenses which are non-reimbursable, non-refundable, or generate other penalties.

The deadline for submitting your claim is no later than seven calendar days following the start of your 2010-11 work year. For year-round school staff, the claims deadline is **August 5**. For IB schools, **August 23** is the deadline. For teachers on the traditional calendar, the deadline is **September 6**.

Instead of reimbursing you, the School Board may opt to allow you to carry out your vacation plans. If so, the district will assign you work on April 18-21 or other mutually agreed upon dates.

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### New Posting for Key MTEA Position

In April, the MTEA Executive Board began a nationwide search to replace Tom Morgan, who had passed away unexpectedly in mid-March. The plan to fill the vacant MTEA Executive Director position by July 1 did not work out.

On July 16, the MTEA Executive Board decided to conduct a second nationwide search to fill this position.

### Sam Carmen Serving on Interim Basis

Anticipating the second process may take a few months, our union's Board has appointed Sam Carmen as the Interim Executive Director. Sam was on the MTEA staff for 23 years. He served as Executive Director for 13 years, prior to retiring three years ago.

### MOU Moves Spring Break to the Week Before Easter

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been bargained that keeps the spring break as close as possible to the traditional pattern and resolves the ACT conflict.

For schools on the traditional calendar and IB schools, the break will start on Monday, **April 18**, and classes will resume on Tuesday, **April 26**.

For year-round schools, the spring intersession will start a week earlier, on Tuesday, **April 5**, and classes will resume on Tuesday, **April 26** (instead of Monday, May 2).

### Additional Calendar Information

Go to [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) to access the three 2010-11 calendars - traditional, year-round, and IB.

The MOU changing spring break provides a process for members to claim reimbursement for plans they made based on the initial agreement on the calendar. (See article on the left.) Specific district procedures for submitting a claim will be at [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) when they are available.

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### For Your Good Health, This Summer

We recommend that you take two steps this summer to do yourself, and your pocketbook, some good. Please take the PHA to avoid a **\$200** financial penalty **and** start the voluntary Internet-based programs to earn a **\$250** financial incentive.

To access information on taking the PHA and the voluntary "Healthy Living" programs, go to [mtea.org](http://mtea.org) and click on the "Take the PHA" link.

### Complete the PHA, Again

By December 15, 2010, you and your spouse **must complete the PHA again** or pay a \$200 penalty. (\$100 will be deducted from your paycheck once in February and in March of 2011.)

### Keep Proof of PHA Completion

Be sure to print and retain your confirmation number if you and your spouse take the PHA online.

If you send the paper version, be certain to retain the results mailed to your home. (If you don't receive your PHA results in the mail within three weeks, call GoodHealth at **1-866-904-2615**.)

### Start Now to Complete Voluntary Programs

If you want to **earn a \$250 tax-free incentive**, you must complete a voluntary GoodHealth program(s) before December 15, 2010.

Many voluntary programs involve three six-week programs - taking 18 weeks to complete. To earn the \$250 incentive:

- ◆ You may take the same six-week program three times, **or** three different programs, **or** the same program twice and another one for a total of three.

- ◆ However, you may **not** take three Internet programs at the same time. You must complete one before you start another.

***You cannot earn the \$250 incentive unless you start now!*** Starting July 25, there are only 20 weeks before the December 15 deadline.

