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Premiums for the 2008/2009 Plan Year

For 2008/2009 the District has maintained a commitment to pay for the entire cost of medical, dental, and vision care for its employees. This means that the district will continue to pay 100% of the cost for primary benefits for the eligible MEA and MESPA employee only coverage for the EPO medical and EPO dental plans, employee vision and employee basic life insurance for the 2008/2009 Plan Year.

In order to maintain this commitment, an additional district contribution of \$1.6 million was required to fund these plans, and the district increased its contribution toward these benefits this year by this amount.

Benefits are an integral part of our total compensation package. On average, each Mesa Public Schools employee should add an additional 14% to their salary in order to assess the total value of the benefits funded by the District.

Complete information regarding the 2008/2009 Plan benefits, rates, provision changes, and open enrollment procedures can be found in the 2008/2009 enrollment handbook, or online at <http://www.mpsaz.org/eb/openenroll.html>.

Mesa Public Schools Offers More Choice

Until now, the medical and dental options were bundled. What this meant is that each enrollee received medical and dental together as a bundled option. Many employees asked us, "why can't I just enroll in dental?". The codes in our system have been established based on bundled options. In the past we have made the decision to keep the plans bundled due to administrative and resource limitations. Now we are able to unbundle these options, which means more choice for you!

The medical, dental, vision and life insurance plans will be separate elections for the 2008/2009 Plan year. As a result, you will now have the option of electing medical without dental, and dental without medical.

Dependent Vision Coverage

Vision Service Plan (VSP) provides vision care benefits to all benefited employees. Employees may now purchase vision coverage for their dependents.

Benefits include a vision exam once every 12 months with a \$10 co-payment; one pair of lenses every 12 months, only if needed; and one set of frames every 24 months, only if needed. There is a \$15 co-payment applied toward the lenses and/or frames.

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is your annual opportunity to make changes to your benefit elections. The open enrollment period for any benefit plan changes for the 2008/2009 Plan year is August 1st – August 22nd by 5:00 PM. Changes made during open enrollment will be effective October 1, 2008. The enrollment handbook concerning the new Plan year's provisions were delivered to homes of eligible contract employees the last two weeks in July. If you did not receive the open enrollment packet; the benefit and enrollment guide, rate sheets, and enrollment forms are available on the Employee Benefit web site, or by calling the Benefits office at 480-472-7222. In addition, we've added an e-mail address for your open enrollment questions, simply e-mail benefits@mpsaz.org.

Higher Short-term Disability Maximums - Decreased Premiums!

Almost 1 in 5 employees will become disabled for 5 or more years before age 65¹. Would you have enough disability income protection to cover your expenses if you became disabled for several weeks? Or several months? Short term disability insurance provides income replacement if you are disabled due to injury or sickness. New this year – higher benefit maximums! You choose the monthly benefit that's right for you - from \$360 up to \$8,000.

In addition to the higher benefit maximums, rates were decreased from the current levels by 13%. If you haven't checked out this valuable benefit before, now is the time to do so!

1 Employee Benefit Plan Review

District-Provided Life Insurance

The District provides life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance benefits for all eligible employees. Previously, life insurance was based on your annual salary amount. The district has increased the basic life insurance benefit to a flat \$50,000 for all full-time employees; Half-time certified employees district-provided life insurance remains at \$20,000.

Mail-Order Pharmacy

The district is changing the structure of the mail-order pharmacy copays to more closely reflect a benefit of 2 times retail pharmacy copays. The copay for non-preferred brand drugs is now based on coinsurance up to a dollar maximum instead of a flat dollar copayment.

| RETAIL | MAIL-ORDER |
|---|--|
| \$100 Annual Deductible per person | |
| 30-DAY SUPPLY, if cost of medication is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than \$15 you pay the cost,• between \$15 and \$50 you pay \$15,• greater than \$50, you pay 40% of the cost to a maximum of \$100. | 90-DAY SUPPLY, if the cost of the medication is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than \$30, you pay the cost,• between \$30 and \$100, you pay \$30,• greater than \$100, you pay 40% of the cost to a maximum of \$200 |

Use the price a medication tool on www.myuhc.com to compare costs and determine which method, retail vs. mail-order, is the least expensive for you.

United Pet Care has a new look!

If you haven't been on the United Pet Care (UPC) website lately, you might want to log on and see the easy to navigate, colorful new look. UPC has made a conscience effort to make it easier to find your way around, find the participating veterinarians and enroll online. To log on go to: http://www.unitedpetcare.com/group.php?gid=mesa_public_schools.

UPC is working on contacting more veterinarians through referrals from pet owners who would like their vets to join the UPC provider network. There is a referral form online under 'veterinarian directory'. It is always helpful to suggest to a non-participating veterinarian that they 'take a look at the UPC program, because it is offered through your employer, and you are interested in joining'.

There will be a slight rate increase for the benefits year commencing October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009. If you have any questions, please contact United Pet Care at (602) 266-5303.

12-15 Passenger Vans

Twelve to fifteen-passenger vans are more likely to be involved in a single-vehicle rollover crash than any other type of vehicle. Mesa Public Schools has responded to this information by implementing and mandating a training program for employees wishing to transport children in a 12 or 15 passenger van. Please contact Professional Development at 472-0385 to register for the van driver certification class.

If you currently have a certification card with an expiration date, do not throw it away. The cards no longer expire, and will be accepted.

Horace Mann Replaces Liberty Mutual

Founded by Educators for Educators, Horace Mann has been offering quality auto insurance at an affordable price for more than 60 years. But education employees get more than standard benefits from Horace Mann. Provided at no additional cost to all educators, Horace Mann's Educator Advantage program offers a package of benefits designed specifically for the educational community. Those benefits include:

- Paying only \$25 for covered vandalism damage on school property;
- Getting added road service coverage if you purchase Emergency Road Service for your policy;
- Getting a replacement car if your new car is declared a "total loss"; and
- Receiving liability coverage if you have to transport students in a vehicle insured by Horace Mann.

Convenience – Mesa Public Schools has selected the Horace Mann Insurance Company to provide MPS with the option of having their auto insurance premium deducted directly from their paycheck.

Savings – Mesa Public School Employees receive an additional 10 percent discount for having their premiums payroll deducted.

To get Horace Mann's quality, convenience and savings, speak with our dedicated representative Larry Pyke, The Horace Mann Companies at 480-839-1404.

Make Safety Committees a Part of Your Back-to-School Plans

The chaos of the start of the school year can be overwhelming. But safety committees should rank high among the mix of priorities. Great topics for safety committees to consider are reviewing the major safety issues from last year as well as establishing safety priorities for the new school year. These safety committees should also view "safety" in the broader perspective, making sure consideration is given to all aspects, such as emergency management, crisis preparedness, health, environmental, social/behavioral, discipline, and workplace safety. Also, safety training should factor heavily in the mix--not just for new hires, but all staff.

As a reminder, schools must hold two fire drills the first month (30 days) of school. If you have a fire drill in August and one in September, prior to September 15, you have fulfilled BOTH the mandatory two drills in 30 days AND two of the minimum of ten required for the year. If you choose to hold two fire drills in August, you will also need to have one in September. (Your total for the year will then be eleven.) Lock down drills are separate drills, and cannot be substituted for the fire drills.

In accordance with Administrative Regulation GBE-R, each school or site shall establish a safety committee that will meet once a month with an agenda and objectives to improve the safety program.

Please forward all fire drill reports and safety committee meeting minutes to the District Risk Management Office by the 10th of the month following the month in which the drill/meeting is held.