

Human Resources News Brief

July 2005

July 25, 2005

Special Points of Interest:

- Staff Performance Evaluations Due August 31, 2005
- Employee Assistance Program
- Legislative Update
- Fall Faculty Benefits Orientation August 23, 2005
- ERS Summer Benefits Fair August 17, 2005

Summer Benefits Enrollment July 25, 2005 to August 19, 2005

Summer enrollment is approaching. Beginning July 25 through August 19, you can make benefit changes for the next plan year, which begins on September 1, 2005.

Personal enrollment notices will be sent regarding your current benefits. All benefits eligible employees will receive a notice from Employees Retirement System (ERS). The ERS notice will state current coverage as of July 1, 2005.



To make benefit changes:

- Go to ERS Online at www.ers.state.tx.us. You will need your User ID and Password to logon and make changes, or
- Come by the Human Resources Office and complete a summer enrollment form.

NOTE-If changes are made online we recommend that you print a confirmation of the changes made.

To elect optional insurance coverage,

such as dental and accidental death and dismemberment insurance, evidence of insurability (EOI) is not required. It is not required that employees be enrolled in health insurance to be eligible for these and other optional coverage.

EOI applications must be completed and mailed to Fort Dearborn Life Insurance Company before enrolling in short term disability, long term disability, optional life insurance, and dependent life insurance. Acceptance is not guaranteed.

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New Health Benefit Rates

Rates Effective September 1, 2005

Coverage Level	Full-time Employer Paid	Full-time Employee Paid
Member Only	\$343.48	\$000.00
Member & Spouse	\$539.70	\$196.22
Member & Child(ren)	\$474.86	\$131.38
Member & Family	\$671.08	\$327.60

Legislative Update

The 79th Legislative session is ending in Austin. Following are a few of the changes that will be taking place in the new fiscal year.

Longevity Changes-Effective September 1, 2005, longevity pay will be earned at the rate of \$20 per month for every two years of lifetime service credit with certain exceptions for return to work retirees. Currently longevity pay is earned at the rate of \$20 per month for every three years of service. Additionally, there will be a maximum amount of longevity pay that an employee can receive (\$420 per month for 42 or more years of service).

Hazardous Duty Pay Changes-Effective September 1, 2005, hazardous duty pay will be earned at the rate of \$10 for every year of lifetime service credit. Currently hazardous duty pay is earned at a rate of \$7 per month for each year of lifetime service credit. The maximum amount of hazardous duty pay is \$300 per month.

Benefit Replacement Pay Changes- BRP eligible employees who leave state employment after August 31, 2005, for at least 30 days, on returning to state employ-

ment will no longer be eligible for BRP. Additionally, a BRP eligible employee who retires on or after June 1, 2005, and returns to work will not be eligible to receive BRP beginning September 1, 2005.

Health Benefits for Part-time Employees who Retire- Part-time benefits eligible employees who retire on or after January 31, 2006, will no longer be eligible for *full-time* retiree health benefits.

Special rules will apply to retirees who return to work after September 1, 2005 for vacation accruals, longevity pay, BRP, and other benefits. Please contact your benefits coordinator, Ms. Connie DeSha for more information.



Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

What is an EAP?

EAP stands for employee assistance program.

The EAP is a program that is designed to help you and your immediate family members with any type of personal problem that might be affecting your life.

Counseling services are *confidential and free*. Coverage under the EAP includes five sessions per incident, per family member, per plan year with no charge to you. The EAP plan year begins March 1st.

Services provided include:

Family-family member conflicts, divorce and child custody issues, communication problems, domestic violence

Emotional-anxiety, depression, mood swings, death of a loved one, victim of a crime

Work-interpersonal problems, job stress, job burnout

Dependence or Codependence Issues-excessive drinking, prescription and illicit drug abuse, gambling

Personal Growth-interpersonal skills (relationship and/or communication) for work or family

EAP Services are provided by
Interface EAP
Call
(800) 324-4327

Referral Services-financial counselors, attorneys

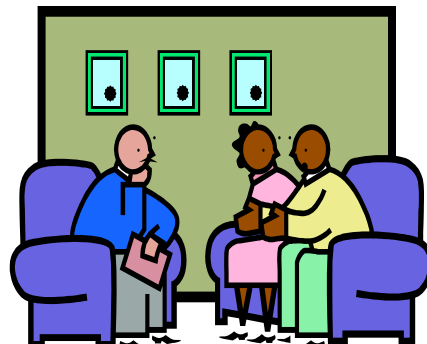
Online Work/Life and Wellness Resources-educational materials, personal health profiles, searchable databases for childcare, elder care, adoption, school, and college resources

For more information contact Interface EAP, toll free at (800) 324-4327.

To access EAP services online go to www.4eap.com

Username: Lamar

Password: 454



Long Term Care Insurance

During summer enrollment, employees can enroll in long term insurance *without* evidence of insurability (EOI). Open enrollment for long term care insurance is normally limited to the first 31 days of employment. This is an excellent opportunity to enroll in this coverage without having to go through an EOI.

Long term care provides nursing and custodial care to insured participants. This coverage is available to you and your spouse, adult children, and the parents and grandparents of both you and your spouse. However, family members will be subject to an EOI.



This coverage is administered by CNA. For more information or an information packet, go to the CNA link on the ERS website or contact CNA by calling (877) 895-6762.

State Kids Insurance Program

Employees can apply for the State Kids Insurance Program (SKIP) anytime. After you are accepted into SKIP you will have to reapply each summer.

If approved for SKIP the State pays most of the health insurance premiums for your eligible children. To qualify for SKIP, you must meet the requirements for family size and income, as well as limits on certain assets. Below are the SKIP income guidelines which were effective April 1, 2005.

Family Size*	Annual Family Income	Monthly Family Income
2	25,660	2,139
3	32,180	2,682
4	38,700	3,225
5	45,220	3,769
6	51,740	4,312
7	58,260	4,855
8	64,780	5,399

* Add 6,520 to annual income for each additional family member.

TexFlex Reimbursement Account

What is TexFlex?

TexFlex provides a tax advantage and allows you to pay for qualified out-of-pocket health care expenses and work related dependant care expenses. Qualified health and daycare expenses are exempt from federal income or social security taxes. This allows you to add dollars to your disposable income, which means you have more money in your pocket!

Remember you must sign up for TexFlex annually.

TexFlex users now have an additional 2 1/2 months to incur expenses for Plan Year 2005. You may continue to use your TexFlex (Plan Year 2005) money until November 15, 2005, instead of August 31, 2005. The deadline to turn in receipts for reimbursement remains the same, December 31, 2005.

Extended Grace Period

Due to a recent ruling by the Internal Revenue Service,

Return to Work Retirees

Return to work retirees who wish participate in TexFlex must enroll in active employee benefits in the first 31 days of employment or during summer enrollment.

Fall Faculty Benefits Orientation—August 23, 2005

Fall faculty benefits orientation will be held on August 23, 2005, at 1:00 PM in the Montagne Center’s Cardinal Club Room. The orientation is scheduled to last four hours, ending at 5:00 PM.

It is important for all new faculty to attend this orientation. Academic departments are encouraged to remind new faculty members to attend this session because this session will not interfere with regular class schedules.

Please reserve this date for your new faculty by not scheduling any departmental meetings during this time.

ERS Summer Enrollment Fair—August 17, 2005

Mark your calendar! Employees Retirement System of Texas will be on campus for a Benefits Fair on August 17, 2005, from 10:00 AM-1:00 PM at the John Gray Center, Building A.

There will be a presentation by an ERS representative at 10:30 AM in the Auditorium. Topics of discussion include summer enrollment and plan year 2006 highlights. Representatives from PayFlex, CitiStreet, and your health and dental plans will also be available to answer your questions.

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dept.lamar.edu/humanresources

Safety Corner

How to Avoid Slips, Trips, & Falls

The majority of injuries reported on campus are slips, trips, and falls. Any of these can result in serious injury. It is important to be aware of your surroundings as you move about campus.

Follow the guidelines below to help prevent slips, trips, and falls on campus:

- Use hand rails and watch your step on stairs
- Keep stairways lit and free of objects
- Don't obstruct your vision
- Avoid areas that pose slipping hazards
- Always clean up spills
- Wear shoes with slip-resistant soles
- Watch for uneven walking surfaces

If you are injured on the job immediately report it to your supervisor.



Special Reminders

- **Staff performance evaluations are due August 31, 2005.** Evaluation forms can be found on the HR website. Late notices will be distributed in September.
- **Be sure to use excess vacation before August 31, 2005.** Fiscal year end is approaching, excess vacation hours will be rolled into your sick leave balance. Refer to the chart in your staff handbook for the maximum carryover allowed.

Attention Search Committees!

Attention faculty search committees, please review search committee guidelines before, during, and after the search. These guidelines are available in the dean or department chair's office and HR. For faculty search questions, training, and information contact: Stacie Simmons at 880-2213 or stacie.simmons@lamar.edu

Hiring International Employees

Please be aware when hiring or sponsoring international employees that additional job postings, paperwork, and fees may be involved. Special restrictions may also apply to hiring practices. For more information on hiring international employees or sponsoring them for work visas or permanent residency, contact Stacie Simmons.

Continued...

Summer Benefits Enrollment

Once an approval letter is received, employees must come to the HR office to enroll in the optional coverage.

During summer enrollment, employees in HealthSelect may add dependents to coverage without EOI. After summer enrollment, adding dependents to HealthSelect will require a qualifying life event and may require EOI.

HealthSelect ID cards have been distributed with new identification numbers. If you have not received your new card, call Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) at (800) 252-8039. Using an old card will result in a denial of coverage.