

September 27, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

We are sending you this email to alert you to changes in health insurance coverage by the University that will affect all members of the UCSC faculty and staff. UCOP has altered health insurance structures for all UC employees, including cancellation of Health Net Full Network (with access to PAMF). While these changes are part of a cost-reduction scheme, some of the details may well leave employees in complicated circumstances, as some insurance plans are dropped or current providers no longer covered at the same level. For an initial (if somewhat uninformative) look at the changes being made, please see

* <http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/news/general/1309-medical-plans.html>

The At Your Service website will not show details about new rates or the comparative costs of new options vs. old ones until mid- to late-October, just before the November Open Enrollment period. At that time, the campus will hold Town Hall-style meetings to inform UCSC employees about these changes and their impacts, although this will leave little time to research discover all the information necessary to make sound decisions on this crucial issue. Furthermore, as you will note in the information that is available to date, this is especially disadvantageous for UCSC faculty and staff, because the Santa Cruz area lacks Kaiser and other major medical centers such as UCSF, UCSC is likely to be the most adversely affected campus by these changes.

The SCFA Board has adopted the following recommendations, originally made by the Berkeley Faculty Association, to ensure that as many employees as possible receive the information they need in time for Open Enrollment:

- * Request that department chairs publicize the upcoming changes in insurance policy at full faculty and department meetings.
- * Suggest, in meetings and by email, that all employees attend the town hall meetings held by the campus.
- * Think, prior to the town halls, about what your individual or family health care needs are likely to be over the next five years, and come to the town halls prepared with questions about which plans will best suit those needs. Your doctor might have specific recommendations on this point, so you might consider asking for a wellness visit in advance of open enrollment to consult about these needs.
- * If you or someone you know has particularly complicated health care needs that may be imperiled by a change in insurer or provider, please email the UCSC Senate Leadership (the Chair of the Academic Senate, Joe Konopelski joek@ucsc.edu, and the Chair of the Committee

on Faculty Welfare, Barry Bowman bbowman@ucsc.edu), and please copy the SCFA (scfa.assist@gmail.com). The more details UCOP has available about the potential impact of the new insurance scheme, the better the chances that the various faculty and staff bodies can pressure UCOP to structure, and in the future revise, the new insurance scheme in ways that meet the needs of as many faculty as possible

In short, please inform yourself as extensively and as far in advance as possible about to the impacts of the upcoming changes, and use departmental channels to ensure that your colleagues and staff do as well.

The SCFA is deeply concerned that faculty and staff have been so poorly and so tardily informed about these changes in health insurance coverage that could have major implications for their healthcare. Furthermore, because we begin classes so late in September, many faculty members and staff may not yet be aware of what UCOP is doing. The task now is to ensure that all Santa Cruz faculty and staff members are alerted to these impending changes, and that Senate leaders are informed of the difficulties they may generate for those in the UCSC community.

Cordially,
Shelly Errington
For the Executive Board of the SCFA
ucscfa.org