

MCEA NEWS *Extra*

March 2005

Maryland Classified Employees Association

House, Senate adopt health benefits plan

The House of Delegates and Senate approved changes to the FY 2006 State employees and retirees health benefits program. The legislature agreed to \$60 million in cuts instead of requiring that participants absorb the full \$120 million deficiency. The changes, which take effect July 1, 2005, are as follows:

- **Reduce the proposed COLA from 2% to 1.5%**
Step increases will remain in the budget.
- **Reduce PINS** (about 450) and transfer funds
- **Increase employee's share of POS premiums from 15% to 17%**
- **Increase Rx co-pays to \$5/\$15/\$25** with a \$700 cap per family per year and 2 co-pays every 90 days. After the maximum is reached, co-pays will be eliminated.
- **Make miscellaneous program changes:** Implement voluntary mail-order, smaller pharmacy network, prior authorization of certain drugs, managed quantities for certain higher-priced drugs, voluntary specialty drug pharmacies, step therapy, etc.

MCEA victorious in 2 difficult cases

Union gets termination on probation rescinded

Management terminated on probation a Correctional Officer from the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women for attendance issues. MCEA had appealed the officer's dismissal based on discrimination and civil rights issues. Upon review of the case, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services reversed the termination and ordered the officer reinstated to work with back pay and benefits, and any reference to the discipline expunged from her personnel file.

MCEA wins LWOP case for DHMH employee

The Office of Administrative Hearings ordered the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to return a Program Administrator to her status prior to her termination. The employee had been dismissed last year when management considered her leave of absence without pay terminated, on the grounds that such leave may not extend beyond two years. The employee had taken the

leave after experiencing respiratory problems in the 201 Preston St. building, which was found to have mold, and when the agency refused to make accommodations for her to work from home or in another work site.

Administrative Law Judge Eileen Sweeney ordered that the termination of the grievant's leave of absence without pay effective Jan. 16, 2004 be rescinded and expunged.

Financial workshop set for April 21

Want to become debt free or financially independent? A "wealth building" workshop will be held on April 21, 6:30 p.m., at MCEA Headquarters. The seminar, sponsored by Destiny Builders, which represents Primerica Financial Services will include the fundamentals of money management and how to achieve financial security. Interested persons may RSVP by April 18 to Sonjia Conaway at MCEA, 410-298-8800 or 1-888-611-MCEA, ext. 222.

Upcoming dates

Statewide Advisory Council Meeting, May 16, Snyder's Willow Grove, 841 N. Hammonds Ferry Rd. in Linthicum. Registration 8 a.m. Program 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thomas Lee, Executive Director of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, is the guest speaker. Registration information will be mailed to chapter presidents. Exhibitors and vendors will be participating.

Moonlight Bowl, June 11, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Bowlers \$20 tickets include admission, shoes, games, buffet, and entertainment. Non-bowlers \$10, includes admission and buffet.

Hagerstown Suns vs. Lake County Captains baseball game, Saturday, July 23, Municipal Stadium in Hagerstown. Picnic 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Game 7:05 p.m. For tickets, call Lonnie Sleaster at 301-766-9319.

Crab Blast/Fish Fry, July 30, 12 to 5 p.m., MCEA Headquarters. For ticket information, contact Barbara Mitchell at 410-298-8800 or 1-888-611-MCEA, ext. 204.

Convention 2005, Sept. 19-20,21 at the Ocean City Convention Center. Headquarters hotel is Princess Royale Bayside, 410 723-2900 or 1-800-854-9785. The alternate hotel is Ramada Limited at 410-289-6488 or 1-800-288-6488.

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