



Briefing

November 2007

News for UC Faculty and Staff

Policymaker Ensures Healthy Employees, Better Benefits

When a UC team scrutinized and then restructured medical plan offerings to employees for 2008, one of Mark Esteban's goals was to give people more resources to improve their health.

With the addition of a University-paid wellness program, new incentives for seeking preventive care, a specialized behavioral health provider and a medical plan that involves a consumer-oriented approach, employees do, indeed, have more choices when it comes to taking control of their health and health care.

Esteban, who has worked at UC for 23 years, the last 5 as director of health and welfare policy and program design, believes the project that has consumed him, his staff and numerous others for the past 18 months has resulted in some significant improvements in the quality of employee health benefits and, at the same time, added a benefit—a slowing of the increases in costs that the University has experienced over the past several years.

"The ability of our medical plans to focus on wellness wasn't where we wanted it to be," Esteban says. "UC's new vendor, StayWell, will bring more attention to wellness because it's their specialty. They know how to engage people in understanding their wellness issues. We have great resources at the campuses, too—people and programs who care about the wellness of their employees—and we're trying to have them work together with StayWell," he says. The addition of the StayWell benefits along with waiving copayments for preventive doctor visits and immunizations encourages employees and their family members to pay greater attention to taking care of themselves, which also helps control costs.

"UC is definitely investing in employees with these changes," says Esteban. Another example of that investment is the single provider of behavioral health benefits. Research shows that employees at higher education institutions are more likely to use of behavioral health benefits

than other employees. "Our experience confirms this, so it makes sense to improve those benefits," he says. "This change is not about cutting costs. We



Mark Esteban

want people to get the care they need, so we've waived the first three copayments for outpatient mental health visits."

Of course, despite the many enhancements to benefits this year, some people will not be happy because their plan or provider will no longer be available. PacifiCare, an HMO, is out; CIGNA Choice Fund, a Health Reimbursement Account with PPO that involves a more consumer-oriented approach, is in. Though Health Net offers many of the same doctors, specialists and hospitals that PacifiCare offers, there will still be a number of PacifiCare enrollees who may have to find a new doctor.

Esteban says one of the most difficult parts of his job is balancing the diverse needs of the 112,000 employees and 35,000 retirees enrolled in benefits plans in an affordable way. "There are so many different people with different opinions of what plans and benefits we should offer. We have to manage this project from a global perspective. Not everyone's individual situation is going to be perfect."

Nonetheless, Esteban feels good about the benefits UC is offering this year. "Giving people resources to improve their quality of life is the responsible thing for an employer to do," he says. "Whether they use those resources is the employee's choice, but we want them to have meaningful and high quality choices."

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Inside

UC People

Your Benefits Questions and Answers

And more...

UC People

Selected stories of UC faculty and staff accomplishments

Berkeley, Riverside

Biology Profs Awarded MacArthur 'Genius' Fellowships

Claire Kremen, a conservation biologist at UC Berkeley, and Cheryl Hayashi, a UC Riverside biologist who studies the genetic structure of spider silk, are two of the 24 recipients of this year's MacArthur "genius" fellowships. The MacArthur Fellowships are \$500,000 "no strings attached" grants to individuals who show exceptional creativity in their work and promise for important future advances.

Hayashi's spider research has revealed the architecture, evolution and structural properties of spider silks and the possibility of developing new synthetic materials based on the molecular and mechanical character of these silks.



Kremen was recognized for her pioneering conservation planning initiative in Madagascar's largest nature reserve. She helped establish the protected region while also taking into account the needs of the local population.

Photos Courtesy MacArthur Foundation

Santa Cruz

Wildfire Monitors Honored

Six UC Santa Cruz employees were honored as part of a multiagency team that helped firefighters battle the deadly Esperanza fire in Southern California last year.

Jeff Meyers, technical area manager of the University Affiliated research center (UARC) Earth Sciences research team; Ted Hildum, staff scientist; Bob Billings, senior field engineer; Kent Dunwoody, senior field engineer; Eric Frait, remote sensing data analyst; and Haiping Su, staff scientist, were part of a group that used

the Altair Unmanned Aerial System for the first time to provide real-time fire information to the Esperanza fire incident Command center. The information helped map the fire's quickly changing behavior and detected hot spots that had jumped fire lines.

Los Angeles

Disease Forecaster Prepares to Predict Pandemics

Nathan Wolfe thinks it's possible to predict future pandemics and stop them in their tracks.

"There's no reason to believe that pandemics will be harder to predict than earthquakes or tsunamis," said Wolfe, professor of epidemiology in UCLA's School of Public Health. With the support of a \$2.5 million Pioneer Award from the National Institutes of Health, he is creating a pilot system for exploring and understanding how viruses emerge and charting new territory in the emerging science of disease forecasting.



Davis

Females Better at Asking "What If"

New research by UC Davis psychologist Kristin Lagattuta suggests a possible reason why anxiety rates are higher in women than in men: Women may be better at anticipating potential threats based on past experiences.

In two studies reported in the journal *Child Development*, Lagattuta found that, from the age of 4, females are more likely than males to anticipate future "what ifs."

"This across-age gender difference in predicting and explaining worry and preventive actions is intriguing in light of research showing that female children and adults have more frequent and intense worries," Lagattuta said. "Indeed, this research suggests that gender differences in reasoning about potential risk situations may begin during the preschool years."

To read the full stories of UC People, see atyourservice.ucop.edu/briefing

UC Briefs



Open Enrollment Is Underway

Open Enrollment for 2008 is now under way, and you have until November 27 to review your current UC health and welfare benefits and make any changes for next year. You will

find detailed information and can make your changes, if any, at the Open Enrollment website, atyourservice.ucop.edu.

Key changes for 2008

- A new no-cost, voluntary wellness program;
- Standardized and improved behavioral health benefits, provided by United Behavioral Health (UBH);
- CIGNA Choice Fund, a new medical plan that combines a health reimbursement account with a preferred provider organization (HRA/PPO), available at all locations;
- In-network preventive care, including doctor visits and immunizations, at no cost;
- The Definity Health, High Option, PacifiCare, and Select EPO plans will be discontinued.

Behavioral Health Benefit Changes

Beginning January 1, 2008, the behavioral health benefits (in-network providers only) for UC employees in Health Net, CIGNA, Western Health Advantage, Blue Cross PLUS and Blue Cross PPO (out-of-network providers are also available) will be covered by United Behavioral Health (UBH). These behavioral health benefits also will be available to those enrolled in a Kaiser—CA plan.

To confirm that your provider is in the UBH network or to find out more about UBH, visit www.liveandworkwell.com and enter the access code: 11280 or call 888-440-8225. If your provider is not in the network, you may be eligible for a transition of care benefit for up to six months (see the website listed above for details).

Breaking Up with Doctor is Hard to Do

When is it time to break up with your doctor? That is a question some people may ponder in the fall, when employers typically offer employees a chance to change health insurance plans. UC Riverside psychologist Robin DiMatteo says that a patient's decision to switch doctors is never easy. But after 30 years of studying patient satisfaction with medical care and communication between physicians and patients, she says, there are times when it's in a patient's best interests to make a change.

"A doctor who is not supportive or who blames, ignores or criticizes the patient does not support healing," says DiMatteo, distinguished professor of psychology. Years of study have demonstrated that "patients do better when doctors are encouraging and supportive."

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act

Annual notification of rights

Do you know that your medical plan, as required by the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998, provides benefits for mastectomy-related services including all stages of reconstruction and surgery to achieve symmetry between the breasts, prostheses, and complications resulting from a mastectomy, including lymphedema? Call your plan for more information.

For more information, go to atyourservice.ucop.edu/briefing



Resetting a Password

Q What do I do if I can't remember my At Your Service Online password so I can make Open Enrollment changes for next year?

A You have three options to obtain a new password:

- You can have a temporary password emailed to you using your email address of record;
- If you have provided answers to the "challenge questions," you may set a new password after answering three of the questions. For additional information on "challenge questions" see the frequently asked questions (<http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/help/faqayso-sec.html>); or
- If you have not yet set your challenge questions, you may contact the UC Customer Service Center (1-800-888-8267; select option 4) to assist you in resetting your password.

Briefing

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