



Briefing

open enrollment
for 2006

Final days for Open Enrollment 2006

UC's annual Open Enrollment for health and welfare plans is almost over—it ends at midnight (PT), November 30. Personal information about your current enrollments, actions you can take, 2006 plan rates and plan changes, eligibility rules, decision-making tools, and enrollment instructions are online (atyourservice.ucop.edu). There is a special one-time opportunity this year to enroll in Supplemental Disability or change your disability waiting period without completing a statement of health.

Your ideas about shaping UC's future

Take a few minutes to visit an exciting UC website—"UC 2025, Long-Range Guidance for UC" (universityofcalifornia.edu/news/uc2025)—where you can send in your ideas about what you think UC should be working towards for the year 2025. Your anonymous comments will be sent to a long-range guidance team of UC Regents, faculty, staff, and students established by UC President Robert C. Dynes to help formulate strategies for the course UC will take over the next two decades. At the site, you'll find a wealth of information about major UC planning issues, and have access to public forum schedules and web chats about long-range planning. The next chat is scheduled for December 7.



Faculty diversity task force begins work

The University of California President's Task Force on Faculty

Diversity formally launched its program review of faculty diversity efforts at each UC campus this fall. The 11-member task force is chaired by UCLA Associate Vice Chancellor Rosina Becerra. Its review will include an in-depth analysis of faculty demographic data, campus visits, and an examination of existing reports and studies of gender equity and faculty diversity at the University of California and peer institutions. A website on the history and progress of the task force can be found at universityofcalifornia.edu/facultydiversity.

UC contributing to hurricane relief

Following Hurricane Katrina's devastating sweep, President Dynes stated, "We at the University of California are pursuing every possible option for contributing our assistance to the recovery effort." Among the University's efforts to date, UC campuses have made more than 500 offers of accommodation to students displaced by the hurricane, and more than 280 of these students have enrolled on a temporary basis at UC campuses this fall. All five of the UC medical centers registered to supply personnel, supplies, and equipment for the recovery effort. Detailed information about UC resources and contributions to hurricane recovery is available at universityofcalifornia.edu/news/katrina-relief.



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Generic drugs

Save money without giving up quality



There is a common misconception among both consumers and physicians that generic medications are in some way inferior to brand-name medications. "Most people believe that if something costs more, it has to be better quality. In the case of generic drugs, this is not true," says Gary Buehler, Director of FDA's Office of Generic Drugs.

"The standards for quality are the same for brand-name and generic products," he says. The FDA requires generics to have the same quality, strength, purity, and stability as brand-name drugs.

Savings potential

Moreover, according to a recent national research study conducted by Express Scripts, members of commercial medical insurance plans across 48 U.S. states have the potential of saving \$20 billion annually by using generic drugs in a number of selected categories. California ranks with several other states having the largest annual savings opportunity of more than \$1 billion.

In most of UC's HMO plans, the copayment for generic drugs is half the copayment amount for equivalent brand-name drugs. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if there is a generic product that you could be using. Not only will you have a lower copayment or out-of-pocket cost, but you'll help to control the cost of prescription drugs in our medical plans—which could help to temper future plan premium increases.

You can find a wealth of information about generic drugs, including myths and facts, at the FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research website (fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/generic_text.htm).

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Gary Buehler,
Director of FDA's
Office of Generic
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Tax rules: Health plan coverage for non-tax dependent children

Beginning in January, faculty and staff will need to notify the University if they have UC health plan coverage for natural or adopted children who do not qualify as tax dependents under IRS rules.

IRS rules require UC to report as taxable income ("imputed income") the UC employer contributions for health plan coverage for dependents who do not qualify under IRS requirements (IRC §152) as tax dependents.

Following the passage of the Working Families Tax Relief Act (WFTRA), which changed the tax dependency requirements in IRC §152, employees will need to "self-identify" natural and adopted children who do not meet the new IRC §152 requirements for purposes of imputing income.

What to do

Beginning January 2, 2006, employees should use form UPAY 850 (R 10/05) to self-identify. The form, which will not be available until January 2, will be on our website (atyourservice.ucop.edu) for downloading, and can also be obtained in your department or from your local Benefits Office.

Forms submitted in accordance with local January payroll processing deadlines will result in imputed income beginning in February for those paid monthly (earlier for those paid biweekly).

UC cannot provide advice about IRS rules or personal tax matters. For assistance or information on the IRS definition of a qualifying tax dependent, contact your tax advisor or check with the IRS (irs.gov, 1-800-829-4933, TDD 1-800-829-4059).

For further important information (including a summary of the §152 definition of a "qualifying child"): atyourservice.ucop.edu/briefing.



UC recreation centers—your campus fitness resource

There is absolutely no underestimating the importance of being and staying fit. To help improve the health, wellness, and satisfaction of University patrons, UC campus recreation centers continually seek to provide the best in fitness and sporting resources for their members. And, best of all, for nominal fees, the conveniently located facilities and services are available to all faculty and staff.

Working out at a campus recreation center can enhance your physical and mental well-being. Expending energy actually helps to create more energy, providing that much-needed boost to help you attack the challenges of the day. Likewise, the release of negative energy during physical activity leads to significantly lowered stress levels.

The key to fitness is the balance of mind, body, and spirit. For UC faculty, staff, students, and alumni, membership in a campus recreation center is a portal to professional staff, resources, and activities that can help improve the health and quality of your life.

For more information, contact your campus recreation center for membership options, and to arrange a personalized tour of facilities. A list of UC's campus recreational sports facilities websites is available at atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/health/medical/campus_sports_facility.html.

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U.S. savings bonds

In previous issues of this newsletter, we reported that a new savings bond program featuring I Bonds would soon be available. The decision has been made not to go forward with a new program at this time. The existing UC-administered program will continue while the search continues for a new program.

Academic personnel policy update

Summary of Academic Personnel Manual (APM) policies issued: ucop.edu/acadado/acadpers/apm/issuance.html

APM sections and proposals under formal review: ucop.edu/acadado/acadpers/apm/review.html

Health plan profile

Delta Dental: network dentist the wisest choice

To get the most from your Delta Dental Plan, select a Delta PPO dentist. PPO dentists are Delta dentists who have agreed to charge PPO enrollees reduced fees. When you visit a PPO dentist, you will receive better benefits and lower out-of-pocket costs.

If you choose a dentist who is not in the PPO network, your best choice is a Delta Dental Premier dentist. Although their fees are higher than PPO dentists, they cannot charge more than their Delta-allowed fees. You won't receive this cost protection and other conveniences when you visit a non-Delta dentist.

Non-Delta dentists do not participate in any Delta networks and have not agreed to Delta's determination of fees. As a result, your costs could be higher than those of a Delta dentist. You could be responsible for any amount charged above Delta's allowed amount, and might experience balance billing from non-Delta dentists.

Go to: atyourservice.ucop.edu/briefing for examples of savings and other advantages of using Delta network dentists.



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The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act

Annual notification of rights

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 (Women's Health Act) requires group medical plans such as those offered by UC that provide coverage for mastectomies to also provide certain related benefits or services.

Under a UC-sponsored medical plan, a plan member (employee, retiree, or eligible family member) who receives a mastectomy and elects breast reconstruction in connection with the mastectomy must receive coverage for the following: reconstruction of the breast on which the mastectomy was performed; surgery and reconstruction of the other breast to produce a symmetrical appearance; and prostheses and treatment of physical complications of the mastectomy, including lymphedema.

Coverage will be provided in a manner determined in consultation with the patient's physician and is subject to the same deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments that apply to other medical or surgical benefits covered under the plan.

If you have questions, please contact your medical plan carrier or refer to your carrier's plan booklet for specific coverage.

Briefing

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