

Multnomah County

Employee Benefits & Wellness Program

NEWSLETTER



December 2009

Claim deadline approaching for:

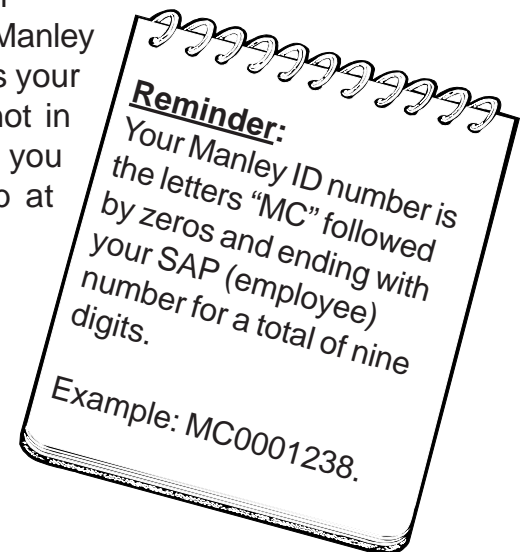


2009 Medical Expense Reimbursement Account (MERP) 2009 Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP)

If you contributed to the Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP) or the Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP) during the plan year of January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009 – the deadline for submitting claims incurred during the 2009 Plan Year is **March 31, 2010**. Failure to submit claims by the deadline will result in forfeiture of any remaining balance in your account.

Claims for expenses incurred between January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009, must be received by the plan administrator, Manley Services, on or before March 31, 2010 by 5:00 p.m. This means your claim must be in the administrator's office by the deadline, not in route to their office. For more information about your account, you can reach Manley Services at 800-422-7038 or on the web at www.manleyplan.com.

Download claim reimbursement forms at:
County Benefits website at: www.multco.us/benefits or
County MINT at <http://mint/benefits>



Have questions??

County Employee Benefits email employee.benefits@co.multnomah.or.us or Benefits Voice Mail (503) 988-3477.

County Payroll email #dcm.central.payroll@co.multnomah.or.us or (503) 988-3309.

County Deferred Comp. email DEFERRED.COMP@co.multnomah.or.us or Vanessa Witka (503) 988-5016.

County PERS email: PERS@co.multnomah.or.us or Kim Chung (503) 988-5017.

(Most PERS questions have to be answered by PERS at (503) 598-7377.)

Benefits & Wellness Program

HRA VEBA Tips and Reminders

Calendar year 2009 is almost over, and everyone is thinking about tax season and possible reimbursable expenses. Here are some reminders and guidelines for active employees with HRA VEBA accounts:

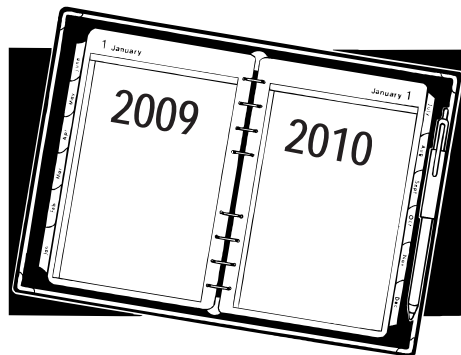
- ◆ HRA VEBAs (health reimbursement arrangement), unlike Flexible Spending Accounts (like County's MERP and DCAP programs), do not have a use-it-or-lose-it provision. Balances in an individual's VEBA account can be carried over from year to year without a penalty.
- ◆ HRA VEBA funds are tax-free, whether they are contributions or reimbursements. Employees will not receive a 1099 form from their employer, nor should they report their contributions or reimbursements issued on eligible expenses when filing their annual taxes.
- ◆ Multnomah County offers health insurance benefits through a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan of the Internal Revenue Code. Insurance premiums that are paid by employers, or that are deducted from your earnings pre-tax through Section 125, are not eligible for reimbursement from an HRA VEBA account. Some employees have payroll deductions for non-IRS eligible dependents taken from post tax earnings. You also are not eligible to recover these premiums from your HRA VEBA because the premiums paid are for non-IRS eligible dependents.
- ◆ For a list of the most common qualified expenses and premiums, please visit www.hraveba.org.
- ◆ If you are a participant in a Section 125 Flexible Spending Account (referred to as MERP at the County), you must exhaust your MERP funds before submitting an eligible claim through HRA VEBA. Since FSA funds can be subject to forfeiture, the law requires you to use those funds first.

2010 W-4 Changes?

Central Payroll would like to remind employees to submit a new W-4 form if their withholding allowances have changed or will change in the coming year.

Starting on December 15th, employees will be able to access their current withholding information and make changes on-line. Watch for upcoming emails with instructions.

The IRS guidelines state that employees may amend their form W-4 if their situation changes. Some of the reasons to add an exemption would be if an employee gets married (provided the spouse does not work and claim his or her own exemption) or if a child is born or adopted. For more information visit the IRS website at www.IRS.gov.



Benefits & Wellness Program

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month



Every day, 36 people in the United States die, and approximately 700 more are injured, in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver.

This December, during National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (3D Month), consider what you and your community can do to make injuries and deaths from impaired driving less of a threat.

The Problem

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), about three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.
- In 2006, 13,470 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third (32%) of all traffic-related deaths in the United States.
- In one year, over 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This accounts for less than 1% of the 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.
- Alcohol-related crashes in the United States cost about \$51 billion a year.

Protect Yourself and Your Family and Friends

During the holiday season, and year-round, take steps to make sure that you and everyone you celebrate with avoids driving under the influence of alcohol. Following these tips from NHTSA can help you stay safe:

- Plan ahead. Always designate a non-drinking driver before any holiday party or celebration begins.
- Take the keys. Do not let a friend drive if they are impaired.
- Be a helpful host. If you're hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate their sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.



Know How Communities Can Help

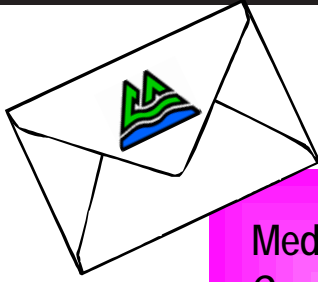
Proven community and state-level methods for reducing alcohol-impaired driving include:

- Sobriety checkpoints. Studies found that fatal crashes thought to involve alcohol dropped by about 22% following implementation of sobriety checkpoints.
- Minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) laws. Studies found that raising the MLDA to 21 reduced crashes by about 16% among people ages 18-20 years.
- 0.08% blood alcohol concentration (BAC) laws. Fatal alcohol-related crashes declined about 7% after 0.08% BAC laws were passed.
- "Zero tolerance" laws for young drivers. Three studies found that zero tolerance laws resulted in declines in fatal crashes among drivers ages 18-20 years of between 9% and 24%.

For additional information on this topic or related topics, visit the web site(s) below:

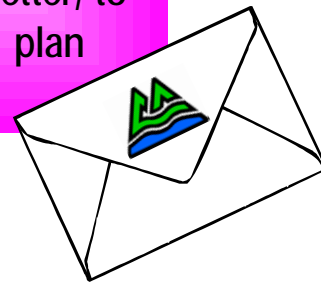
- http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/3d.html
- CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Impaired_Driving/impaired-driv_factsheet.html
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). [Traffic Safety Facts 2006: Alcohol-Impaired Driving \(PDF 630KB, 6 pages\)](#)

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Medical and Dental Open Enrollment Confirmation letters to employees will be sent during the month of December.


Employees have within 10 days, from the date of the confirmation letter, to make changes to their health plan election.



Information Request Form

Fill out form and send to **#503/4/Wellness or Multnomah County Wellness Program, 501 SE Hawthorne, Suite 400, Portland OR 97214.**

Name: _____
SAP Personnel No.: _____
Bldg./Rm: _____
Phone: _____

 Please check here if you'd like the return envelope to be marked "confidential."

DEC 2009

Ongoing Programs/Activities

- Loan of Electric Breast Pumps: Available for employees and/or their spouse/domestic partner.
- Peer Support Network Information.
- Weight Loss Subsidy Information.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Information.

All classes/activities are open to all employees, retirees and those covered by their benefits. Persons requiring accommodations for classes, call (503) 988-5015 x24319 or (TDD) (503) 988-5170, during business hours at least two working days prior to the event.



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Portland, OR 97214 Interoffice address: #503/4/Benefits or Wellness Program