



HUMAN RESOURCES

← COMMUNICATOR →

Newsletter from the Bates College Human Resources Department

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What Dirigo Will Cost You!

You may have seen the recent commercials about the Dirigo Choice Health Plan and think that it is what Dirigo is all about -- but it is about much more. The Dirigo Health Reform Act was signed into Maine Law in June 2003 as a broad strategy to improve Maine's health care system by addressing issues around quality of care, cost of care and access to care.

Quality: Dirigo aims to improve the data and information systems in Maine to provide tools to measure and improve quality. Part of this will be developing incentives to support an electronic health record system for Maine citizens. The Maine Quality Forum website at <http://www.mainequalityforum.gov/> provides both information defining quality in health care and tools to assist in researching specific medical conditions, identifying health resources, choosing doctors and hospitals and making your hospital stay safer.

Cost: There are several initiatives within the Dirigo Health Reform Act aimed at controlling cost. Most notably, voluntary caps on costs and operating margins from hospitals, other providers and insurers; a tougher review of requests for new in-patient and out-patient facilities and equipment; and, finally, reducing the amount of bad debt and charity care by providing access to health insurance through the Dirigo Choice Health Plan.

Access: Dirigo Choice is an effort to provide an affordable and comprehensive health plan to small businesses, self-employed and individuals aimed specifically at those 136,000 individuals in Maine who are currently uninsured. To make it affordable, discounts in the premium and subsidies for out-of-pocket expenses are available based on household size and income.

Enrollment in the program has not met expectations, which is why you are seeing an increase in the marketing of the product. The enrollment target for the first year was 31,000 but as of August 15th the enrollment was only 8,100. Only 28% of those 8,100 reported being uninsured previously.

Savings Offset Payment: One of the most controversial aspects of the Dirigo Health Reform Act is the establishment of the *Savings Offset Payment (SOP)* which is an assessment of **up to 4%** of an employer's health plan claims that is paid to Dirigo. The law states that the SOP cannot be

charged if it cannot be determined that there were actually savings. After several months of deliberation, at a September 14th Dirigo board meeting they determined the savings to be \$136 million. This will put the assessment at between 3.5% and 4.0% of claims and is estimated to increase the premiums for our medical plan by between \$130,000 and \$160,000 for calendar year 2006.

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What can we do? Anthem is responsible for sending the SOP to Dirigo and they do it on a monthly basis as a percentage increase of the premiums they charge us. Although the exact mechanics have not been determined, there would need to be a "true-up" as to the amount collected as a part of the premium and the percentage of actual claims.

Those in favor of Dirigo may make the argument that in the absence of the Dirigo initiatives our claims cost (and thus premiums) would have been higher while those opposed to Dirigo may label the SOP as a "tax". Regardless of whether you are for or against the program, if final approval of the SOP is reached, Bates will be assessed this additional amount based on our actual claims. That means that if our medical claims are high, we get charged more and if they are low, we would be charged less.

This will put the assessment at between 3.5% and 4.0% of claims and is estimated to increase the premiums for Bates' medical plan by between \$130,000 and \$160,000 for calendar year 2006.

All employees can help hold these costs down by making healthy choices -- getting preventive care to identify any conditions early on, paying attention to what we eat, exercising on a regular basis, getting enough sleep and quitting smoking. We all know these things are important to our health but they are also important in limiting the increase in the amount of money we pay for our health insurance. Together we can make a difference!

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Customer Service Week

Celebrate Customer Service Week: October 3-7

Customer service is the primary element of any institution or company. Here at Bates College we serve many customers, students, alumni, employees, trustees and just as important, each other. Take some time during this week to show appreciation for those people who give good customer service and reinforce its importance at Bates College.

Here are some customer service elements to reflect on.

Who really are the customers that we serve? We may think that the only customers we have are the students and alumni. Take a moment to compile a list of the types of people that you interact with everyday. Anyone that asks a question or has a request is your customer.

How can we serve our customers better? This may be harder to answer than you think. Some things are obvious however sometimes we mistake too much customer service for good customer service. Make sure that you understand the customers' needs. We tend to do things for people because we believe that we are helping and that is not what the customer wants.

How can we keep those who are at the front line of customer service energized? It is very hard to be "on" everyday. It takes a great amount of energy to give good customer service and not necessarily for just the "challenging" customer. We don't have to do elaborate or expensive things, just saying "Thank you" or "Really nice job" go a long way.



How have we improved customer service in the past year? We always need to be looking to improve. Giving the same customer service for 20 years doesn't always work. Technology, attitudes, procedures and rules change constantly and affect customer needs.

Some customer service facts:

Fact: We spend up to 10% more for the same product with better service.

Fact: We tell anywhere from 9 to 12 people when we get good service.

Fact: When we receive poor service, we tell up to 20 people.

Fact: Studies have shown that it takes a customer as little as ten seconds to pick up on the attitude (bad or good) of the person they are speaking to! (www.MotivationUSA.com)

Benefits Briefs

Keep Your Benny Card!

If you are one of the approximately 100 employees who elected the BennyCard in 2005, please remember to keep your card even if you have already used up all the funds in your account. Your BennyCard will not expire for 5 years so that if you elect to use it again in 2006, the amount you elect to contribute will automatically be available through the same card you have now. There will still be the same \$18 fee for using the card. If you lose your card, there is a \$10 fee to replace it with a new card.

Annual Benefits Enrollment Schedule

Mark your calendars! All the details of the 2006 Annual Benefits Enrollment are being made as we speak. Human Resources is targeting October 24, 2005 through November 11, 2005 as this year's enrollment period. Look for more information in the next couple of weeks as the details are worked out.

New Dental Cards Issued

Anthem Dental sent new ID cards to insured individuals during the week of September 19th. The new card uses a randomly generated ID number instead of your Social Security Number. You should begin using these new cards immediately and make sure your dentist has a copy of the new card on file. The address on the back of the card for submitting claims has also changed so make sure your dentist is made aware of where to send your claim. If you did not receive the new card or have any questions, you may call Anthem Customer Service at 1-888-799-6290 Monday – Thursday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm or Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Personal Leave

Personal leave given to staff is a "use it or lose it" benefit. Your Personal leave balance of up to two days does not roll over to the next year. So, if you have not used your calendar year 2005 personal leave days, you should consider using them before December 23rd when College holidays will start.

Open Positions

Associate Director for the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships/DOF - 8/01/05

Custodian/Physical Plant - immediately

Architect/Physical Plant - immediately

Alumni and Parent Programs Coordinator/Advancement - immediately

Two (2) Staff Assistants/Advancement - immediately

Den Worker/Dining Services - immediately

Delivery/Catering/Dining Services - immediately

Sanitation/Dining Services - immediately

Production/Dining Services - immediately

Den Shift Leader/Dining Services - immediately

On-call Catering/Dining Services - immediately

Audio Support Specialist/ILS - 8/21/05

Technology Support Assistant (Internship)/ILS - immediately

Archivist/ILS - 8/26/05

Men's Rugby Coach - immediately

Coordinator Alumni & Parent Programs - immediately

New Employees & Open Positions

Jessica Anthony - Class Notes Editor/OCMR - 7/21/05
Helen Boucher - Asst. Professor/Psychology - 8/01/05
Richard Brown - Visiting Asst. Professor/Chemistry - 8/01/05
James Charlesworth - Stock Assistant/Bookstore - 8/02/05
Alexandre Dauge-Roth - Asst. Professor/French - 8/01/05
Jaime Doucette - Stud. Fin. Services Assist./RSFS - 7/20/05
Alison Dumont - Service/Dining Services 9/02/05
Matthew Fountain - Lab Research Asst/Bio-Chemistry - 7/18/05
Valerie Franks - Asst. Dean/Admissions - 9/26/05
Margaret Galligan - Office Specialist/Admissions - 8/24/05
Olya Gayazova - Visiting Asst. Professor/Poli Science - 8/01/05
Rebecca Gilden - Mellon Learning Associate/DOF - 9/10/05
Doug Ginevan - Asst. VP for Financial Planning & Analysis/
Treasurer - 9/06/05
Brian Greeley - Custodian/Physical Plant - 9/19/05
Fiona Halloran - Visiting Asst. Professor/History - 8/01/05
Jennifer Hartshorn - Head Coach of Women's Cross Country &
Indoor/Outdoor Track & Field/Athletics - 9/01/05
Amy Hood - Desktop Application & Support Analyst/ILS -
8/30/05
Kacey Houston - Residence Life and Student Activities Asst./
DOS - 8/22/05
Jane Jawor - Library Assistant-Public Services/ILS - 8/15/05
Sofya Khagi - Lecturer/Russian - 8/01/05
Steve Konezny - Visiting Asst. Professor/Physics - 8/01/05
Walther Lach - Assistant in Instruction/Chemistry - 8/08/05
Anne Lewis - Asst. Rowing Coach/Athletics - 9/01/05
Gerald Lewis - Custodian/Physical Plant - 10/3/05
Howard Martin - Library Asst-Public Services/ILS - 8/22/05
Christine McDowell - Asst. Professor/Theater - 8/01/05
Jessica Mellen - Residence Life and Student Activities Asst./
DOS - 8/16/05
Karen Melvin - Asst. Professor/History - 8/01/05
Susan Meservier - Staff Assistant/Advancement - 7/25/05
Hiroya Miura - Instructor/Music - 8/01/05
Ichiro Noguchi - Lecturer/Japanese - 8/01/05
Jay Patterson - Asst. Dean/Admissions - 9/12/05
George Perkins - Visiting Assoc. Professor/Economics - 8/01/05
Eliot Pitney - Asst. Rowing Coach/Athletics - 9/26/05
Melinda Plastas - Visiting Asst. Professor/Women and Gender
Studies - 8/01/05
George Romano - Coordinator of Academic Administration/
DOF - 8/15/05
Caleb Shor - Visiting Asst. Professor/Math - 8/01/05
Jonathan Skinner - Asst. Professor/Environ. Studies - 1/1/06
Hongjun Su - Visiting Asst. Professor/Chinese - 8/01/05
Oscar Torres Duque - Visiting Asst. Professor/Spanish - 8/01/05
Damien Tougas - Web Programmer/Analyst/ILS - 10/4/05
Monika Ullian - Programmer/Analyst - 8/30/05
Barbie Ware - Security Officer/Security - 9/06/05
Darcy York - iModules Coordinator/Advancement - 8/29/05

TRANSFERS:

Nancy Crosby - Programmer/Analyst/ILS - 8/01/05
Dennis Skinner - Security Officer/Security - 9/05/05

Evacuation Skills

Evacuation has been in the news a lot lately. We've all listened in horror to the fears and frustrations faced by residents in the Gulf Coast area. While we feel compassion for those confronted with the need to move away from danger, we tend to be thankful that we are not faced with the same need to move ourselves quickly from our comfort zones. But we are not exempt from circumstances which might require us to leave in a hurry. We need to be ready to react at a moments notice to fire alarms.

Over time we become comfortable and complacent in our work environments. We adjust things for comfort and convenience. We forget the things we might need to know to save our own lives and the lives of our coworkers in an emergency. Perhaps it makes some sense to take a few moments to think about the things we can do to minimize complications in an evacuation and how we should conduct ourselves if an alarm sounds.

Think first about escape routes. Notice that the word routes is plural. We never know where a fire or other type of catastrophe will occur. The preferred route may very well be blocked. Smart employees will think through a few alternate paths to get out of a building. This means being thoroughly familiar with the buildings we work in and visit in the course of our work day. Most buildings have doors that lead to rooms without multiple exits...closets, restrooms, offices, etc. These need to be avoided as we make our way out of an impacted building. If the emergency is a fire, there is a high likelihood that spaces will be filled with smoke which will obscure or eliminate visibility. For this reason, it's a good idea to mentally map out landmarks along possible escape paths.

Never use an elevator in an emergency. In fires, elevator shafts can become chimneys which concentrate and draw smoke. Most fire deaths result from smoke inhalation. Even a normal stairwell can act as a chimney if fire doors are left open allowing smoke to enter the space. But when the power goes off you can still make your way up or down stairs toward an exit.

Smoke will hamper your progress. It can totally block vision. It can cause severe respiratory distress and the combined effects often lead to panic. Your strategy needs to include measures to minimize the effects of smoke. Stay low, as close to the floor as possible. Heated air and smoke will rise so the cleanest air will be near the floor. Try to remain calm and move quickly and safely toward an exit. Watch or feel for landmarks as you move along your chosen route. Call out to others who you know are in your work area. Help those who are confused, hand-capped or injured if you can.

When you have safely escaped a building the danger does not end. Move away from the building to a predetermined assembly place and help get a headcount. Determine if there may still be persons in the building so that emergency responders can be notified. Stay put until you have been released by an emergency responder. Be sure your assembly spot is out of the way of emergency vehicles.

Even before an emergency happens you can take steps to increase your chances of survival. Maintain clear walkways. Keep papers and other combustible materials to the minimum required to perform your work. Using file cabinets to store papers delays the spread of fire. Do not use candles or any devices

ON THE HORIZON

Annual Enrollment
tentatively schedule for
October 24 - November 11, 2005

PAYROLL CALENDAR!

Biweekly	October 6, 2005 October 20, 2005
Student	October 14, 2005 October 28, 2005
Monthly	October 13, 2005

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Dedicated to sharing information about employment - related matters at Bates College.

Editor: Chris Lee
Thanks to the Print and Mail Services staff.

For comments, suggestions or extra copies, contact us at 786-6140 or hrdept@bates.edu.

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DISCOUNTS FOR BATESIES

Membership has its unintended privileges. Here is a list of known discounts that particular businesses have extended to the Bates Community. The College has not solicited any discounts, nor does it endorse any individual business. Those taking advantage of the discounts do so on their own accord. Furthermore, Bates does not guarantee that the discount as originally reported remains in place.

- Dunkin Donuts**, Shaw's Supermarket 27 East Ave, 1124 Lisbon Street, Lewiston, ME, & 148 Sabattus Road, Sabattus ME & participating locations - 15% off
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car**, Center Street, Auburn, call for details.
- Lost Valley Ski Area** - varies, call for details.
- Nothing But the Blues Café**, College Street, free drink or \$1.00 meal purchase.
- Verizon**, 352 Center Street Auburn: 3-11% depending upon plan
- Yvon's Valvoline Express Care** 698 Main Street, Lewiston - \$3 off an oil change

If you know of other discounts, please let us know and we will share them with the community. Please call HR at x-6140 or send the information to forsale@abacus.bates.edu.

EVACUATION (continued from page 3)

with open flames. If your work requires flammable liquids store them in approved cabinets when not in use.

Organize wires so that they will not be pinched, crushed, abraded or stretched. Never run wires under carpet, across walking paths or through door or window openings. Be sure that electrical outlets are not overloaded. Don't place fabric or paper over hot surfaces like light bulbs or heaters. Don't cook in a space which has not been designed for cooking. These steps reduce complications during an evacuation but also help prevent fires from starting.

Buildings are equipped with fire safety equipment which needs to be maintained and accessible. Learn the location of fire alarm pull stations. Do not hang anything from sprinkler pipes or heads. Keep objects at least 18 inches below the heads. Do not allow smoke detectors to be covered or shielded. Keep pathways to fire extinguishers unobstructed.

We all expect to make our way through life without experiencing a fire. We can help to reduce the chances of fire by following the suggestions above. If a fire does occur, we can increase our chances of survival by preparing as suggested above. If we all do our part to prepare, we can avoid being part of a tragic story.