



Wednesday, October 30, 2002

# Open enrollment runs through Nov. 27

By **Mary E. Iorio**, OU Editor

This year's health benefits open enrollment will come two weeks later than usual to accommodate down-to-the-wire employee group contract negotiations.

Look for packets by Wednesday, Nov. 13. Open enrollment runs Nov. 13-27. Human Resources will conduct four Health Benefits Comparison meetings on Nov. 13 and 14 to help employees decide which offering will work best for their families. Meetings will be held in the Oakland Center at the following times and locations:

- Nov. 13 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Heritage Room
- Nov. 13 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Oakland Room
- Nov. 14 from 10 a.m. to noon in Lake Superior Room B
- Nov. 14 from 2 to 4 p.m. in Rooms 128-130

The delay this year provides employee groups with more time to evaluate their benefit options during contract negotiations.

Over the past year, the Health Benefits Council has been looking at plan design changes across the board. (See Oct. 15 web story, "**Benefits under microscope as costs soar**," for background on the council's work.)

"We conducted competitive bids on every plan and we've come up with lower premium rates, often from existing vendors in response," said Barbare McGuire, OU's benefit and compensation services manager. "That has helped us to contain increases, but it was not enough."

The Health Benefits Council working with Human Resources developed a single, campus- wide plan that could contain costs even further by taking advantage of economies of scale. Currently, plans differ slightly based on the employee group.

As negotiations continue, each employee group is evaluating the changes to see if they'll join a universal plan. By putting off open enrollment for two weeks, groups have more time to examine their options.

"We couldn't assume that everyone will accept it, and we couldn't hold open enrollment without providing people with the specifics of their plans and their premium rates," McGuire said.

For more information, contact the Human Resources Department at (248) 370-4207.

### SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, October 30, 2002  
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, October 30, 2002  
Article Start Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2003