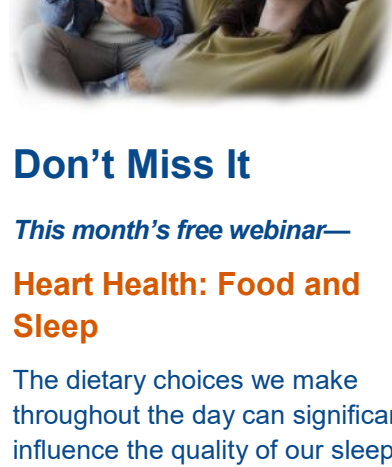


## April Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the April 2025 issue of *Well Aware eNews*! Read on to learn about—

- this month's wellness champion, a bus attendant whose decade of participation in MCPS wellness programs has shown him the importance of health and wellness to his workplace and to his own health;
- a webinar on how the food we eat during the day influences the quality of our sleep at night;
- an update on the *Summit Seeker* physical activity challenge;
- National Cancer Control Month;
- the American Heart Association's *Move More Month*; and
- more!



## Don't Miss It

*This month's free webinar—*

### Heart Health: Food and Sleep

The dietary choices we make throughout the day can significantly influence the quality of our sleep at night. Achieving a restful night is essential for maintaining overall health and well-being. In this session, a registered dietitian will examine the various foods consumed during the day and their effects on sleep patterns.

**Tuesday, April 29, 2025**

Webinar/Recording

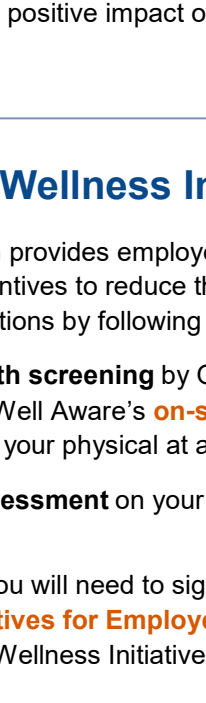
4:30–5:30 p.m.

**Please register for the webinar by emailing Well Aware.** You will receive a link in your Outlook email as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our **printable flyer**. Visit the **Wellness Webinar Library**.

## Wellness Champion Spreads the Word: Health and Wellness Are Important to Transportation Staff

Selestine Nwafor, bus attendant special education, has been participating in staff wellness programs at the Randolph Transportation Depot for more than 10 years. He currently is taking the Friday lunchtime exercise class with his coworkers, and touts the value of health and wellness for transportation staff.



"Health and wellness are important for transportation staff because they increase healthy behaviors, reduce health care costs, increase engagement, and boost morale and transportation culture," Selestine said. "They also help us manage daily stress on the bus."

In his 10 years of participation, he has seen many personal benefits.

"I have personally gained a lot from the MCPS wellness program," Selestine said. "I have seen my energy levels increase and lower blood pressure readings. My self-esteem and self-control have improved. I have lost weight, and I am physically stronger. My overall health and mindfulness have improved."

Selestine has suggestions for other transportation staff looking to start living healthy lives or join the staff wellness program.

"They should team up with a supportive group of coworkers to share and support each other on our wellness journey," Selestine said. "We can also encourage coworkers by inviting them to participate with us and motivating them. It is important that we share success stories and highlight the positive impact of wellness on individuals within the depots."

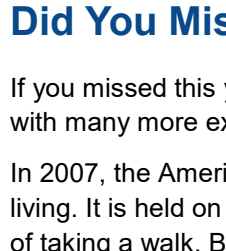
## Have You Taken the Wellness Initiatives for 2026?

The Wellness Initiatives program provides employees covered by an MCPS provided medical insurance plan with incentives to reduce their health insurance costs. Be sure to take advantage of the rate reductions by following these steps:

- **Complete a biometric health screening** by October 3, 2025—See your doctor for an annual physical, attend one of Well Aware's **on-site biometric health screenings**, or, if you are a Cigna member, have your physical at a Quest Patient Services Center.

- **Complete a health risk assessment** on your medical plan's website by October 3, 2025.

Kaiser Permanente members: You will need to sign a HIPAA waiver. A link to the waiver is available on the **Wellness Initiatives for Employees web page**. Be sure to log in to confirm your participation in the Wellness Initiatives program. Without your consent, your information will not be reported.



## A New Physical Activity Challenge for Spring: *Summit Seeker*

We are three weeks into the *Summit Seeker* physical activity challenge, and our MCPS coworkers are working hard! We have already awarded prizes to 15 individuals who also received a grant for their school/office/depot for logging their activity. We are getting closer to reaching the summit with each step!

There is still time to become a *Summit Seeker*. Register for a **Well Aware Fitness Log** account and start logging your activity. **See all of the *Summit Seeker* challenge details.**

## April Is National Cancer Control Month

This year, an estimated 500,000 Americans will lose their lives to cancer, and three times that many will be diagnosed with this devastating illness. Cancer patients are parents and grandparents, children and cherished friends; the disease touches almost all of us and casts a shadow over families and communities across our nation.

During National Cancer Control Month this April, we remember those we have lost, support Americans fighting this disease, and recommit ourselves toward effective cancer control.

Prevention and screening are our best defenses against cancer. All Americans can reduce their risk by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, limiting sun exposure, avoiding excessive alcohol consumption, living tobacco-free, and taking advantage of appropriate, regularly scheduled cancer screenings. **Learn about Cancer Screening Guidelines by Age.**

## American Heart Association: April Is Move More Month

Every April, the American Heart Association (AHA) celebrates physical activity and encourages all Americans to commit to being more active on a regular basis. One in four U.S. adults sits for longer than eight hours each day. Sitting for too long can hurt your physical and mental health.

A recent study found that swapping just 30 minutes of sitting with low intensity physical activity reduced risk of death by 17 percent. If everyone increased their activity, even by a small amount, we would see an improvement in health and lower the cost of disease in the United States.

The AHA encourages you to *Move More Together* with these resources:

- **Five-Minute Movement Breaks**
- **Chair Workout**
- **Get Moving Evening Workout**
- **Create a home workout circuit**

## Did You Miss This Year's National Walking Day?

If you missed this year's National Walking Day on April 3, no worries! Spring provides us with many more excellent days to begin the practice of walking.

In 2007, the American Heart Association began National Walking Day to promote healthy living. It is held on the first Wednesday in April to remind people about the health benefits of taking a walk. But it doesn't have to be just that day! Any day can be a walking day!

Click **here** to see why walking is the most popular form of exercise.

Did your school/office/depot celebrate the event? **Email Well Aware** with your stories and pictures.

## Stress Less This Spring

Fresh air and exercise can help you to manage stress. In addition, being in the outdoors and nature can improve mental wellbeing. Spring is a wonderful time to get outside and enjoy nature. Check out **this article** to learn more about how nature improves mental health.

In addition to spending more time in nature, Well Aware is continuing our online, live, in-person, and recorded classes for your convenience. From yoga and seated yoga, to mindfulness and tai chi, there is something for everyone. Give them all a try to see what you like best.

**Email Well Aware** for a monthly calendar of classes. **Opt in** to our wellness email distribution list.

## Join Us for Online Physical Activity

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your heart and mind, and help you manage your stress and overall wellness. Consider trying one of the classes below to see what kind of physical activity is best for you!

This spring, Well Aware is continuing our online, live, in-person, and recorded classes for your convenience. From Zumba and HIITCamp, to yoga and core workouts, there is something for everyone. Give them all a try to see what you like best.

**Email Well Aware** to get the full schedule of classes. **Opt in** to our wellness email distribution list.

## Share Your Wellness Stories and Encourage Your Coworkers!

Well Aware is proud of MCPS employees for all of the hard work they are doing to lead healthy lives. Share your stories and your spirit on X (formerly Twitter). Perhaps you need some extra motivation to begin a staff wellness program at your school, depot, or office, or to turn life-long unhealthy habits into healthy ones. Follow **@mcpswellaware** for incredible stories, wellness ideas, encouragement from your MCPS coworkers, tips on living a healthy life, or for updates on MCPS staff wellness programs.

## Montgomery County Offers MCPS Employees Free Access to Its Recreation Facilities and Pools

As a permanent MCPS employee, you have free access to all Montgomery County (MC) recreation facilities, including swimming pools and gymnasiums. You also are eligible for a 20 percent discount on an annual pool pass for your family members.

Interested? **Learn more** by visiting the **MC Recreation website** for general information. You may **apply online** for the individual Total Rec Pass. The **Employee Family Pool Pass application** also is available online. Both passes are valid for one year; you need to reapply each year to continue your access to the facilities.

## Well Aware Toolbox

Well Aware, the MCPS employee wellness program, brings you the Well Aware Wellness Toolbox, a web page with many resources to help staff live healthy and well lives. These tools include physical and mental health resources, lists of free exercise and mindfulness classes, links to resources for improving sleep, nutrition, and more. MCPS staff are encouraged to take the time for self-care. Studies show that self-care is essential to well-being, especially during times of uncertainty and transition. **Check out the Well Aware Toolbox to see what self-care resources will work best for you!**

## Omada for Cigna and Kaiser Permanente Members

Omada is a personalized program that helps members lose weight and create healthier habits by offering one-on-one personal coaching and the tools needed to make long-lasting health changes.

Qualifying participants receive the following:

- One-on-one support from a personal health coach.
- Easy monitoring with a smart scale, which is yours to keep.
- Tools for managing stress and creating a healthy mindset.
- Actionable tips in weekly lessons.
- Encouragement from an online community.

For more information about the Omada program and to apply, visit **[omadahealth.com/mcps](https://omadahealth.com/mcps)**.

## Have You Been to *HFP Live*?

MCPS, a Well Aware livestream and video library built specifically for employees who are hard at work. You can access the livestream portal from any computer, laptop, tablet, or cell phone by using a password-protected link.

Can't make a live session? Not to worry. Each livestreamed event is recorded and posted in a video library for you to access for at least 30 days.

Check out our live fitness classes with HFP:

- **Virtual Boot Camp**—Become the healthiest version of you. *Wednesdays and Thursdays, 6:00–6:45 a.m. and 5:00–5:45 p.m.*
- **Strength Training**—Engage in an array of bodyweight and strength exercises aimed to help you feel more empowered and stable. *Mondays, 6:00–6:45 a.m.*
- **Tabata**—Jump into the power-packed HIIT training class that will make you sweat! We're talking seven intense sets that will rev up your fitness. *Tuesdays, 6:00–6:45 a.m.*
- **Cardio and Core**—Build strength and boost your energy in a friendly, exciting environment. *Wednesdays, 6:00–6:45 a.m.*
- **Mobility and Strength**—It's about moving with ease, getting that heart rate up, and flexing those muscles all at once. Sounds like a triple win, right? *Thursdays, 6:00–6:45 a.m.*
- **Coach Mash Up**—End your week on a high note. This is a fun, challenging mix of everything we've done throughout the week. *Fridays, 6:00–6:45 a.m.*

All MCPS staff can participate! **Log in** using password: mcpsmd.

## Well Aware and the Employee Assistance Program Stress Awareness Month



*The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Well Aware (the MCPS Employee Wellness Program) continue to bring you monthly topics focusing on mental and physical health.*

April is National Stress Awareness Month and an opportunity to reflect on how you're coping. We all experience stress from time to time, and not all stress is harmful. Stress can take a toll on your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and body when stressful events or situations last for a long time without breaks or adequate support.

### EAP Resources

Consider taking five minutes to reflect on how you're coping with the stressors in your life. What are you doing to take care of yourself well? When do stressors become overwhelming? What signs do you notice in your body when you're stressed? The EAP can help you create a personalized stress management plan that works for you. Call the EAP at 240-740-6500 (Monday–Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) to learn more.

Conflict in the workplace can also contribute to increased stress levels. Did you know the EAP offers free, confidential mediation and coaching to help resolve workplace conflicts? Mediation is facilitated by EAP's partnership with the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County. Watch this **video** to learn more.

### Well Aware Resources

Stress symptoms may be affecting your health, even though you might not know it. You may blame sickness for that annoying headache, your sleeping troubles, feeling unwell or your lack of focus at work. But stress may really be the cause.

- **Physical effects of stress on the body**
- **What stress can do to your body**
- **Tips to tame stress**

## Wellbeats Wellness: Figuring Out Your Finances

Do you want to feel more confident and less stressed about your finances? Figuring out your finances doesn't have to be overwhelming. By starting where you are, you can take small, manageable steps toward building the financial future you've always wanted.

Whether it's tackling debt, saving for the future, or simply gaining clarity, taking control of your finances today will reduce stress and set you up for long-term success.

As a part of your benefits, you have access to Wellbeats Wellness, which offers the **Figuring Out Your Finances program** that provides simple but effective strategies for managing debt, saving money, and thriving through uncertainty.

In addition, access thousands of top-notch fitness, nutrition, and mindfulness classes—all at no cost! Simply log in to your Wellbeats Wellness account on your device and explore a wide range of guided classes to help manage stress and overwhelm. From calming yoga sessions to energizing workouts to healthy recipes, we've got something that suits your needs.

Ready to start working on your finances? Access Wellbeats Wellness via the mobile app or on your internet browser and login with your work email address. See the attached **flyer** with log-in information as well as the **Financial Health flyer**.