

May Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champions, Cabin John Middle School staff who are passing on to their students their healthy lifestyle habits;
- a seminar/webinar on women's health issues, including suggestions for preventive health practices;
- this year's Bike to Work Day;
- how you can Step into Summer;
- National High Blood Pressure Education Month; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar— Women's Health

Join Well Aware and CareFirst at this seminar/webinar for a review of women's health issues and suggestions for preventive health practices.

Tuesday, May 8, 2018
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Shady Grove Bus Depot
 16651 Crabbs Branch Way
 Rockville, Maryland 20855

Wednesday, May 9, 2018
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

West Farm Bus Depot
 11920 Bournefield Way
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Thursday, May 17, 2018
 4:00–5:00 p.m.

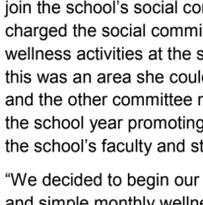
Webinar

Please register for the seminar or webinar by e-mailing **Well Aware** with the date and time you plan to attend. If you register for the webinar, you will receive a link in your Outlook e-mail as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

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

Presented by: CareFirst

Wellness Champions Keep It Simple to Ensure Success



Cabin John Middle School Social Committee and Staff

In Victoria Barry's first year at Cabin John Middle School as a fulltime classroom teacher, she decided to join the school's social committee. The administration charged the social committee with coordinating wellness activities at the school for staff. Victoria knew this was an area she could have a positive impact. She and the other committee members decided to spend the school year promoting the health and happiness of the school's faculty and staff.

"We decided to begin our wellness promotion with fun and simple monthly wellness challenges and activities for staff," Victoria said.

The committee held its first successful activity last September. They held a "planksgiving" challenge, during which staff were encouraged to plank all over the school and post photos of themselves on Google drive for their coworkers to view. This relatively easy-to-do, enjoyable activity got staff thinking about the importance of wellness in their lives.

They held another popular challenge in February to promote heart health. From a list of heart-healthy habits, staff were asked to write down—on a heart-shaped sticky note—something they had done to promote their own heart health. They then posted the notes in the school staff workroom.

"It was really cool to see all of the different heart healthy behaviors plastered all over the workroom," Victoria said.

The team then went to work organizing a walking challenge—held last month—to see how many miles the staff could collectively walk during the month.

"We are proud that Cabin John Middle School staff logged a total of 1,600 miles in April," Victoria said.

Victoria shared a number of reasons for her belief that health and wellness are essential for school employees.

"It is important to take time for our health and wellness so we can continue to give our best to students through our jobs," Victoria said. "If we are not healthy and happy, it can be very difficult to do our jobs well."

Victoria believes too that by promoting wellness, schools can help reduce the number of sick days that staff take. She says that, in turn, less staff sick days means better student learning.

The social committee makes an effort to reach all of their coworkers through a variety of physical activities, recognizing that staff have differing interests and needs.

"By mixing up the opportunities for engagement in wellness activities and trying out fun and different ways for staff to get involved, hopefully we can make a difference for each staff member," Victoria said. In the process, we serve as a reminder to them that it is important to take care of their health."

Recently, Cabin John Middle School held a health and wellness fair for its students. The school invited a number of vendors from the area and offered an opportunity for students to learn more about health and about careers in healthcare.

"Students need adults who they can look up to and be inspired by," Victoria said. While some students have positive role models at home, others may not so they will turn to their teachers to fill that role. When we model healthy, positive behaviors, our students will hopefully learn to practice healthy and positive behaviors as well."

Victoria has some suggestions for other schools and offices looking to start their own wellness challenges and committees.

"Think about how much time staff have to incorporate wellness activities into their busy schedules," Victoria said. "If time is limited, it's important to keep things simple and then stick with them. Sometimes, it may seem like staff are ignoring your wellness efforts, but then an activity winds up being a huge success. You realize that it is totally worth it, and people are getting something out of your efforts."

Join Well Aware This Summer for One or More of These Physical Activities

Tai Chi

We will continue our tai chi practice throughout the summer. Are you new to tai chi? No problem! You may join any class to enjoy this stress relieving practice.

Thursdays

Beginning May 3, 2018
 4:45 p.m.

Lower Level Gym
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Sit and Be Fit

Try a new and exciting physical activity class! Sit and Be Fit is a total body resistance training workout for beginners that may have limited mobility or for those who are working up to a traditional resistance training class.

Tuesdays

June 26; July 3, 17, 24, 31; August 7, 14, 21, 28
 4:45–5:45 p.m.

Café 45
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga

Join Well Aware this summer and learn basic yoga techniques in a comfortable environment.

Wednesdays

May 9, 16, 23, 30; June 6
 4:45 p.m.

Café 45
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Bike to Work Day Is Coming!

Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association invites you to join more than 10,000 area commuters on Friday, May 18, 2018, for a celebration of bicycling as a clean, fun, and healthy way to get to work.

There will be more than 100 pit stops throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia where you can receive refreshments and enter a raffle for free bicycles. Free T-shirts also are available at the pit stops to the first 15,000 who register and attend.

Learn more and/or register for the event.

Wellness Initiatives: Complete Your Health Risk Assessment and Biometric Health Screening and Save

Completing your health risk assessment each year gives you the information you need to take better control of your health and well-being. And that's important, because when you are running at 100 percent, being fit and in good spirits will go a long way to help you perform at your best.

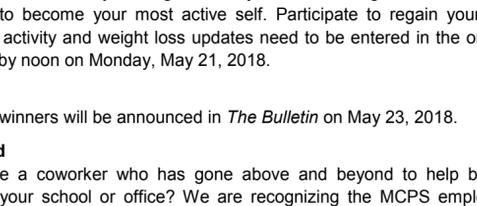
Take your medical insurance plan's confidential, online questionnaire and in less than 20 minutes, you will—

- learn your risk levels for common health problems, including heart disease, colon cancer, and diabetes;
- get a clear picture of your current health status and learn how to improve your health in the future through preventive tests, chronic condition support, and online health coaching; and
- discover interactive tools and educational information that can give you more details on your health status.

Managing and improving your health has never been easier. And, when you complete your Health Risk Assessment by October 5, 2018, MCPS will pay 1 percent more of the total cost of your 2019 health insurance premiums—reducing your contribution by 1 percent. To get started, visit the **Wellness Initiatives for Employees web page**. You will find links for accessing the CareFirst and Kaiser Permanente Health Risk Assessments. You will also find helpful instructions to guide you through the log-in process. **Learn more.**

In addition to the health risk assessment, you can save another 1 percent of the cost of your health insurance by completing a biometric health screening. This means that you either have an annual preventive physical exam with your primary care physician or attend a Well Aware health screening before October 5, 2018. If you are covered by CareFirst, make sure to have your primary care physician complete and sign a Wellness Evaluation form. **See CareFirst instructions** for completing your Wellness Initiatives. If you are a member of Kaiser Permanente, you will need to log in to the **Kaiser Permanente incentive portal** to complete its requirements.

Learn more about Wellness Initiatives.



There's Still Time to Race in the MCPS Grand Prix

Across Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), employees are experiencing better health and morale because of their involvement in Well Aware's *MCPS Grand Prix* physical activity challenge. Some are participating as individuals; others as members of a team. They are enjoying better health and fitness as a result.

There is still time to rev your engines and join the challenge. Let the MCPS Grand Prix inspire you to become your most active self. Participate to regain your health and win prizes! Your activity and weight loss updates need to be entered in the online Well Aware Fitness Log by noon on Monday, May 21, 2018.

Stay tuned

Grand prize winners will be announced in *The Bulletin* on May 23, 2018.

Spirit Award

Do you have a coworker who has gone above and beyond to help build a culture of wellness in your school or office? We are recognizing the MCPS employees who most encouraged others to live their healthiest lives. Ten Spirit Award winners will each receive a fall Zumba or Spirit Award at their school or office. To request a Spirit Award nomination form, **e-mail Well Aware**. Nominations are due by Monday May 21, 2018.

Don't stop now!

Maintain your active lifestyle and look for information on the fall wellness programs on the **Well Aware web page**, in the **Well Aware eNews**, and in **The Bulletin**.

Learn more about the *MCPS Grand Prix*.

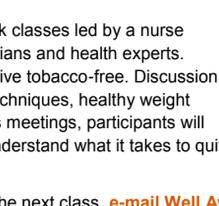
It Is National High Blood Pressure Education Month

High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for death in both men and women. Because of this, every May we encourage men and women to check, change, and control their blood pressure.

Maintaining a healthy blood pressure is one of the many ways you can help keep your heart healthy. To help you understand your risk for high blood pressure, Well Aware has brought the American Heart Association's Check. Change. Control. program to MCPS employees. Check. Change. Control. empowers you to learn about, monitor, and manage your blood pressure through a combination of resources.

Get started! Sign up for your Check. Change. Control. account (use Campaign Code MCPS1) today! Review flyers on the consequences of high blood pressure and modifications you can make to improve your blood pressure.

Questions about Check. Change. Control.? **E-mail Well Aware.**



It's Your Turn to Quit for Good

MCPS and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again to bring you the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program. The free program is available to employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or if you participate with Kaiser.

The program is course-based and consists of once-a-week classes led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Participants will learn the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics will include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the class meetings, participants will receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources.

Fall classes are forming! To add your name to the list for the next class, **e-mail Well Aware**. Learn more about the program by visiting the **Well Aware website**.

Step into Summer!

Step into Summer is another option to help motivate you to incorporate physical activity into your daily life and help you start your summer off on the right foot. This four-week program encourages you to increase your physical activity and start a new healthy habit before the busy summer months. Interested? **E-mail Well Aware** for details.

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). Learn more about employee wellness by visiting our **website**. View this e-mail newsletter as a **PDF document**. Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or **e-mail Well Aware**.