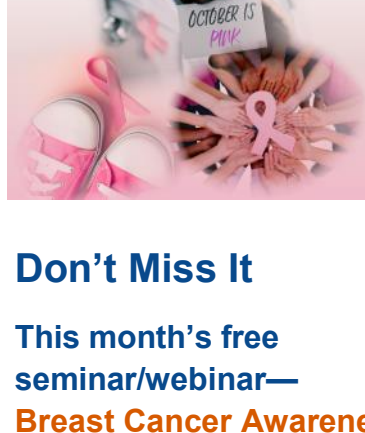


## October Well Aware eNews

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

- a seminar/webinar on the diagnosis path, risk factors, and detection methods of breast cancer;
- the importance of the tobacco attestation requirement and how *Quit for Good* can help you avoid the tobacco surcharge;
- a journey *To the Moon*;
- this year's Wear Pink Day; and
- more!



### Don't Miss It

#### This month's free seminar/webinar— Breast Cancer Awareness

Join Well Aware and CareFirst for a seminar/webinar that will provide an introductory understanding of breast cancer, including the path of diagnosis, risk factors, and methods of detection.

Thursday, October 11, 2018  
10:00–11:00 a.m.

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

Thursday, October 25, 2018  
4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

Wednesday, October 31, 2018  
10:00–11:00 a.m.

11920 Bournefield Way  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

**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*

## Attest and, If You Use Tobacco, Quit for Good to Avoid the Tobacco-user Surcharge

Employee Benefits Open Enrollment begins next week and is your chance to attest to your and your spouse's tobacco-use status.\* If you are a non-tobacco-user and fail to attest, you will pay a 25 percent surcharge on the total cost of your health insurance in 2019.

Tobacco-users also must make their attestation during Open Enrollment every year. Those who register for and complete the *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program can have the surcharge waived and, depending on when the program is completed, refunded.

MCPS and Kaiser Permanente have been teaming up since 2011 to bring you *Quit for Good*. 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 Permanente.

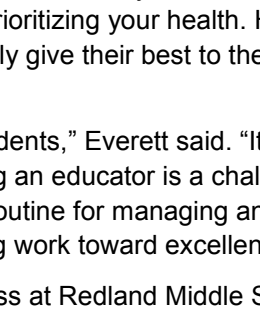
The program is course-based and led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Classes cover the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the class meetings, participants receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources. Learn more by visiting the [Quit for Good web page](#).

Classes are filling up! You must register to participate by [e-mailing Well Aware](#).

*\*Open Enrollment will be held October 8–November 2, 2018. Tobacco attestation instructions will be included in the annual Open Enrollment announcement e-mail that you will receive in your Outlook inbox on Friday, October 5.*

## Wellness Champion Makes His and His Staff's Health a Top Priority

*If you don't have your health, you don't have anything.*



This is a motto that Redland Middle School Principal Everett Davis lives by. He has witnessed the negative impacts faced by colleagues who have not prioritized their health and wellness. He has also seen the effects on his wife, a physician, while managing her own illness.

"I believe that in order for us to serve as leaders and life-long learners, we must maintain a healthy mind, body, and soul," Everett said. "Although I am still making strides along my own health and wellness journey, I do feel it is important and make it a priority, particularly regarding my eating habits and spiritual wellness."

Everett reminds his staff that a core value of our school system is excellence. He tells them it is easier to attain excellence when you're prioritizing your health. He encourages staff to live a healthy and well life so they may not only give their best to their students, but also to their families and to themselves.

"We, the adults, model what we expect of students," Everett said. "It's important to remember that 'all eyes are watching.'" "Being an educator is a challenging and demanding profession. I encourage everyone to have a routine for managing and releasing stress so that it does not impede their health or ongoing work toward excellence."

Everett doesn't just preach health and wellness at Redland Middle School, he models it. Through his leadership, the school organized a Biggest Loser Competition for staff. For several years, Redland has offered yoga classes and even massage.

This year, the goal is to continue offering yoga and perhaps add Zumba classes. Redland staff received a back-to-school gift last month to encourage their participation. In addition, Sharzad Benze, speech pathologist, joined Redland this year after serving as wellness coach at Clearspring Elementary School. She has brought renewed energy to the wellness program at Redland through a wealth of ideas, resources, and partnerships.

Since implementing his own wellness ideas at the school, Everett has some suggestions for other school administrators.

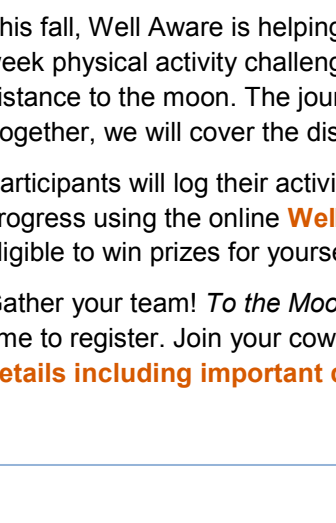
"For those administrators who are interested in starting a wellness program for their staff, I suggest taking a step, both literally and figuratively," Everett said. Beginning a program requires self-reflection. It also requires identifying someone on staff who is passionate about wellness, someone to help champion the cause."

Everett believes that wellness programs are great ways to build community and personal relationships, to set goals, and to encourage each another. He offers that Lisa Cooperstein MCPS wellness coordinator, and/or school wellness coaches are full of ideas, resources, and other supports to help schools and offices begin their programs.

Schools also can form community partnerships to help create and maintain a wellness program. Redland Middle School has discovered a number of companies and organizations that are willing to provide resources to school staff.

Everett's wife's medical practice emphasizes the *Four Pillars of Wellness*, which serve as the foundation of a healthy life style. The pillars include movement/exercise, whole foods diet/healthy nutrition, stress management and sleep, and connection to community and life purpose.

"As you begin to create a wellness program for your school/office, I also recommend that you adopt one or some of these pillars," Everett said. "As a former colleague used to remind me, "Where there is no path, the path is made by walking."



## To the Moon: Well Aware's Fall Physical Activity Challenge

The journey of a thousand (or 250,000 to be exact) miles begins with a single step. Most people see exercise as all or nothing, but truthfully all it takes is a few minutes each day to begin a habit. Soon you will find that the two-minute daily walk you started weeks ago is now 20 minutes or more.

This fall, Well Aware is helping to motivate MCPS staff to take that small step with the 10-week physical activity challenge: *To the Moon*. We are working together to travel the distance to the moon. The journey from Earth to the Moon is about 250,000 miles. Together, we will cover the distance by compiling our miles (or hours of activity).

Participants will log their activity throughout the 10-week challenge, and track their progress using the online [Well Aware Fitness Log](#). Based on participation, you will be eligible to win prizes for yourself, your team, and your school or office.

Gather your team! *To the Moon* started on Monday, October 1, but there is still plenty of time to register. Join your coworkers as a team or train as an individual. [See challenge details including important dates](#).

## National Eating Healthy Day Planned

Take the first step to making healthier food choices by taking part in the American Heart Association's National Eating Healthy Day on Wednesday, November 7, 2018.

On that day, Americans are encouraged to make healthy changes to their food choices and help raise awareness of the importance of good nutrition. Celebrating National Eating Healthy Day is fun and easy. Here are some ways to have healthy celebrations at your upcoming favorite events:

- Focus on fun rather than food.
- Make healthy fruit smoothies.
- Encourage veggies and low-fat dip.

Instead of ice cream sundaes, make a yogurt parfait.

Check out these [excellent resources](#) from the American Heart Association to support National Eating Healthy Day.

Eating healthy is more than just eating the right things; it also is [about eating the proper portions](#). Enjoy this [video](#) to learn how to make healthy recipe swaps.

## Wear Pink to Raise Breast Cancer Awareness

Wear Pink Day will be held this year on October 19, 2018. Join your MCPS coworkers and wear pink that day to raise breast cancer awareness.

Among American women, breast cancer, along with skin cancer, is the most common cancer. Getting mammograms regularly can lower the risk of dying from breast cancer. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women who are 50 to 74 years of age have a screening mammogram every two years. Those 40 to 49 years old should talk with their doctors about when to start and how often to have a screening mammogram.

The Centers for Disease Control launched the *Bring Your Brave* program to provide information about breast cancer to women younger than age 45. The campaign tells real stories about young women whose lives have been affected by breast cancer. These stories about prevention, risk, family history, and survivorship bring to life the idea that young women can be personally affected by breast cancer. Through these testimonials, *Bring Your Brave* aims to inspire young women to learn their risk for breast cancer, talk with their health care provider about their risk, and live a breast-healthy lifestyle.

- [Learn more about the importance of family history, genetic counseling, and lifestyle choices](#)
- [View testimonials from the Bring Your Brave campaign](#).

Wear Pink Day is a great opportunity to speak with coworkers, family, and friends about breast cancer warning signs and to encourage self-checks and mammograms. Also, be sure to take photos of you and your coworkers wearing pink and [share them with Well Aware!](#)

## Stress Less This Fall

If you are living with high levels of stress, you are putting your entire well-being at risk. Stress wreaks havoc on your emotional wellness, as well as on your physical health. It makes it harder to think clearly, function effectively, and enjoy life.

Effective stress management, on the other hand, helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—and the flexibility to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all. That's why it's important to experiment and find out what works best for you.

Find out how to [Beat Stress in 15 Minutes or Less](#).

Well Aware will offer the following classes this fall to help you stress less:

### Mindfulness and Meditation

Mondays through December 17 (except holidays)  
5:00–5:45 p.m.

Conference Room 223  
Carver Educational Services Center  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Seated Yoga

Wednesdays  
October 3, 24, 31  
November 7, 14, 28  
December 5, 12, 19

4:45 p.m.  
Café 45 (Lower Level)  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Sit and Be Fit

Tuesdays through December 18  
4:45 p.m.

Café 45 (Lower Level)  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Tai Chi

Thursdays  
4:45 p.m.

Lower Level Gym  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Zumba

Mondays  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Gymnasium  
Flora M. Singer Elementary School  
2600 Hayden Drive  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Tuesdays and Thursdays through December 20  
3:00 p.m.

John F. Kennedy High School  
1901 Randolph Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

[Register here](#)

Fridays  
4:30 p.m.  
Washington Grove Elementary School  
8712 Oakmont Street  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

To register for any of these classes (except for the Zumba class at John F. Kennedy High School), [e-mail Well Aware](#).

## Depression is More Than Feeling Sad

We all feel sad from time to time. It's a normal, temporary reaction to upsetting experiences in life. Depression is different. When a person has depression, it interferes with daily life—eating, sleeping, working and more. It affects not just the person with depression, but also those who care about them. Most people who experience depression need treatment to get better.

### Know the signs and symptoms of depression

If you experience any of the following symptoms for two weeks or longer, you may have depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Difficulty sleeping, fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering

### Understanding depression

There are different types of depression and they can impact people in different ways. It is best to start treatment early, but it's important to know all forms of depression can be treated. They include—

- Major depression—severe symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, sleep, study, eat and enjoy life.
- Persistent depressive disorder—a depressed mood that lasts for at least two years.
- Postpartum depression—more serious than the normal "baby blues" many women experience after giving birth.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)—depression sets in during the winter months, when there is less natural sunlight. The depression typically fades during spring and summer.

### Treatment for depression

Depression is usually treated with medicines and/or talk therapy (psychotherapy). Typically, there is some trial and error to find the right medication because no two people are affected the same way by depression. It can take several weeks of treatment before you begin to feel better. It is essential to follow your doctor's treatment plan to keep depression from returning.

Every situation is different; there are resources available to help:

- If you are having thoughts of death or suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or call 911 immediately.
- Talk with your doctor to find the right treatment options.

### Depression Screenings

The MCPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) conducts screenings for depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The screenings take less than 30 minutes and are available for all MCPS employees and their family members. Screenings are free and confidential and provide an opportunity to learn more about depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders; complete a brief screening questionnaire; and speak one-on-one with a mental health professional. If appropriate, referrals will be made for a complete evaluation.

Call the EAP at 240-314-1040 if you have questions and/or to schedule an appointment. Appointments are available from 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at the EAP offices, 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 1300, Rockville.

## Flu Awareness

Did you know a cough can travel up to 100 mph and reach as far as 20 feet? Flu season is fast approaching! Ranging from October through April, an estimated 5-20 percent of Americans get the flu each year with symptoms lasting for up to two weeks.

[Here are some easy ways to protect yourself from colds and the flu.](#)

## InStep with Diabetes

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente have partnered together to hold a diabetes educational program to help pre-diabetics, diagnosed diabetics, and caretakers of diabetics. We have helped staff members lower their A1C levels, control their sugar intake, and lose body fat. Join us for this four-week course focusing on nutrition and diabetes.

InStep with Diabetes will be held—

Tuesdays, October 9–30, 2018  
4:30–5:30 p.m.

45 West Gude Drive  
Aspen Conference Room  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register, [e-mail Well Aware](#).