

University plan will cost UMPNC members' income

How much is **too much** for health insurance?

You knew it was coming and now it's here. U of M, a profit-making institution, is now trying to improve their bottom line on the backs of the nurses by using their patented "one size fits all" health insurance plan against UMPNC members. This plan would constitute a major chunk of income disappearing from nurses' pockets and going straight into the Employer's coffers.

On June 1, 2011 representatives of the University's Benefits Administration Office made a presentation to the UMPNC's bargaining team on the Committee on Sustainable Health Benefit's (COSHB) recommendations for health insurance changes for the entire University.

COSHB proposed benefit changes include:

	Current	Recommended	Increase
Prescription Drug Tier 3	\$30	\$45	\$15/RX
Office Visit Co-Pay	\$15	\$20	\$5/visit
Emergency Room Visits	\$50	\$75	\$25/visit

Additionally, COSHB is proposing that employees pay more for their health insurance co-premiums. During the last two years, University employees began to contribute about 30% of the total cost of health care which includes co-premiums, deductibles and co-pays. UMPNC/MNA employees currently pay about 20% of the total cost of health care.

The following is an illustration of the rate changes for employees who are currently on the 85/15 premium formula if they were to move to the COSHB-recommended formula.

	Monthly 85/15	Monthly COSHB	Monthly Increase	Annual Increase
Full-time	\$127.47	\$198.84	\$71.37	\$856.44
Part-time	\$152.13	\$334.55	\$182.42	\$2,189.04

Under the COSHB proposed changes, a full time nurse would be paying \$2386 annually and a part-time nurse would be paying \$4015 annually for health care co-premiums. A

nurse who is in the middle of the payscale of Level C would be paying about 4% of their income toward health insurance co-premiums. A half-time nurse in the middle of the payscale of Level C would be paying about 13% of their income toward health insurance co-premiums. These proposed changes are significant and if implemented would actually end up reducing the income for UMPNC members. How much will your wage increase need to be in order to have University provided health insurance if the COSHB changes are implemented?

This is an unfair ask of the Employer. Show your solidarity in support of your bargaining team and in opposition to these proposed changes by wearing your button every day and wearing red on Fridays!

Bills that will impact UMPNC members

Over the course of the last six months, bills have been pouring out of the Michigan legislature. Unfortunately for UMPNC members, many of these pieces of legislation are going to have a very negative impact now that they are signed into law.

Arguably the worst of the new legislation passed is House Bill (HB) 4152. This new law will have the following effect on UMPNC members:

Wages and benefits will be **frozen** at the end of an expired contract and during the active negotiation of a new contract. Step increases **will not be allowed** during this time; AND

The burden of any increased costs related to maintaining health benefits during the expired contract or the active negotiation of a new contract is the **responsibility of the nurse**; AND

The U of M now has the **authorization** to make payroll deductions to cover any increased costs associated with maintaining the health benefits from the expired contract; AND

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The retroactive pay or benefit levels greater than those in effect on the expiration date of the contract also **would be prohibited.**

Stay united! Push the Employer for a new contract that protects your wages and increases.

Senate Bill (SB) 20 is not a nurse-friendly new law, either. It prohibits the enforcement of rules regarding workplace ergonomics, which means that your physical health is more at risk due to unsafe working conditions.

Below are some other pieces of legislation that have not yet passed the full legislature, but will have a huge impact on UMPNC, should they become laws.

HB 4059 is a bill to prohibit a public employer from entering into or renewing a collective bargaining agreement that requires or allows paid release time for union officers or bargaining representatives to conduct union business if the release time is paid by the public employer. **BILL STATUS: PASSED THE HOUSE.**

SB 7 is a bill to limit public employers from paying more than 80 percent of the total cost of health care for employees. **BILL STATUS: PASSED THE SENATE.**

SJR-B is a joint resolution to impose a 5 percent reduction in pay for all public servants for three years. **BILL STATUS: INTRODUCED, NOT PASSED.**

SJR-C is a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the state constitution of 1963 to provide for establishing uniform

cost allocation requirements for health benefits for public employees. **BILL STATUS: PASSED THE SENATE.**

As you can plainly see, the legislation being proposed so far this year is focused on union-busting and shifting the financial burdens of our great state onto the backs of public employees like yourselves. Now, more than ever, members need to get involved and stay involved. Call your state senator and your state representative. Tell them that you don't support any of this legislation and that you will remember how they voted when elections roll back around in 2012. Go to your legislator's local town hall meetings and coffee hours. Let your voices be heard and make sure they know that you are not happy with their legislative decision-making. If we don't act now, these bills will pass and become a reality. Everyone must do their part to ensure that these pieces of legislation do not become law.

See the MNA website for fact sheets on all of these bills at www.minurses.org.

Get latest news via e-mail

The next few weeks are going to be very important in our contract negotiations. If any UMPNC member wishes to receive email updates, they can submit their name and email address to Lynn Speed at the UMPNC office 734.663.5657; lkspeed@med.umich.edu

Plan on checking the website often, too!



Over 750 nurses from 31 different states, including several UMPNC members, gather to rally for nursing's voice to be heard at the Capitol in Washington, DC at the NNU Staff Nurse Assembly on June 6, 2011.