



# UPDATE

February 3, 2005

• A Publication of the All Faculty Association at Santa Rosa Junior College •

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## Adjunct Medical Benefits in Jeopardy

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Many of you are aware, because of our recent communications, that the State of California's Adjunct Medical Benefits Program is in jeopardy. The original legislation set aside one million dollars to reimburse districts for 50% of the health insurance premium for adjuncts who work an average of 40% each semester. This was a wonderful idea but, as so often happens with the State, it became an unfunded mandate. During the first year SRJC adopted the program, there was no cost to the District; however, for the last two years the State has not adequately funded the program. In 2003-04, for example, it cost the District \$490,000, and the State only reimbursed them \$69,000. Clearly, the State is not upholding its part of the bargain and every year AFA has had to renegotiate how to pay for this item. In September of 2004, the District and AFA sent letters to adjunct faculty who participate in the program letting them know that their coverage would continue until June 30, 2005, but that the solution for 2004-05 was not viable on an ongoing basis.

At this point in time, the Chancellor's Office has proposed that the program be funded at five million dollars which would cover the costs for all districts across the state.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP.** Although the governor has some definite ideas about most items in his budget, it still is only a **proposed budget**. As I said before, all of us should be concerned that Governor Schwarzenegger is more than willing to sacrifice the quality of the State's educational institutions rather than raise taxes. Despite his position on taxation, much negotiation will take place with the legislature **and we do have a voice in Sacramento if we choose to make it heard.**

We urge you to go to the AFA website and access sample letters and the addresses for your legislators. Write to them and to the governor; talk to your friends, neighbors, and students about the importance of adequately funding community colleges and providing access to health care for adjunct faculty. Use your political voice to support your colleagues!

### More Bad News:

#### Defined Benefit Plan At Risk

While you're writing letters, take a moment to look at the sample letters on the AFA website and send one telling the governor to refrain from making sweeping changes to the CalSTRS Defined Benefit Plan. This issue deeply affects many faculty and educators across the state.

### Health Net Problems?

AFA and the District have become aware that a significant number of SRJC employees have been experiencing problems with Health Net's payment of claims. AFA and the District are actively pursuing a resolution of this situation. In the meantime, if you are insured under the District's Health Net Plan and you are experiencing any difficulty with timely payment of claims, AFA encourages you to promptly contact Louise Burke, Benefits Specialist in the Human Resources Department, at ext. 4304 or [lburke@santarosa.edu](mailto:lburke@santarosa.edu). Louise is working closely with Robert Shirrell's office and the District-Health Net liaison to take care of each claim as quickly as possible.

## IRC 125 Plan Receipts for 2004 Due by March 31

If you participated last year in the District's IRC Section 125 Plan, you have until March 31, 2005 to deplete your account balance and submit your receipts for dependent care and out-of-pocket medical care expenses paid during the 2004 calendar year. (You should have received a statement from Shirrell Consulting Services, summarizing your contributions and reimbursements, and the balance remaining in your account as of November 30, 2004.)

Copies of all receipts (keep the originals for your records) should be attached to a completed, orange *Claim for Reimbursement Form* and mailed to Shirrell Consulting Services, Inc., P.O. Box 329, Santa Rosa, CA 95402. Contact Lisa Hotchkiss in the Payroll Department at 527-4200 if you need additional forms. If you did not receive a statement, call Shirrell Consulting Services at (707) 544-1801.

If you still have funds remaining in your 2004 account, you might be interested to know that a recent change in IRS regulations allows you to submit claims through the IRC 125 Plan for over-the-counter drugs. (Note: you must have made the purchase in the year 2004 in order to be able to submit the claim for reimbursement.) Allowable IRC 125 plan medical care expenses include amounts paid for diagnosing, curing, mitigating, treating or preventing disease. Covered over-the-counter drugs include the following:

- Antacids
- Allergy pills
- Pain relievers
- Cold medicines

The ruling excludes reimbursements for purchases of toiletries, cosmetics, and other items such as toothpaste, hair spray, and soap. If you have any questions regarding a particular item, call Shirrell Consulting Services at (707) 544-1801.

## Apply now for Faculty Technology Training Funds

AFA would like to remind all active full-time and part-time faculty that you may submit an application at any time to the Faculty Technology Training Fund (FTTF). This fund was established through negotiations between AFA and the District to encourage effective use of technology and promote technological competence by funding hands-on training opportunities for faculty.

The FTTF Committee will consider reimbursement for all direct costs related to participation in hands-on training activities (for example, travel and travel-related expenses, registration, certification fees and instructional materials). In this year of limited staff development money, the Faculty Tech Training Fund may be the only source of funds easily available; but, remember: it is for **hands-on** technology training only — you must be learning by doing.

A description of the fund and a copy of the application form are posted on the AFA web site at [www.santarosa.edu/afa/](http://www.santarosa.edu/afa/) and are also available upon request by calling the AFA office at 527-4731, or by sending an e-mail to [afa@santarosa.edu](mailto:afa@santarosa.edu). Note: applications must be submitted **in advance** of the training.

### Reminder: PDA Workshops

#### Planning Ahead: CalSTRS Defined Benefit Plan

Wednesday, February 16  
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
Lark Hall, Room 2004

#### Adjunct Faculty Workshop: Hourly Assignments, Evaluations and Your Concerns

Wednesday, February 16  
7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.  
Emeritus Hall, Room 1588