

News Update



Representing Public Employees in
City of Colusa, Sutter and Yuba Counties

Volume XXI Issue I

January 2006

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

Mission

Statement

To represent and assist public employees in their quest to improve their wages and working conditions and to ensure their rights are protected.

Word Gets Out

by Christine Scanlan, Field Representative, San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association

Office walls, especially cubicle walls, are really thin. For most of us, when we're at work, complete privacy is typically unattainable and accidental eavesdropping by co-workers is a common occurrence. We all try to be careful about what we do and say on the job, but an occasional reminder of the do's and don'ts of verbal office etiquette never hurts, right?

KEEP CRITIQUES QUIET

Even in situations at work where you are right about a complaint or critique—maybe a current procedure is inefficient, a policy is not being followed consistently or an employee is being treated poorly—criticizing aloud, where co-workers can hear, is not the proper way to address the problem. If you are in a meeting where articulating constructive criticisms with a group is encouraged, that's another story—go ahead and voice your opinion respectfully. But if you

are talking with a co-worker in the break room or in your workstation, that is not the appropriate place to vent frustration or disapproval. People can overhear and misinterpret what you are saying. No matter how innocent they may seem to you; your words can sound differently to others inadvertently listening in.

When you have something to report to your supervisor—a negative incident, a co-worker's behavior or a complaint about a client you are helping—make sure to pick a time to deliver the information when you can meet with your supervisor alone and you won't be overheard. And the same goes for supervisors: remember to always pass on constructive criticism to subordinate employees behind closed doors.

Be careful not to make snide or sarcastic comments about your job or employer, even when you think you are alone with a trusted co-worker. And when talking about

things like promotions, workloads or inconsistent treatment, make sure you're secluded and prepared for the conversation. Office politics are already difficult enough; don't make things worse by sending a message you didn't intend!

INFORM PROPERLY

Sometimes sending an email or writing a memo is the proper method to deliver criticisms or relay serious inquiries; sometimes verbally relaying the message in a confidential manner to the proper individual(s) is the appropriate technique. Every situation should be assessed differently based on the gravity of the information and the nature of the interpersonal relationships of the parties involved. Many times, you should call S/YCEA for advice, help or representation—but again, make sure you're on a break or off work and in a private location when you call.

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Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Cowardice asks the question - is it safe?

Vanity asks the question - is it popular?

Expediency asks the question - is it political?

But conscience asks the question - is it right?

There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, popular, or political; but because it is right.

We have flown the air like birds and swum the seas like fishes, but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.

Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.

**Martin Luther King,
Jr.**

Medicare Rx "doughnut hole"

Many of us have parents and/or other relatives that are struggling with the new Medicare drug benefit and we are looking for ways to save loved ones money. The article below may give some relief.

Best Buy Drugs could save you money—in some cases more than \$5,000 a year—in conjunction with the new Medicare drug benefit, study finds.

Are you struggling with the new Medicare drug benefit? Join the club. Seniors nationwide are having difficulties understanding their options and deciding which plan is best for them.

We don't want to confuse you even further—but we've conducted an analysis that we think you might want to know about. It could help save you a substantial amount of money if you join a Medicare drug plan. Actually, it could help you even if you don't.

Using the information available on the new drug plans on the government's Medicare Website (www.medicare.gov), we calculated the possible savings for individuals taking a representative set of the Best Buy drugs we

identify in the reports available on this Web site, compared with more expensive prescription medicines.

It's a hypothetical example. But the savings could be very real. We present a few of the findings below. But we want to be clear: Achieving these savings first requires that you talk to your doctor about making the kind of drug switches we based our analysis on. Your doctor could agree that such switches might be easily done for you. But he or she could also advise that, for medical reasons, you should not make changes in the drugs you take. The important thing is that you get the medicines that are right for you.

Having said that, Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs is all about empowering you with information to work with your doctor to make these kind of choices. And it's also about identifying drugs that cost less but are just as effective and safe—or even safer—than higher-cost medicines.

The analysis found that seniors taking five commonly prescribed drugs—for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis pain, and depression—could save between \$2,300 and \$5,300 a year under various Medicare Part D insurance plans by switching to the effective lower-cost

medicines drugs identified as Best Buys on this Web site.

Most significant, the study illustrates that seniors who take several medicines regularly could avoid falling into the "doughnut hole"—the coverage gap that begins with most plans once seniors' total drug costs reach \$2,250—by switching to lower-cost drugs. In California, for example, a senior enrolled in the lowest-cost Medicare insurance plan would save \$2,555 a year by switching to Best Buy drugs. Those savings would increase to \$5,278 with the highest-price plan (a plan that has the highest premiums and co-pays and/or lacks coverage of some of the drugs we analyzed). Savings were similar in Georgia and Minnesota, the two other states we examined.

Even if you take one drug on a regular basis, the savings could be significant, we found—ranging from around \$280 to \$2,600 a year. For example, a switch from the cholesterol-lowering drug Lipitor to generic lovastatin yields annual savings of \$737 under the highest-cost plan in the Sacramento, Calif., area. Similarly, a switch from the arthritis-pain drug Celebrex to generic prescription

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Medicare Rx "doughnut hole"

(Continued from page 2)

ibuprofen could yield savings of around \$2,500 a year for those in the highest-cost Medicare Rx plans in the Atlanta, Ga., area.

You can get a copy of the report, *Helping Medicare Beneficiaries Lower Their Out-of-Pocket Costs under the New Prescription Drug Benefit*, by going to—www.crbestbuydrugs.org/PDFs/MedicareReport.Pdf.

You will need adobe acrobat software to download it.
(December 2005)

CONSUMER REPORTS
BEST BUY DRUGS™

Word Gets Out

(Continued from page 1)

KEEP PERSONAL INFORMATION PERSONAL

Information about your health condition and medications; particulars about your personal life or

relationships; and details about your work performance issues, potential disciplinary actions and workplace grievances should be kept private. Yes, many co-workers become friends through work, but keep in mind that the workplace needs to

remain a professional environment. Don't unintentionally cross the line because you've gotten too comfortable!

As always, call S/YCEA when you need us, we are here to help. 674-0185.

Keeping Us Updated and Your Benefits

Please call the Association office to update your records with us. First, check your newsletter label. Is your name correct? Is your work location correct? Also, has your work phone or extension number changed? Next, has your home address changed or has your phone number changed? Do we have a personal email address on file for you?

If you go on maternity, family or medical leave, you need to notify the Association that you are not at your work location at this time and would like your bulletins and newsletters to be mailed to your home address.

Take advantage of membership benefits that include this News Update with information that outlines your rights in the workplace, legislative news, negotiation activities, amusement park discounts and tickets, insurance programs, legal services, and discounts from merchants in our community.

The newsletter is how we communicate important information to you each month. At times you may read a newsletter that didn't apply to you or you didn't feel was helpful so you don't take the time to scan through the articles each month in a timely manner and you lose a benefit or chance to be prepared when a work

problem arises.

Be informed and be ready to take the appropriate action in an emergency! If you think the Association doesn't do anything for you and you haven't read the newsletter, how would you know what we do or offer? Stay up-to-date with the Association calendar and know when your leaders are meeting. Maybe there is something that needs to be addressed at a Site Representative Meeting. Do you know who your leaders are? They are the ones who fight for your rights each and every month and get very little praise or appreciation from the ones they serve.

Service Awards Sutter County



Gold Resolutions at Sutter County Mental Health Department:

Bob Morrish

32 years

Joann Nixon

15 years

Beverly Vickland

15 years

Janet Henderson

28 years

Dale McBride-long time member before he was promoted to management

28 years

Gold Resolution at Employment Services:

Kathleen Mahoney

Sutter County

35 years

City of Colusa

Ben Carranza

Street Department

Senior Maintenance
Worker

20 Years

Dale Nokes

Sewer Department

Utility Systems Operator

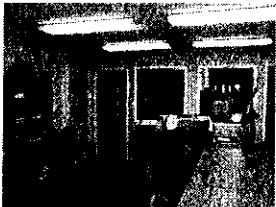
30 Years



Local #1 is having their annual Crab Feed on **Saturday, February 4, 2006.** Set-up has been assigned to Sutter and Yuba Counties so staff will be attending again this year and helping with the tables, chairs, tablecloths, place settings, and most importantly bibs so all that lovely crab will not end up on attendees. The event will be held in Pittsburg, California at the East County Boys & Girls Club at 1001 Stoneman Avenue. Tickets are \$35 per person. The theme will be red, white and blue and there will be raffle prizes and a no host bar. The local Fire Fighter Academy will be proving support for serving and cleanup.

If you wish to purchase tickets, have questions or need directions, please call the Association Office at 674-0185 and we will be happy to assist you!

S/YCEA



Representing Public Employees in City of Colusa, Sutter and Yuba Counties

718 Bridge Street, Suite A
Yuba City, CA 95991

Phone: 530 674-0185

Fax: 530 674-0477

Email: Local1@sycea.org

sycea.org

JANUARY 2006

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Local #1 Board Meeting** – Saturday at 9:30 a.m. January 7
Was held in Sacramento at UPE, Local #1 Office
- S/YCEA Board of Directors' Joint Meeting** – Tuesday 5:30 p.m. January 10
Will be held at the S/YCEA Association Office
- Martin Luther King Holiday** – Monday January 16
- YCEA Board of Directors' Meeting** – Wednesday January 25
Will be held at the S/YCEA Association Office
- Site Rep Meetings & Membership and/or Negotiation Committee Meetings will be listed on the Association web site shortly.*

NEW MEMBERS

Yuba County

Carol Mc Graw
Child Support Services

Sutter County

Gina Krog
Auditor's Office

Sutter County Courts

Rachel Yvonne Heffner

Sutter County

Housing Authority

Bret Weniger

David Skibbie

Cher Vang

Wayne Miers

City of Colusa

Alan Campbell
Water Department



933 members strong!!





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