TSA Services Grow; New Plans Available

Human Resources has recently expanded its service offering to employees in the areas of tax sheltered annuities with the addition of more vendors.

Joining Copeland are VALIC and Fidelity to create a diversity of options.

Kevin Rhodes, of VALIC, says the programs, commonly called TSAs, are opportunities for employees to set up a regular savings plan for retirement. They are the non-profit institution equivalent to 401k plans offered through many private businesses.

The value for long-term financial planning is that payroll deductions are made on a pre-tax basis, which has the effect of reducing income tax liability. He adds that the companies invest those funds, which helps the savings grow over the years.

“Depending on your income,” he explains, “a payroll deduction of $100 a month is really worth between $110 and $140 because it is before taxes.”

He also notes that TSAs are highly individualized packages, tailored to meet personal needs. Even the manner in which money is invested varies in terms of risk, which affects rates of return.

Rhodes says the service is valuable because it allows employees of all ages flexibility in retirement savings plans. “You might be young and only able to spare $10 or $15 per pay, or you may be older, with children grown and no mortgage, and have more to work with.”

That’s the reason it’s worthwhile to do some shopping among the various providers before making a commitment. Each offers unique products, and each is prepared to work with the individual employee to present varied alternatives.

After that, it’s as simple as arranging for a payroll deduction.

Rhodes says it’s important to remember that while TSAs are available only through non-profit employers, nothing is lost should an employee switch from hospital to private sector employment (where many offer similar 401k plans).

Rhodes is available at Cedar Crest & I-78 on Mondays and Tuesdays, and at 17th & Chew on Wednesdays and Fridays. He can be reached at ext. 9486.

Copeland representative Steve Lehman is at Cedar Crest & I-78 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and at 17th & Chew on Monday and Tuesday. He can be reached at ext. 8801.

Information about Fidelity is available by calling 1-800-841-3363.
Your Serve: It’s Time for Volleyball Again

April 23 is the deadline for summer volleyball registration with Brenda Rocchino in Engineering. Games begin in early May and continue through August on Mondays and Wednesdays. Each player will be required to pay a small fee, estimated at $5 to $10, to cover the cost of conditioning the courts and t-shirts for the season champs.

HDR Programs

CPR Recertification will be held in the 24-hour period beginning at 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 28 in the Pediatrics Classroom, 5th floor, 17th & Chew.

CPR certification, for which pre-registration is required by returning the registration form on the monthly HRD calendar or outside HRD at either site, will be held in two parts, and attendance is required for both. Part I will be held Thursday, May 6 and Part II on May 13, both from 1 to 4 p.m. in Room 900, School of Nursing, 17th & Chew.

Stress and Burnout — Care for the Caregiver, will be held April 22 from 9 to 11:30 a.m. in Room 902, School of Nursing, 17th & Chew. Registration forms are available on the monthly education calendar or outside HRD office.

Coming in the Regional Symposium Series, offered by Human Resource Development and supported by the Dorothy Rider Pool Health Care Trust, are Renal Transplant: Applications for the Non-Transplant Physician on April 24, the Second Annual Wilderness Medicine Symposium on May 1, The 13th Annual Update in Cardiology on May 6, and The Fourth Annual Pediatric Symposium on May 20. For additional information, call ext. 4609.

WalkAmerica 1993

Registration continues for WalkAmerica for Healthier Babies, the annual fund-raiser of the March of Dimes, to be held rain or shine on April 25. The walk begins at Dorney Park and covers a nine-mile route. Hospital participants will receive a fanny pack to wear around the waist and carry small necessities. To register, contact Gail Pitsko at ext. 3001.

Hospital employees are also invited to join two benefit events to support health causes.

The American Lung Association of the Lehigh Valley will conduct its Clean Air Challenge Bike Ride on May 15. Riders will choose from 10, 25, 50 or 100 mile routes that begin and end at Northampton Community College. There’s even a 3-mile kid’s ride. For additional information about the event, call 867-4100.

The annual Multiple Sclerosis 150 Bike Tour will be held June 12 and 13. The hospital will sponsor a team of riders for the event, which begins in Tresckertown and winds through Lancaster County. For more information about the event and registration, contact George Guldin, Respiratory Care, ext. 8055.

Walking Program

Group walks, led by a certified aerobic instructor, will be offered on a series of dates at hospital sites by Health Promotion Program. Preceded by a warm up stretch, the walks are approximately 30 minutes in length, and depart from the main entrances of both hospital sites.

Registration is by calling 821-2150 and the deadline to sign up is April 26. All walkers participating in three or more of the lunchtime walks will receive a T-shirt.

The schedule at 17th & Chew, all Mondays, is 11:30 a.m. to noon and 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. on May 3, May 10, May 17 and May 24. At Cedar Crest & I-78, the walks will be in the same time periods on Wednesdays, including May 5, May 12, May 19 and May 26.

CheckUp is a bimonthly employee publication of Lehigh Valley Hospital, Public Relations, 1243 S. Cedar Crest Blvd., Allentown, PA 18103. Interoffice mail submissions should be addressed to 1243SCC-PR. For additional information, call ext. 3000. Lehigh Valley Hospital is an equal opportunity employer. M/F/D/V

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OT Challenges Staff to Celebrate Month

Okay, guys, who's got the strongest grip? Both men and women will have a chance to find out in the next couple of weeks, courtesy of Occupational Therapy.

April is Occupational Therapy Awareness Month, and the hospital professionals plan to educate everyone about the art of their work as well as inviting everyone to have some fun, too.

Between April 19 and 23 at 17th & Chew and from April 26 to 30 at Cedar Crest & I-78, lobby displays near the 17th & Chew cafeteria and the Anderson Wing lobby will show off the variety of work done by occupational therapists. Displays will include cognitive/perceptual, splinting and activities of daily living tables.

Therapists will be on hand to explain the high levels of creativity required for the very individualized cases they deal with, especially in areas of stroke, orthopedics, trauma, pediatrics and psychiatry.

The final day at each site has been reserved for fun, with three contests planned.

Anyone can have a shot at the dynamometer, which measures the strength of grip, for the distinction of strongest male and strongest female at each site. But be careful — whoever finishes at the bottom of the list will get a special award for being “all around wimp.”

For the creative, samples of splinting materials will be available (along with the necessary warm water to shape the material) to form a creation, with contestants judged on creativity, function and design.

And for the more cerebral, the question will be how much you know about adaptive equipment. The advice here is to stop by during the first three days, learn as much as you can, and show off when the identifying tags are gone on the final day.

Events
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Educational Programs

Robert Thompson, MD, a dermatologist, will present “Skin Cancer: Your Role in Early Detection and Prevention” on Wednesday, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. in Classroom 3, Cedar Crest & I-78. The program is part of a regular series offered by the Comprehensive Community Cancer Center.

Nursing Education's Continuing Education Program lists varied registration deadlines for a number of late April and May classes. Among those on the immediate agenda are Psycho-Oncology: Expanding the Horizon; CCRN Review Series; Preceptorship Preparation; Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump; ACLS Recertification; Pediatric Trauma; and Advanced Pacemaker Offering. For additional information on dates, locations and registration requirements, contact Nursing Education at ext. 1700.

Benefits Summaries
To Be Mailed Soon

Annual personal benefits statements will be distributed this month to all employees scheduled to work 32 hours per pay as of Dec. 31, 1992.

The statements, first issued in 1991, are designed to show the value of benefits provided by Human Resources. They are mailed to employee homes.

Questions regarding the statement should be directed to Gerriane Keiser, ext. 8839; Maryjane Zanders, ext. 2930; or Leilani Souders, ext. 8807.
Week of Treats Planned at Cafeteria

Next week is one of special treats for patrons at the Cedar Crest & I-78 cafeteria, with three special events planned.

Topping the list is "Dannon Day," on April 12 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and from 1 to 3 a.m. the following morning. Dannon likes to think its frozen yogurt is better than the Colombo brand now in the dispensing machine and, in an attempt to prove it, will be giving out sample tastes of its product line.

A Dannon representative will be on hand to serve the desserts, provide nutritional information, and answer questions. And just to pique employee interest even further, there will be instant winners of Dannon T-shirts and baseball caps, as well as an opportunity for employees to get in on a grand prize drawing for a bicycle.

The event will be held only at Cedar Crest & I-78 because Food Services owns the dispensing machine; at 17th & Chew, the hospital has a lease agreement with Jack and Jill — which means that's the only brand in the dispenser.

Also making a debut on April 12 are jumbo soft pretzels, which will be offered as an afternoon snack between 2 and 4 p.m. daily. They're warm, with mustard available, and 65 cents each.

It'll be "Dew" It With "Pete's Pizza" Day, courtesy of Pepsico. To celebrate the arrival of personal pan pizza from Pete's Arena, Mountain Dew will accompany the meal at half price. The seven-inch pies will be $1.85 for cheese and $2.05 for pepperoni. Alex Endres, assistant director, Food Services, also encourages patrons to check under the plate that the pie will be served on — find a Mountain Dew sticker and you're an instant winner of a Mountain Dew tee-shirt. The pan pizzas will be available during the usual lunch and dinner hours, and will not replace large pie slices.

The event is limited to the Cedar Crest & I-78 cafeteria because Pepsico products aren't available at 17th & Chew.

Meanwhile, recent customer comment cards included applause for flavored coffee and elicited a promise for even more variety.

Another patron encourages a reduction of salt in the offerings. Food Services says the chefs are continually looking for new products and ways to improve quality, including finding flavor enhancers and food bases with less salt content and more natural ingredients.

Then there's the important matter of toast and bagels. Sorry, but toast can't be available at all times, mostly because of the burden of heavy lunch traffic. And no, the brand of bagels wasn't changed because of the toaster, but because of difficulties with the vendor. If problems are resolved, those other bagels may be back.

In the department of odd math, an employee wondered, "If we receive a 20 percent discount, why are we charged 85 cents for a $1 item?" There's the small matter of state sales tax, which is computed after the discount ($1 times 0.8 equals 80 cents times 1.06 equals 84.8 cents, rounded up to 85).

Finally, why can't at least one of the doors at the rear of the cafeteria be opened from the outside? The answer is in security and fire code regulations, which require the doors to remain closed. Designated personnel can gain access from the outside in cases of emergency.

Take Note of This
Unusual Cancer Support

The diversional program of the Comprehensive Community Cancer Center recently acquired a unique addition in Phil Spaziani, a volunteer with exceptional talent in singing.

Until recently, he entertained on 6T and then shifted to the cancer center — where he's a patient. Now he sings to patients on the oncology unit as well as Radiation Therapy, and has recruited another 15 volunteers to expand the program.

The cancer center's diversional program will eventually include a variety of card and board games and other items of interest, according to Sandra Smith, center director.
We can’t stress enough how important it is to protect your code and password,” Gottschall says. “You’ll have to treat it the same as the numbers on your Money Access Card.”

To help make it easy, it’s possible to log off the system with a single keystroke, and no terminal should ever be left unattended. Logging back in takes only a few seconds.

When Lehigh Valley Hospital’s new patient care, management and accounting system goes on line in the near future, the emphasis is on speed and convenience for staff throughout the system who are involved in patient records.

But what few will ever see is an elaborate system of security for that information that not only increases confidentiality but also strengthens integrity.

While teams at Information Services continue to check and double check the system to ensure it’s in perfect working order before the “go-live” date, another group has been studying every conceivable means of security.

Milton Gottschall, security administrator, explains that the 18-month effort is designed to prevent unauthorized access to medical records as well as establish the means to prevent any tampering with patient chart or hospital financial data.

At present, with paper records, it’s a matter of ethics; those involved with various aspects of a current chart look at only what is required for them to perform their work. After discharge, the chart contents are guarded by Medical Records.

But with the new LastWord system, only those parts of the record to which a clinician has authorization to work with will be available on screen. This is achieved through assignment of individual codes to all those involved — no simple feat in itself, considering the vast array of physicians, units and support services who become involved with hundreds of patients on a daily basis throughout the entire system.

To illustrate how ethically and legally challenging the task can get, Gottschall illustrates with examples of confidentiality:

- A former Psychiatry patient, who is on prescribed medications as a matter of mental health, is admitted to Shock Trauma after a traffic accident. How much should Shock Trauma be allowed to know about the individual? Medical records, certainly, but not psychiatric reports. And even then, access is closely monitored.
- A young adult who had been given up for adoption is admitted as a patient. There is a record of his birth still on file — which includes the identity of the birth parents. Those are sealed records, and must remain so.
- A person who is treated for a chronic disease, but does not want even her spouse to know, is an ideal candidate for a research study. Correspondence would be a dead giveaway; should the research suffer to protect confidentiality? How will researchers even know if confidentiality is a concern?

An important plus for the new PCMA system is the ability for physicians to check patient records from the convenience of their offices. That means calls from outside the hospital telephone system and the question of security.

The system the hospital uses requires both a code and a password for entry, but also requires a “home address” of the incoming call.

A special addition is planned for authorized terminals in physician’s offices. “You call up, and the first thing the computer will do is ‘talk’ to the terminal to see if it’s legitimate,” Gottschall says. “If not, it hangs up. Then it wants not only the code but the password, too. And even then, you’d have to be very sophisticated to know the limitations of access — remember, you leave an electronic trail. If you try to get into areas you don’t belong, we begin to observe, and we can shut you off at any time.”
Electronic Footprints Key to Record Security

The security system of LastWord not only means medical staff and employees will be given unique access codes and passwords, but each time they log in, or electronically access, a patient's record, they will leave an electronic trail. The unique access code is called an “SUI” or Standard User Identification.

Pronounced “soo-ee,” the SUI is equivalent to your legal signature. That's the most important reason for not sharing your password. Unlike the present system, users must log off after every session at the computer or another employee's actions will be “signed” with your electronic signature.

To illustrate, Gottschall paints a scenario. “Dr. Smith logs in, calls up the record of her patient, and enters various medical orders. In the meantime, a nurse, Ann Jones, needs to quickly check on something in a different patient’s chart. Dr. Smith graciously steps aside and allows Nurse Jones to do her momentary work.

“What happens is that the actions in the second patient's file are attributed to Dr. Smith, not Nurse Jones, because that was the code being used at the time,” he says, “and that activity is a permanent part of the record.”

It forever allows the hospital to backtrack and determine who entered what information and when they did it.

Even more elaborate are attempts at unauthorized access. The entire network goes beyond patient records and includes, among many items, personnel materials and institutional financial data. “Perhaps you want to use the system to see if you can find out how much a vice president is earning,” Gottschall illustrates. “If you don’t have authorization, you won’t get into the file. But beyond that, you will leave your 'signature' that you attempted access and were denied.”

Part of the security system includes alarms and monitoring. In the case of the former psychiatric patient, access from a Shock Trauma nurse would be allowed to a point, but the computer system will promptly notify system authorities that someone has been given access to confidential material and it will be closely observed to protect confidentiality.

And If All That Isn’t Enough...

Protecting the Integrity of the Data

The integrity of the record — that is, protecting it from alteration — is another security concern for PCMA designers. At Lehigh Valley Hospital even simple typing errors can’t be erased. Here’s how it works: data is being entered and must be changed for whatever reason. It’s easy to do on the screen, but what the operator doesn’t see is a whole new “sheet” begun in the permanent record; the erroneous one is also saved and the electronic footprints recorded.

Backing Up the System

Although every chart is on the new computer system's huge hard drive for purposes of rapid access, the records will be regularly backed up and stored at different locations. That means that if an airplane crashes into the data center and demolishes the computer, the records are still intact.

Keeping the System Running

What’s been done to prevent the collective groans when “the system is down”? The new hardware, which is already in use for a variety of purposes, doesn’t go down. Communications and power links are backed up; the actual computer uses multiple processors. From time to time sections of the computer have been taken off line for maintenance and testing — but no one has noticed. That's because duplicate, nonstop systems keep functioning, and while the high-speed system may run just a bit slower, it's not really noticeable.
Think of a library and you think of a place they keep books — but that's not quite true anymore. The staff at Lehigh Valley Hospital's own library, getting prepared to celebrate National Library Week (April 18-24), are quick to point out that libraries are places you find information. True enough, you'll find about 20,000 books and periodicals in the hospital's library, which is split between the two sites.

But now you find computers, too, which serve as vehicles to travel superhighways of information. Unlike public libraries, you won't find light bedtime reading in the hospital facility. It's a specialty library, and a rather good one at that, which focuses on medical information. But like public libraries, there has traditionally been the problem of selecting what becomes part of the collection. You can only afford to buy and store so many books.

Not surprisingly, high tech is on the shelves. Barbara Iobst, director, Library, explains that being absolutely current is absolutely essential, and to accommodate that, the library is part of a worldwide network of informational flow with major hospitals, medical schools and universities. It starts with the obvious: two different services provide physicians immediate access to diagnostic information not easily found in journals or textbooks.

Medical students and residents continue their education through the magic of computers linked with laser disks and television screens to allow, for example, a detailed study of obscure corners of the human brain.

Nurses and other healthcare professionals can electronically browse Medline for any journal with highly specific information that they might otherwise not even know exists.

And soon to come for all the library users, an electronic card catalog will direct you to books and periodicals that may be physically in the library or thousands of miles distant.

Yet Lehigh Valley Hospital's "library of the future" is striking out into even more exotic frontiers. As a hub of knowledge, it's part of a system that allows neighboring community hospitals access to the same information. And that will soon be extended to the general public by networking with libraries, large and small, with which we are more familiar.

And Iobst says the day is not far off when hospital personnel won't even have to physically walk through the doors. Among the benefits of the new computer system will be the ability to get information from unit desks and physician's offices.

Even the way information is presented is undergoing change. For example, medical knowledge has traditionally been presented in formal journal articles; now the trend is to ongoing "discussions," which has a much broader base. These "conversations" take place over communications lines and are stored in databases, which can then be retrieved by those needing the information.

The various networks in which Lehigh Valley Hospital participates adds up to a real source of pride among the library staff. It means that the hospital is on the very cutting edge of information technology. By virtue of pathways to major medical libraries everywhere, it also means the hospital system is about as thorough as anyone could desire.
About Our People

Joanne F. McLaughlin, RN, director of professional affairs, Burn Prevention Foundation, received the "Burn Prevention Award" from the American Burn Association at that group's annual meeting. The ABA is a national organization whose membership is composed of burn care professionals affiliated with burn center hospitals in the United States and burn prevention educators.

McLaughlin received the award for her 10 years of service to the Burn Prevention Foundation in Allentown and the Burn Foundation in Philadelphia. In conjunction with the Burn Center at Lehigh Valley Hospital, she coordinates and presents programs for student nurses, occupational health nurses, industrial safety personnel, firefighters and emergency medical services.

Mary T. Kinneman, RN, senior vice president, Patient Care Services, recently participated in the Advanced Management Education Conference, an alumni extension of the Wharton Fellows Program in Management for Nurse Executives at the University of Pennsylvania. Kinneman is a 1987 graduate of the program.

Linda Petrine, MSN, RN, CNN, has joined the Transplant Service as a full-time transplant nurse coordinator. She previously also served in the peritoneal dialysis unit as a staff nurse.

Maryrose Darward, RN, Carole Bognar, RN, and Michele Kratzer, RN, staff nurses, 6S, recently passed examinations for certification in psychiatric and mental health nursing.

Ursula Wuerth, RN, staff nurse, 6S, had an article titled "A Comparison: An Open Psychiatric Unit in the U.S. and Germany" published in the March issue of The Journal of Psychosocial Nursing.

Raymond M. Massich, RN, CCRN, staff nurse, Special Care Unit, recently passed an examination for certification in critical care nursing.

Karen Friedly, RD, CDE, a diabetes educator at Helwig Diabetes Center, recently presented "Healthy Eating for Diabetics" at the Wellness Fair of Green Meadows Adult Personal Care Community.

Jennifer Samer, RN, Cluster G Float, and Kevin McCardle recently announced their engagement. They plan to marry on April 8, 1994.

Macy's Shopping Day

Tickets are still available for Macy's Benefit Shopping Day on April 27. In addition to money-saving coupons and special store discounts, there will be drawings for an eight-day Aruba Dream Vacation for Two, a four-day stay at the Kingsbridge Resort in Williamsburg, Va., an Alfani wardrobe, a Movado anniversary watch, and other prizes.

Additionally, Linda Dano, known to soap opera fans as Felicia Gallant on NBC's "Another World" will participate in a fashion show at 7 p.m. and Philadelphia Eagles punt returner Vi Sikahema will make a personal appearance at 6 p.m.

Proceeds from the $5 tickets benefit Lehigh Valley Hospice, Friends of Nursing and the Transitional Living Center. Information on where to obtain tickets is available by calling ext. 3031.

Coming in the next issue of CheckUp: service anniversaries for the month of May.