



*Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine*

September 30, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

I am not sure where September went and will try and make this update brief but it contains important news.

### **Update on our right to require masks**

We all received an email from UMS Risk and Safety Management on August 28 with the following message:

- **Masks: At this time, faculty cannot require students to wear masks in class. Our current guidelines, as outlined on the [Together for Maine](#) website, do not include provisions for such mandates.**

AFUM was not told this was happening and did not bargain this issue. I sent a demand to bargain, and in subsequent meetings it quickly became apparent that nobody seemed to know where the message came from, and many staff did not even receive the email.

UMS made the decision to walk back the position in the email and allow faculty to require masks in their classrooms for this current academic year. We will soon have an MOU to be effective through the spring 2025 semester, and UMS will connect with Safety Management so they may communicate through their channels.

### **UMS Healthcare**

We have some good news, bad news, and more good news about our UMS Health Plan for 2025

So first, some good news: the projections for the increase are not as high as we thought in August (12.3%); they are now only 10.8%

The bad news is that because we share any increase beyond 4.5% at a 50/50 split with UMS (rather than the usual 10/90 cost share); this would land like a 20+% increase on our monthly premiums.

But more good news is that thanks to our CBA negotiated 15% cap - that comes down to a 11-19% increase (depending on your coverage rate – individual/+1/family)

We agreed to a change in the co-pay charge for generic pharmacy (preferred generics going from \$5 to \$10 and generics going from \$10 to \$15); that should have very little effect, as many preferred generics and even generics are less than \$10 and our members pay the lower cost. This

small change will have an impact on our members' monthly premiums of \$3-8 dollars per month (annually \$36-\$64 savings depending on plan).

Monthly Premiums will change in January 2025

Individual coverage will go be \$180.86 (2024 it was \$154.01)

Individual +1 coverage will be \$397.89 (2024 it was \$361.44)

Family coverage will be \$506.41 (2024 it was \$463.98)

For those unfamiliar with the how health care changes are decided on:

The Employee Health Plan Task Force **EHPTF** is a joint labor/management group with representation from all of the bargaining units as well as non-represented employees. **EHPTF** meets monthly and their charge is to review the **UMS** health plans and make recommendations. UMS is a self-insured employer, so all claims incurred by employees and their dependents are paid from University resources. UMS pays a small administrative fee to Cigna to administer the plan and adjudicate claims. Our AFUM EHPTF representatives are Lisa Leduc and Peter Precourt.

### **Negotiating Update**

We still remain without a new contract and negotiations continue. Our colleagues in UMPSA and ASCUM and the new Graduate Student union (UMGWUA-UAW) are also in negotiations. Previous contractual terms continue. Please let AFUM know if anyone claims that contractual terms will not be honored, including promotion increases and post-tenure review increases.

I am a geographer and love nothing more than a road trip so Stephanie von Glinsky, our MEA Uniserv Director, and I are hitting the road and meeting with chapter leaders – we have plans with UMF, UMA and UM and will be setting up visits to USM, UMM, UMPI, and UMFK with the hope of getting the driving in before snow flies.

Yours in solidarity,

Lydia Savage