

## June Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the June 2021 issue of the *Well Aware eNews!* Read on to learn about—

- an alternative to receive credit for completing your biometric health screening;
- this month's wellness champion, a physical education teacher who, during the pandemic, has continued to motivate his coworkers through Well Aware's physical activity challenges;
- a webinar on the physical and mental benefits of exercising in nature;
- ideas for staying active this summer;
- ways to give the gift of health to the men in your life;
- your medical plan's online health and wellness resources;
- online tools you can use to help you adjust to the return to school and offices; and
- more!



### Don't Miss It

#### This month's free webinar—Benefits of Movement in Nature

Join us for this webinar to learn the physical and mental benefits of being outside, ideas on ways to immerse yourself in nature while exercising, and important safety tips to keep in mind.

**Tuesday, June 15, 2021**  
4:00–5:00 p.m.

Please **email Well Aware** to register for the webinar. After registering, you will receive a link to the webinar in your Outlook email as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our **printable flyer**. Visit the **Wellness Webinar Library**.

### Have You Taken the [Wellness] Initiative for 2022?

#### Alternative to Biometric Health Screening Now Available

An alternative way to complete the Wellness Initiatives biometric health screening is available again this year for MCPS employees.

Due to COVID-19, Well Aware has been unable to hold onsite biometric health screenings. For that reason, MCPS employees are able to register for and complete *Biometrics Incentive Alternative 2022 Benefit Year* training (course number 90270) on **Professional Development Online (PDO)**, in lieu of a biometric health screening. Employees who complete the training by **October 8, 2021**, will pay 1 percent less of their health insurance costs in 2022.

Employees who are able to complete their yearly physical with their doctor (or at a MinuteClinic for CareFirst members) also have until **Friday, October 8, 2021**, to complete the physical and receive the premium discount.

The Wellness Initiatives program provides employees covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan with incentives to reduce their health insurance costs. By completing steps 1 and 2 below, your contribution to your health insurance will be reduced by 2 percent. Be sure to take advantage of the rate reductions by—

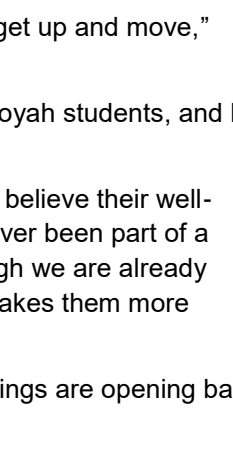
1. **Completing a biometric health screening OR its alternative by October 8, 2021.** See your doctor for an annual physical (or, if you are a CareFirst member, have your physical at a CVS Minute Clinic), **OR** register for and complete the *Biometrics Incentive Alternative* training. If you do, you will pay 1 percent less of your health insurance costs in 2022.
2. **Completing the health risk assessment on your medical plan's website by October 8, 2021** to pay 1 percent less of your health insurance costs. This is the *Real Age Test* for CareFirst, and the *Total Health Assessment* for Kaiser Permanente.

**Kaiser Permanente and CareFirst members: Be sure to log in to your medical plan's web page to consent to your participation in the program. Without your consent, your information will not be reported.**

Take the [Wellness] Initiative! **Learn more.**

## Wellness Champion Motivates His Coworkers to Get and Stay Healthy and Fit

**Mr. Patrick Dudash, physical education teacher, Sequoyah Elementary School**



Patrick Dudash, physical education teacher at Sequoyah Elementary School, has made it his goal to keep himself physically active and motivate his coworkers to get and stay fit. Due in no small part to his dedication, the school was successful in Well Aware physical activity challenges prior to COVID-19. Patrick continues to find ways to meet his goal in spite of the challenges everyone faces as a result of the pandemic.

"While we have a variety of health goals, the main goal is the same: Everyone having fun," Patrick said. "If it's not fun, you lose interest. During our competitions, I always include a funny workout meme. They are a huge hit."

Patrick has learned there are many reasons people choose to pursue a healthy lifestyle and different levels of dedication to health and well-being.

"Some of my colleagues enjoy competition, while others just want to get up and move," Patrick said.

He is very impressed with the dedication his coworkers have to Sequoyah students, and he believes that health and wellness play a big part.

"Many of my coworkers want to continue staying active because they believe their well-being reflects what they do in the classroom," Patrick said. "I have never been part of a group of school staff that cares more about their students. Even though we are already giving so much, our staff wants feel good about themselves, which makes them more motivated to be the best for their students."

He now is looking for ways to keep the motivation high now that buildings are opening back up.

"I plan to continue promoting physical fitness opportunities and motivating my coworkers to stick to their individual plans," Patrick said. Everyone has a different reason for staying healthy, and I need to make sure they feel their reason is important."

As soon as official health guidelines permit, Patrick plans to restart the school's yoga sessions and involvement in the physical activity challenges.

Patrick has advice for schools looking to make health and wellness a staff priority.

"Get to know your staff and what works for them," Patrick said. "Don't be afraid to fail. Our first walk-a-thon challenge was a disaster with more problems than I can remember. But we kept going. Whatever you do, don't give up! Keep it fun and use memes!"

## Instep with Diabetes: There Is Still Time to Join

Diabetes affects more than 25 million adults in the United States. Are you or your spouse living with diabetes? Join Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente for a three-week web-based program to better understand diabetes and learn skills for healthy living including—

- Diabetes facts
- Nutrition and food choices
- Physical activity
- Testing your blood sugar
- Diabetes medicines
- Recommended care

You do not need to be a Kaiser Permanente member to participate.

While the June class began on June 2, 2021, it's not too late to sign up. Well Aware will send you a recording of the class you missed, and you can join live for the classes on June 9 and June 16. **Email Well Aware** to register.

## Be Sure to Check Out Our Online Health and Wellness "Toolbox"

Well Aware, the MCPS employee wellness program, has launched the *Well Aware Wellness Toolbox*, a web page with many resources to help MCPS staff adjust to the return to schools and offices. These tools include physical and mental health resources, lists of free exercise and mindfulness classes, links to resources for improving sleep, nutrition, and more. MCPS staff are encouraged to take the time for self-care. Studies show that self-care is essential to well-being, especially during times of uncertainty and transition. Check out the **Well Aware Toolbox** to see what self-care resources will work best for you!

## Stay Active This Summer

Summer is a great time to get back into walking, biking, jogging, or just playing outside with your kids. Getting active now will make it easier to keep it up when we get back to our hectic schedules in the fall. From Zumba and yoga to Tai chi, Well Aware and CareFirst are offering you some options to help you get fit this summer.

For a class list and schedule, **email Well Aware**.

## BurnAlong Classes Available to Help You and Your Family Stay Well and Fit

MCPS and CareFirst have partnered to give you access to *BurnAlong*, a health and wellness platform that comes with four free accounts for you and interested family and friends. The 1000+ classes available range from meditation, boxing, yoga, bootcamp, and spin. There are even classes on nutrition and financial literacy and specialized senior classes for you or older members of your family who may need physical activity but need to remain in the house. Classes can also be taken as a group, so you can work out with a friend or family member while seeing and talking to each other during the class. Join the *BurnAlong* June Bootcamp! **Register and log in.**

## June Is Men's Health Month: Attending to Men's Physical and Mental Health

In June, we celebrate Father's Day and honor the men in our lives. What better way than to give them the gift of good health, both physical and mental?

Have your husband, father, brother, son, or male friend **review these [checkup and screening guidelines for men](#)**, and encourage him to stay on top of his health.

It is equally important to make men's mental health and wellness a priority. Depression, anxiety, stress, and mood disorders can strike anyone. Introduce him to ***Your Head: An Owner's Manual*** from the Men's Health Network. In it, men's health and wellness experts offer insight into men's emotional needs, and how they can find help while maintaining their dignity.

## Quit for Good Thinking About Quitting Smoking, or Need Support to Stay Tobacco Free?



MCPS and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again to bring you the *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program. The free program is available to employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or if you participate with Kaiser.

The program is course-based and consists of once-a-week classes led with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Classes will discuss the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics will include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more.

**Learn more about the program** and register for the fall session by **emailing Well Aware**.

## Online Stress Management Resources Available Through Kaiser Permanente and CareFirst

If you are a subscriber of an MCPS medical plan (Kaiser Permanente or CareFirst), you have access to a wealth of free health and wellness resources. Did you know that Kaiser Permanente and CareFirst have stress management tools including guided meditations, podcasts, and more?

To learn more, Kaiser Permanente members can visit **[Kaiser Permanente's Wellness Resources web page](#)**. CareFirst members can check out **[Inspirations and Relax 360](#)**.

## Montgomery County Offers MCPS Employees Free Access to Its Recreation Facilities

As a permanent MCPS employee, you have free access to all Montgomery County (MC) recreation facilities, including swimming pools and gymnasiums. You also are eligible for a 20 percent discount on an annual pool pass for your family members.

Interested? **Learn more** and visit the **[MC Recreation website](#)** for general information. You may **apply online** for the individual Total Rec Pass. The **[Employee Family Pool Pass application](#)** also is available online. Both passes are valid for one year; you may reapply each year to continue your access to the facilities.

## Be Well 365 for Staff

MCPS has launched a well-being web page for its employees. This online resource is a one-stop shop where employees can find information to help them navigate and balance their work, home, personal, and community lives. The emphasis is on staff well-being and self-care. This has been a challenging time for all of us, and MCPS is committed to ensuring that its staff members stay safe and feel supported. **Browse Be Well 365.**

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). Learn more about employee wellness by visiting our **[website](#)**. View this email newsletter as a **[PDF document](#)**. Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or **email Well Aware**.