

# Employee Forum reviews pay raises and health benefits

Employee Forum delegates received a primer on what changes to expect this year in their pay and health benefits, along with important reminders about health care cost savings tools and tuition reimbursement deadlines during the Forum's Aug. 3 meeting.

Gena Carter, senior director for Employee and Management Relations, gave the good news first: All University employees will see the 1.5 percent pay raise approved as part of 2016-17 state budget reflected in their Aug. 5 paychecks. Each person's raise, she added, would be retroactive to July 1.

The budget included reserves for a 0.5 percent one-time bonus for all state employees, along with reserves equaling 1 percent of salaries for merit-based bonuses for both SHRA and EHRA employees.

The Office of Human Resources is still waiting for instructions from the state and General Administration on how – and when – to distribute these bonuses, Carter said.

Benefits manager Shauna Stackhouse, meanwhile, called attention to planning tools available to employees as they prepare for Open Enrollment, which is set for Oct. 1 to 31. The tools, which include a health benefits estimator and rate calculator, are available on the North Carolina State Health Plan's homepage [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org).

The most important thing to remember, Stackhouse said, is that all members will be placed into the Traditional 70/30 Plan at the start of Open Enrollment and must take action during Open Enrollment to select a different plan. The other options in addition to the 70/30 Plan are the Enhanced 80/20 Health Plan and Consumer-Directed Health Plan (CDHP).

Employees with single coverage who elect to stay in the Traditional 70/30 Plan for active members can reduce their employee premium to zero if they complete the tobacco attestation premium credit activity.

Information about Open Enrollment will be sent to all University employees later this summer.

With the start of a new academic year comes another chance to take advantage of the tuition waiver program that allows University employees to take a credit course for free each semester, to include fall, spring or one of the two summer semesters. Employees can take up to three courses each year. The deadline for the tuition waiver program for the fall semester is Aug. 29. To learn more, call 962-3071.

For more information about employee benefits, visit [hr.unc.edu](http://hr.unc.edu).

## Carolina among nation's top-ranked cancer hospitals

*U.S. News & World Report* has cited UNC Hospitals' N.C. Cancer Hospital as one of the nation's highest-ranked cancer hospitals and the top cancer hospital in North Carolina. N.C. Cancer Hospital is the clinical home of UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Among more than 900 hospitals, UNC Hospitals earned a national

ranking of 16th in cancer care, up from 32nd in 2015. It previously was ranked 38th in 2014 and 43rd in 2013.

U.S. News ranked UNC Children's Hospital 28th nationally for pediatric cancer in its Best Children's Hospital guide in June.

To keep reading, see: <https://unclineberger.org/news/usnwr-2016> 



DAN SEARS

## American Indian Center receives grant to promote healthy lifestyles among state's Native communities

The American Indian Center will use a \$386,082 grant from the Winston-Salem-based Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust to help prevent obesity and chronic disease among the state's Native communities.

The grant will support the Healthy Native North Carolinians Network (HNNC), a center initiative that leverages common goals and resources to promote Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) practices in North Carolina's tribes and urban Indian organizations.

"The American Indian Center is excited to continue the Healthy Native North Carolinians Network," said Amy Locklear Hertel, director of the American Indian Center. "This grant enables the center and our Native community partners to impact tribal HEAL policies, family lifestyle choices and cultural revitalization.

"Also, for this new grant cycle we have added a student internship element. Native high school and college student interns will be placed with tribal communities to implement and evaluate the tribally self-determined efforts. We are eager to merge student and community engagement with engaged scholarship."

Among the enhancements to HNNC will be facility renovations that foster physical activity and play, and the development of walking trails. According to Hertel, the funding will enable HNNC to reach 65,000 Native people.

The grant builds on previous support from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust for HNNC, which launched in 2011. HNNC has spurred numerous HEAL initiatives, from tribal Zumba classes to community gardens. In the Coharie tribe alone, more than 10,000 pounds of vegetables were distributed to community members over the past year.

"A transition is occurring in my community, attitudes are changing and healthier choices are being made," said Greg Jacobs, tribal administrator for the Coharie tribe. "There is a greater awareness of health problems affecting Native people and communities are eager to do something about it as a tribe and as individuals."

Native people in the U.S. experience significantly worse health outcomes than the country's white population. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Indians 18 years of age and older are two times more likely to develop diabetes than their non-Hispanic white counterparts (16.3 percent compared to 7.6 percent). Additionally, a recent report from the State Center for Health Statistics and Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities shows that Natives living in North Carolina also suffer from poor health compared to Caucasians in the state, particularly with heart disease and stroke. 