Health insurance premiums for most AU faculty and staff will increase on Jan. 1 in a range from $2 to $15 per pay period, depending on each employee’s annual salary and type of insurance coverage.

AU will also pay an additional $1 million into the health insurance fund for employees in 2007.

The increases, announced in a mailing last week to all AU employees, are described as an attempt to offset the rising cost of health care for employees covered by AU’s self-insurance program, which is administered by BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama.

The cost of health care has been rising across the nation during this decade, and insurers everywhere have been struggling to keep up.

AU’s health insurance plan will pay out approximately 5 percent more for employee health care expenses in 2006 than in 2005. The larger payouts were led by increased expense for out-patient hospital costs, prescription drugs and care for patients with chronic diseases.

In 2007, employees with AU’s traditional health...
Health insurance

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insurance will pay $35 ($2 more) per pay period if they earn less than $24,600 per year, are paid every two weeks and have individual coverage. For family coverage, they will pay $74 a month ($4 more) for single coverage or $152 per month ($8 more) for family coverage. Those who are paid monthly over 12 months, will pay $74 a month ($4 more) for single coverage or $152 per month ($8 more) for family coverage. Those earning $24,000-$36,899 and paid every two weeks will pay $50 ($2 more) per pay period for single coverage or $102 ($5 more) for family coverage. Those earning $24,600 per year will pay $49 per pay period for individual coverage or $98 per pay period for family coverage. Those earning $36,900 or more will pay $67 ($3 more) per pay period for individual coverage or $153 per pay period for family coverage. Those on 12-month appointments will pay $108 ($2 more) per pay period for individual coverage or $220 ($15 more) for family coverage. Persons with nine-month appointments and earning $24,600 per year will pay $49 per pay period for single coverage or $98 per pay period for family coverage. Those earning $24,600-$36,899 and paid every two weeks will pay $50 ($2 more) per pay period for single coverage or $102 ($5 more) for family coverage. Those earning $36,900 or more will pay $67 ($3 more) per pay period for individual coverage or $153 per pay period for family coverage.

Employers may add or renew new flexible spending plans during this period. The flex spending option enables employees to set aside funds for medical costs and dependent care expenses, or both, each pay period, providing tax savings for participants. The Office of Payroll and Employee Benefits distributes enrollment forms to AU employees last week with information about flex spending accounts. For additional information or an enrollment form, contact that office at 444-4183.

Alderman

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design, development, implementation, monitor- ing and assessing of the university’s admissions, enrollment, and recruitment processes and support operations to ensure all are consistent with the university’s enrollment and diversity goals. Alderman, a Torkmach Professor of Accounting, was the dean of the College of Business from 1993 to 2001, and a 2001 recipient of the college’s distin- guished alumnae award. He received his bachelor of science in business administration from AU in 1971 and his master of business administration from AU a year later. He earned his doctorate in business administration from the University of Tennessee.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, November 7

ELECTION DAY Vote!

AU THEATRE

“The Flea in Her Ear,” 7:30 p.m., Talliear Poet Theatre; also same time Nov. 7-10 and Nov. 14-17 and 2:30 p.m. Nov. 12; box office 444-4154

Wednesday, Nov. 8

MUSICAL DRAMA “An Evening with Madame F.” visiting per- former and Holocaust survivor. Performances are free, sponsored by Women’s Studies Program.

Thursday, November 9

COMMITTEE SESSIONS AU Board of Trustees, 9 a.m.-until, AU Hotel

SESCIENTENNIAL LECTURE “Auburn University: Serving the Community,” Wayne Flynn, author and Emeritus Professor of History, 4 p.m., Special Collections, Draughon Library

FREE CONCERT “Sounds of Auburn,” featuring AU Symphonic Band, Marching Band, Concert Choir, Steel Drum Band, AU and the JAG Singers, 7:30 p.m., Coliseum

Friday, November 10

MEETING AU Board of Trustees, 9 a.m., AU Hotel

Monday, November 13

NEXT AU Report

NEW FACULTY RECEPTION AUAP Chapter, 4 p.m.-6 p.m., Alumni Cen- ter, for information, e-mail trimbr@auburn.edu or call 444-6606

Tuesday, November 14

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR “Tips for Effective Grant Proposal Writing,” noon-1:30 p.m., Foy 206, open to all faculty, staff and graduate students; bring your lunch

Alderman

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In a change regarding medical benefits, the initial prescription of a maintenance drug will be limited to a 30-day supply. Also, premiums in the expanded dental plan will increase $12 per year for individual coverage and $36 per year for family coverage.

AU employees may make changes to or add insurance plans during November. Insurance op- tions include the two health plans, dental, vision, cancer and supplemental disability insurance. Employees may add or renew new flexible spending plans during this period. The flex spend- ing option enables employees to set aside funds for medical costs and dependent care expenses, or both, each pay period, providing tax savings for participants.

The Office of Payroll and Employee Benefits distributes enrollment forms to AU employees last week with information about flexible spending accounts. For additional information or an enrollment form, contact that office at 444-4183.
Profiles in Excellence

Lishak finds challenge in people who do not understand science

While most college professors enjoy teaching students who are interested in their field, Biological Sciences Professor Robert Lishak prefers teaching those who have little or no interest in general biology.

Most of the 200 or more students in his core-curriculum biology classes present more of a challenge, admits Lishak, an Auburn faculty member since 1976. But the “aha” moment when a student comprehends a concept for the first time makes the extra effort worthwhile, he adds. And, as the semester progresses, Lishak sees more and more faces light up.

“ Majors are fun to teach because they already love biology or they wouldn’t be taking it,” Lishak says. “But the non-majors, the ones who are there because they have to be, are the ones who need it the most. They are the most challenging to teach and the most rewarding.”

He adds, “Starting with the first day of class, my goal is to help them understand why they should care about biology.”

Lishak notes that students often fail to see the relationship between understanding scientific concepts and the ability to form intelligent decisions as consumers, voters and citizens. “For non-majors, this may be their last chance to relate science to their lives so they will understand the issues when they are in junior high or high school, at the undergraduate level or in graduate school. “Every time he is discussing science with students, whether they are in junior high or high school, at the undergraduate level or in graduate school. “Every time I see the expression on a student’s face when a concept makes sense for the first time, I know this is where I want to be. I love every minute of it.”

On another day, he will replay a television commercial that makes scientific claims and ask the students to analyze the validity of those claims.

Once he has introduced a concept, the professor frequently adopts the Socratic method to help students recognize the role of science in their daily affairs. “I try to get them to think about questions they probably asked when they were little and their parents may not have been able to answer,” he says. “When you get them to thinking about those things again, they want to find the answers.”

Although he usually teaches the core curriculum classes in auditorium-sized lecture halls, Lishak frequently calls on individuals in an attempt to generate discussion about the material. “I think discussion is what it is all about,” he says. “Things they discuss are probably things they will remember for a long time.”

Days not spent in the classroom are packed with meetings with students and faculty colleagues, grading papers, advising graduate students and preparing for the next class. But after 30 years, the lure of the classroom is still strong. “I find myself waking up on classdays chomping at the bit to get into the classroom,” he says. “On days that I am not teaching, I feel like something is missing.”

Even as an undergraduate at Seton Hall University in New Jersey in the late 1960s, Lishak knew he wanted to teach. But his original goal was to teach in high school. Encouraged by his professors at Seton Hall, he expanded his horizon to the college level, where he could combine classroom instruction with research and outreach. After receiving his Ph.D. from Ohio State, he joined the Auburn faculty and never looked back.

His research interests have focused on the acoustic behaviors of animals, particularly gray squirrels. His studies have been published in peer-reviewed journals, and, in addition to the Leischuck Award, he has received the Burlington Northern Foundation Faculty Award for Teaching, the College of Sciences and Mathematics Dean’s Award for Outreach and the Alumni Association Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award.

Lishak is also active in outreach activities and community programs including AU Explore and Youth Experience in Science.

He says research and outreach frequently add new perspectives that he takes back to the classroom. And, he notes, teaching comes into play any time he is discussing science with students, whether they are in junior high or high school, at the undergraduate level or in graduate school. “Every time I see the expression on a student’s face when a concept makes sense for the first time, I know this is where I want to be. I love every minute of it.”