

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

To: Faculty and Staff
From: H. Kim Bottomly
Re: New Health Management Initiative

Dear Colleagues:

For over 12 years, Wellesley College has actively collaborated with several of our peer institutions—through the Boston Consortium for Higher Education—on a range of challenges we all face. One such topic is rising health care costs. I am writing to let you know about an exciting new opportunity in which the College is participating to support a healthy community and to reduce our health care costs, which affect us all.

The College, along with other Consortium members, is introducing an important new initiative called Healthy You, a health management program that can help you improve and maintain your overall health. The program is free of charge to faculty and staff, and is intended to enable all of us, regardless of our health insurance provider, to make choices that will foster healthy living. Through this initiative, you and your peers at other Boston-area schools will be encouraged to complete a personal Health Questionnaire, participate in lifestyle coaching, take part in a chronic condition management program, if needed, and access comprehensive health-related information through Harvard Pilgrim. Any information you share with Harvard Pilgrim will be kept in the strictest of confidence. Wellesley College will not have access to specific individual information; rather, the College will receive an overall aggregate about participation in the program.

To put this situation into context, the Boston Consortium schools—of which Wellesley is a member—spend in excess of \$430 million per year on health care benefits for over 60,000 active faculty and staff. Here at Wellesley College, our annual medical costs are approaching \$11 million. These costs are directly related to the excellent health care that our faculty, staff, and dependents receive under the Harvard Pilgrim Health Plan. We are trying to take proactive measures to reduce these costs without reducing our quality of health care; at the current rate, these cost trends will be very difficult to sustain.

We periodically review our benefit plan designs and work with our health insurance partner, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, to ensure we are getting the best value for the resources we invest in health care. But the responsibility for these costs does not rest with the College alone. Each of us, by maintaining active and healthy lifestyles, can make a difference; after all, our health care needs directly affect the rate we pay to the health plan. At the same time, there is an opportunity to provide our community with a more holistic approach to maintaining healthy lifestyles, complementing the activities and programs that are already offered on campus.



I have asked Eloise McGaw, Assistant Vice President and Director of Human Resources, and Debra DeMeis, Dean of Students, to lead this charge by co-chairing the newly formed Health Management and Wellness Advisory Committee, which includes a cross-section of faculty, administrative staff, and union representatives. Additionally, the Faculty Benefits Committee (FBC), the Compensation and Personnel Policy Advisory Committee (CPPAC), and the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) have all been involved in this effort and are supportive of the Healthy You program. The charge to the Health Management and Wellness Advisory Committee is to establish, advocate, and advise on health initiatives encompassing faculty, staff, and students.

I hope you will participate in the upcoming activities that this Committee is putting together. Look for more detailed information about Healthy You in the weeks and months to come.