

# Human Resources Newsletter

December 2020



## In This Month's Issue:

- **Upcoming Employee Wellness Events**
- **Save on Specialty Drugs with SaveOn SP**
- **Virtual Medical Visit Information**
- **A Guide to Soft Skills**
- **Top Qualities in Leaders**

**And More!**

## HR Employee Celebrates 25 Years

Cindy Todhunter, Senior Employee Benefits Representative, recently celebrated her 25-year work anniversary with A&M-Commerce. Cindy is integral to taking care of our employees, both during their time at the university and as retirees. She is known for her amazing customer service and Human Resources is very thankful to have her on our team. Congratulations, Cindy!



## Important News Concerning Student Workers and GAs

Please note that student employees may work full-time during interim periods (between semesters) such as winter break and during the summer. Student employees cannot work during hours in which their classes are scheduled.

Also, all GATs and GARs who are graduating in Fall 2020 must have a termination date (end date) of 01/15/2021 in Workday in order for their pay to calculate correctly.

If you have questions or concerns, contact Jayla Mayes at [HR.StudentHiring@tamuc.edu](mailto:HR.StudentHiring@tamuc.edu) or via phone at 903-468-8741.

## Required COVID-19 Training

The President's office is requiring that all employees take the 2114130: Protocol and Certification for System Member Employees. All Employees will be assigned this training on December 20, 2020 and will be required to complete the training before returning to work on Jan 4, 2021.

Employees who fail to complete the training by Jan. 4 will be added to the past due list and their supervisor will be notified. Any questions regarding this requirement should be directed to [eoc@tamuc.edu](mailto:eoc@tamuc.edu). Any technical questions should be sent to Jazz Dyck at [training@tamuc.edu](mailto:training@tamuc.edu).



## Get Ready! Wellness Week: December 7th – 11th

Learn about resources for your physical and mental health during Wellness Week, December 7th through 11th, 2020. Total Rewards will be hosting a "Total Rewards Bingo." This event will test your employee benefits knowledge. The first one to BINGO will receive a grand prize, then small items will be given for the next 3 winners.

During Wellness Week, also be on the lookout for ComPsych educational material for your wellbeing and information on how to sign-up for on-demand trainings.



## Holiday Market 2020 Winners

On November 20th, HR's Total Rewards unit attended the annual Holiday Market to spread the word about Total Rewards. Cindy Todhunter, Sr. Employee Benefits Representative, and Crystle McIlveene, Wellness and Benefits Specialist, shared great information about various benefits available to our employees.

Employees who could provide proof of having the MyEvide and LionSafe cell phone apps were entered into a drawing for prizes. The winners are as follows:

Crystal Thomas: Fire 7 Tablet

William Hall: COSORI Smart WiFi Air Fryer

Sarah Cliff: National Tree Co. 24" Christmas Wreath

Thank you to all who participated!



## Nominations Open: President's Meritorious Service Awards

The President's Meritorious Service Awards program, developed to recognize outstanding staff contributions to the university, are now open.

Nominations must be received through the [online nomination portal](#) no later than December 18th at 5 p.m. Eligibility criteria are listed in the portal. Awards will be presented at the Spring Assembly, on Thursday, January 7, 2021.

If you have questions, email Crystle McIlveene at [Crystle.McIlveene@tamuc.edu](mailto:Crystle.McIlveene@tamuc.edu) or call 903-886-5025.



## Upcoming Wellness Events

December 7th – 11th  
Wellness Awareness Week

Join Human Resources for Total Rewards Bingo and ComPsych on-demand trainings. Be on the lookout for emails in your inbox.

Wednesday, December 16th  
9:30 A.M.

[15-minute workout with WELL with WELCOA](#)

Get the latest on the Employee Wellness Program by joining the distribution list. Email [Crystle.McIlveene@tamuc.edu](mailto:Crystle.McIlveene@tamuc.edu) to join today.



## Employee Wellness Quick Links

The quick links below will take employees to resources on a variety of wellness topics:

- [National Influenza Vaccination Week](#) is occurring this month
- Airrosti Injury Spotlight: [Disc Herniation](#)
- Podcast: [A Healthy Approach to the Holidays](#)
- A short video on [Hosting a Holiday Gathering](#)
- More information on [having a safe and healthy holiday season](#)



## Ovia Maternity and Women's Health

Whether you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant, you should prepare as much as you can. BlueCross and BlueShield of Texas has free tools to help you! The apps are available in English and Spanish and provide videos, tips, coaching and more. Access Ovia health through [MyEvive](#).



## Benefits Program: SaveOn SP

SaveOn SP is an [Express Scripts](#) program that lowers the cost of a number of specialty drugs for both the members and the plan by taking advantage of manufacturer assistance programs. The specialty drugs are in specific medication categories such as Hepatitis C, Multiple Sclerosis, Oncology, Rheumatoid Arthritis, and a few others. If you participate in this program, you will have a zero cost for certain specialty medications. Your prescriptions will still be filled through Accredo, your existing specialty mail pharmacy.

- The cost of these drugs will not count towards the annual out-of-pocket maximum and
- All plan members must use the Accredo specialty pharmacy for all specialty fills.

SaveOn is not available to the 65 Plus plan. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact SaveonSP at :

1-800-683-1074

Monday – Thursday

7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Central

Friday

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Central

## Get Virtual Healthcare with MDLive

Virtual Visits is a feature provided by [MDLive](#) through your Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) health plan. You can schedule visits with doctors and therapists via telephone, online video or mobile app. This virtual alternative provides health care for simple, non-emergency medical and behavioral health conditions 24/7/365.



### Employee Wellness Champions Wanted

The Employee Wellness program is looking for a special person in each department—could that be you? Are you the one who is always keeping your co-workers up to date on the latest and greatest activities/programs/resources available to you as an employee? If so, volunteer today to become the “Employee Wellness Champion” for your department.

We are taking volunteers all the way up to December 18th, then we will ask each department head to assign an individual to be their Employee Wellness Champion if no one has volunteered.

What is an Employee Wellness Champion? You will be responsible for attending meetings with the Wellness & Benefit Coordinator to learn what programs/resources are available to employees. You will then educate your department on the programs/resources and answer questions. From there you will receive updated information on current or new programs/resources and upcoming Wellness events that you will disseminate to your department.

If this person is you, email your supervisor and Crystle McIlveene at [Wellness@tamuc.edu](mailto:Wellness@tamuc.edu) to volunteer today!

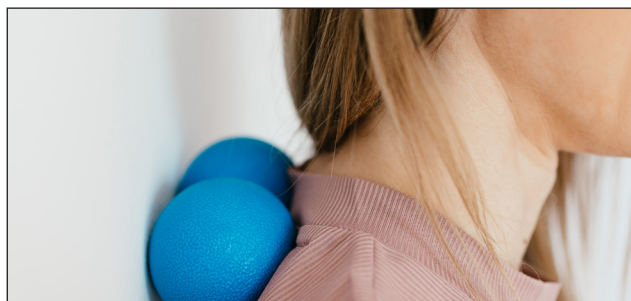
## Try Hinge Health for Musculoskeletal Pain

If you experience chronic pain in your back, hip, or knee, Hinge Health may be able to help. This 12-week, coach-led digital musculoskeletal (MSK) program is delivered remotely using wearable technology and is based on proven nonsurgical care guidelines.

Hinge Health is designed to focus on three core pillars:

- exercise therapy — wearable sensors and tablet provided for real-time movements feedback
- behavioral health — cognitive behavioral therapy and unlimited 1:1 coaching
- education — personalized and interactive education curriculum

Participation is based on eligibility. Take the [Hinge Health screening questionnaire](#) if you are interested in the program. If you are accepted, your eligible Blue Cross and Blue Shield insurance plan will cover the program cost.



### 2nd.MD Webinars Available

[2nd.MD](#), a virtual medical second opinion service available to covered employees, has on-demand webinars including “Advance Care Planning in the Time of COVID-19” and “Is COVID-19 Stressing Your Stomach Out?”

Additionally, 2nd.MD is hosting a webinar on December 10th, “Coping with COVID: Mental Health and the Holidays.” [See the webinars here.](#)

## Benefits Spotlight: Omada and Livongo for Diabetes

The A&M health plan has numerous resources to help eligible employees. Omada and Livongo are two programs designed to help with diabetes and hypertension management.

Omada is a digital program to help reduce the risks of Type II diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension through lifestyle changes. Omada combines individualized attention of professional health coaches with a researched curriculum and manageable goals. It helps connect the dots between knowing how to get healthy and actually doing it. You get the support and tools you need, including an interactive program, wireless scale, health coach, and more.

Omada eligibility is determined by an application process. Visit [Omada Health](#) to take the one-minute risk screener. If the screener results indicate a risk, you are eligible to apply via the online application. If you are accepted into the program, the program and shipping are free to you.



Livongo is a program for individuals diagnosed with Type I or Type II Diabetes or hypertension. If you are determined to be eligible for the program, you will be contacted by Livongo; you cannot apply to the program without being contacted.

The Livongo diabetes program includes an advanced meter, unlimited strips and lancets, and 24/7 support from Livongo expert coaches. The Livongo hypertension program includes a free connected blood pressure monitor, blood pressure management, and personalized support.

## Online Courses to Boost Skills and Knowledge Available through CPD

The Center for Professional Development (CPD) has new course opportunities to help individuals supplement their job skills and seek career training. These two programs offer a variety of content that covers many industries and skill sets.

Online [professional skill development courses](#) cover numerous and diverse topics such as Microsoft Office, web design, grant writing, speed Spanish, medical terminology, and SQL. Courses are non-credit and may be instructor-led with a cohort or self-paced and allow immediate access to all course lessons.



Alternatively, individuals may be interested in the online [career training courses](#) which help prepare learners for certification exams. Many career paths and employable skills are covered by the courses, such as certified administrative professional, certified Six Sigma black belt, project management with PMP Prep, digital court reporting with legal transcription, teacher's aide with ParaPro Prep, and more.

For more information, please view the program webpages or contact Kenny Agbaje via email at [CPD@tamuc.edu](mailto:CPD@tamuc.edu).





## Learn Soft Skills From Home

We hear a lot these days about a “skills gap,” in which companies struggle to find, recruit and hire employees with “hard” skills like coding, data science or mechanical skills.

Yet, if you ask most employers, the skills they really value are “soft” skills, such as communication, persuasion, collaboration and leadership.

It makes a lot of sense. The most technological-ly advanced product will fail if no one can explain it or train its users or those who consume its output.

### “Hard” Skills vs. “Soft” Skills

One easy way to differentiate between hard skills and soft skills is to say that hard skills mostly involve working with material things, while soft skills mostly involve working with people and ideas.

#### Hard Skills

Most technology and mechanical skills are considered hard skills. They involve material objects and the patterns they can create.

#### Soft Skills

Communication, creativity and collaboration are considered soft skills. They involve people, their potential and the progress they can create. Some highly-valued skills like business analysis and digital marketing might be considered blended skills. They combine numbers-driven facts with human-centered insights.

Check out our [soft-skills courses](#) through the Center for Professional Development at A&M Commerce.



### Soft Skills and Career Leverage

Soft skills are not just useful when you are trying to be hired. In fact, job advice site TheMuse.com notes that improving soft skills is among the best, fastest ways to enhance your current career.

What better way to be noticed right away than improving your creativity or persuasion skills? If you become someone who can collaborate and guide a team skillfully, do not be surprised if your colleagues and your organization’s leaders notice!

Mindfulness and self-awareness are crucial. If you see any gaps in your soft skill tool kit, address them quickly and watch your career prospects grow.

### Learn Soft Skills from Home

The best way to learn any skill is to practice. But because soft skills are so interpersonal, they may seem hard to learn from home.

Yet if you follow a few key learning principles, an online course can be the perfect way to hone your soft skills. Some of those principles include:

#### *Low-Risk Practice with Small Groups*

“Modeling” or simulation is among the most effective learning skills. Using your new adaptability skills, for example, is just as effective with your family as it is with your work colleagues. Practice your new soft skills mindfully, any time and anywhere you can.

#### *Practice with Virtual Communication Tools*

Mediated communication can be especially challenging for soft skills, whether that involves written, voice or video interaction. Yet the virtual environment is the perfect place to put your new persuasion skills to work.

Article by ed2go, our partner in online courses.

# Leadership and Psychological Safety Matters

By Dr. David A. Giles, Ph.D

In 2008, Google launched a critical examination of leaders and leadership skills in an extensive investigation, referred to as "Project Oxygen." In addition to examining leadership traits, Google wanted to cultivate more effective cross-organization collaboration and stronger decision-making practices from their leaders.

Their initial research hypothesis was that employee leaders really do not matter to team performance. The data secured from the study did not support their hypothesis; in fact, their data showed that teams with certain leaders were more productive and happier than other teams. The researchers from Google looked at two qualitative measures: (1) leader performance ratings and (2) leader feedback from annual employees' survey data.

As a result of their four-year study, Google realized that, as their company grew and took on a wider scope, the qualities of a successful leader also had evolved and expanded. While these characteristics might not fit all organizational structures, Google currently identifies ten behaviors that differentiated good leaders from bad leaders. Good leaders tend to:

1. Be a good coach
2. Empower employee teams without micromanaging
3. Create an inclusive team environment
4. Be productive and results-oriented
5. Be a good communicator – excels at listening and sharing information
6. Encourage career development and nurture outstanding performance
7. Have a clear vision/strategy for the team
8. Have key technical skills to help advise the team
9. Collaborate
10. Be a strong decision maker

Google's research also pointed out that effective leaders understand the importance of two (2) key traits: hiring practices and organizational culture. Repeatedly these traits were instrumental to the leadership success of their managers.

First, successful leaders hire people brighter than they are and then they get out of their way. At various times in their careers, Lee Iacocca, Bill Marriott and Steve Jobs all have embraced similar hiring practices as Google. Empowering employees and valuing their expertise became cardinal traits of their successful leaders.

Second, effective leaders create a working atmosphere characterized by psychological safety where employees can fully develop their potential. Psychological safety allows for moderate risk-taking, speaking your mind, creativity, and sticking your neck out without fear of having it cut off. Following a four-year study into what makes a successful team, Google found Psychological Safety to be a key differentiator when it comes to making a team work – its best-performing teams all had strong Psychological Safety in common. In a similar study, the National Health Service Work Skills Development Unit identifies Psychological Safety as one of five interconnected pillars for creating a healthy workplace.



## RESOURCES

Garvin, DA, Wagonfeld, AB, & Kind, L. (2013). Google's project oxygen: Do managers matter?