

August Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the August 2024 issue of *Well Aware eNews*! Read on to learn about—

- this month's wellness webinar on reducing stress,
- a 5K training program for the fall,
- Monthly Connection from Well Aware and the Employee Assistance Program,
- Back to Basics with Wellbeats Wellness,
- the Head Heart and Hands wellness program, and
- more!



Don't Miss It

**This month's free webinar—
Pressing Pause:
Reducing Stress for
Better Health**

Join an Omada health coach to learn tips on managing daily stress and developing habits to boost your mood.

Wednesday, August 21, 2024
Webinar
4:30–5:30 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**.

The Fall 5K Training Program Will Be Here Soon

Running is an accessible, inexpensive, and effective way to improve your health and fitness, relieve stress, and boost your confidence. Whether you have never run or it's been a while since you last ran, the cooler fall weather is the perfect time to start training!

Following a successful spring session, the Run Farther & Faster MCPS Fall Virtual Group 5K Training Program will begin on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, and run through Saturday, November 9, 2024. This will prepare participants for the Rockville 5K, upcoming Turkey Trots, and any of the other fall races.

Participants will receive a comprehensive training calendar, weekly emails with training support and running-related information, as well as the ability to email certified running coaches with questions or concerns. The training calendar begins with run/walk intervals and progress safely and gradually toward continuous running. It also includes strength workouts and form drills. Interested participants also will have access to a private Facebook group to facilitate finding running partners.

The program is appropriate for new runners or runners who are returning after a hiatus. Space is limited to the first 50 registrants. **Learn more and register.**

Wellness Initiatives

Save Money on Your Health Insurance in 2025

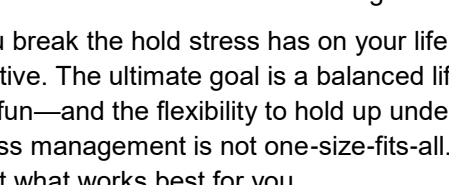
The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Wellness Initiatives program provides you with incentives to reduce your yearly health insurance costs. If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan, complete a biometric health screening and your insurance provider's online health risk assessment by October 4, 2024 to take advantage of the rate reductions in 2025.

If you do, you will pay 2 percent less of the total cost of your health insurance. See your doctor for an annual physical and complete a health risk assessment on your medical plan's website by October 4, 2024. Both Cigna and Kaiser Permanente members must log in to their 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.**

Well Aware and the Employee Assistance Program

Monthly Connection: Time Management



Did you know that mental and physical health are linked? Recent research has shown that an improvement or decline in one can lead to an improvement or decline in the other. The great news is that the body and brain are both very responsive to positive change!

For this reason, the MCPS EAP (Employee Assistance Program) and Well Aware (the MCPS Employee Wellness Program), are excited to work together to bring you monthly topics focusing on mental and physical health. These resources will help you align your wellness journey to ensure that you are focusing on both physical and mental health. Look for these resources each month in the Well Aware eNews, The Bulletin, the Well Aware Toolbox, and on the EAP web pages.

August marks the transition from summer to back to school. Many staff have a different routine over the summer, and starting a new school year might include a return to waking up earlier, packing lunches and snacks for yourself or loved ones, dropping off children at school or daycare, and getting back to a Monday to Friday work schedule. During busy seasons of your life, and especially during transitions, it can be common to experience a decline in self-care.

EAP Resources

The EAP offers gentle encouragement to continue prioritizing time to take good care of yourself. One way to prioritize making time to care for yourself is to incorporate time management strategies in your routine.

Consider the following time management tips:

1. Set a daily to-do list and prioritize tasks in order of importance. Remember that taking care of yourself is important!
2. Break down large tasks into 60- to 90-minute segments and take a 15- to 20-minute break to move, eat, hydrate, rest, or engage in a joyful activity.
3. Set a timer for every 25–30 minutes followed by a short break (**Pomodoro Effect**).
4. Only Handle It Once (OHIO). Do tasks that take less than 10 minutes right away.
5. Set a deadline for yourself, and reward yourself for completing a task!

To learn more time management strategies to help you maximize your time, join the EAP for a workshop on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 from 2:00–3:30 p.m. Register on PDO—course number 90816 (SPT10).

Well Aware Resources

A busy schedule can often interfere with prioritizing your physical health. One solution is to plan ahead. Check out these tips to plan healthy meals and schedule exercise time for a busy school or workweek.

- **8 Time Management Tips to Help You Achieve Your Health and Fitness Goals**
- **Meal planning magic: Save time with these strategies by working smarter, not harder**
- **Time Management Tricks To Stay With Fitness Goals: How to Manage Time for Fitness**

Stress Less this Summer

These are the last few weeks of summer! This is the best time to start filling your wellness toolbox with resources for fall self-care. Learning stress management techniques while things are calm can be helpful so that you can recall them when times get busy.

Effective stress management helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—and the flexibility to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all. That's why it's important to experiment and find out what works best for you.

Well Aware is continuing our online, virtual, live, and recorded classes for your convenience. From yoga and seated yoga, to mindfulness and tai chi, there is something for everyone. Give them all a try to see what you like best.

Email Well Aware to get the full schedule of classes. Register for the daily wellness email update to stay up to date on class links, and updates. **Opt-in to this email distribution list.**

Join Us for Online Physical Activity

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your heart and mind, and help you manage your stress and overall wellness.

Well Aware is continuing our online, virtual, live and recorded classes for your convenience. From Zumba and HIITCamp, to yoga and core workouts, there is something for everyone. Give them all a try to see what you like best.

Email Well Aware to get the full schedule of classes. Register for the daily wellness email update to stay up to date on class links, and updates. **Opt-in to this email distribution list.**

Share Your Wellness Stories and Encourage Your Coworkers!

Well Aware is proud of MCPS employees for all of the hard work they are doing to lead healthy lives. Share your stories and your spirit on X (formerly Twitter). Perhaps you need some extra motivation to begin a staff wellness program at your school, depot, or office, or to turn life-long unhealthy habits into healthy ones. Follow [@mcpswellaware](#) for incredible stories, wellness ideas, encouragement from your MCPS coworkers, tips on living a healthy life, or for updates on MCPS staff wellness programs. Be sure to also follow [#mcpsstaffwellness!](#)

Well Aware Toolbox

Well Aware, the MCPS employee wellness program, offers the Well Aware Wellness Toolbox, a web page with free resources for you to manage your health and wellness. 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. **Check out the Well Aware Toolbox** to see what self-care resources will work best for you!

Montgomery County Offers MCPS Employees Free Access to Its Recreation Facilities and Pools

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** by visiting 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 need to reapply each year to continue your access to the facilities.

Back to Basics with Wellbeats

Ready to boost back into a healthy routine that fits your lifestyle as the seasons transition? Wellbeats Wellness has your back, no matter where you are starting from.

Whether is a peaceful yoga session, a nutrition class, or a mindfulness meditation, prioritize your well-being and the beauty of going back to basics.

Complete at least 40 class play minutes during the month of August to be entered into a drawing for a Wellbeats Wellness accessories gift card. To help you reach your 40 class play minutes, try one of our new introductory programs, including Wellness Time Savers, Mindfulness at Work, or Getting Started Sampler. **See log-in instructions and Back to Basics program information.**

Have You Been to HFP Live?

MCPS Well Aware and Cigna have partnered to provide all MCPS staff with access to *HFP Live*, a wellness livestream and video library built specifically for employees who are hard at work.

HFP Live broadcasts webinars, workshops, demos, and fitness classes in real time and with recordings for employees to view. Each week, we will send a schedule highlighting some of the upcoming events that you can check out. You can access the livestream portal and also view the schedule of upcoming events from any computer, laptop, tablet, or cell phone by using a password-protected link. Can't make a live session? Not to worry. Each livestreamed event is recorded and posted in a video library for you to access for at least 30 days. **Learn more. Log in to participate** using password: mcpsmd.

Head Heart and Hands 12-Week Wellness Program

The Head Heart and Hands 12-week wellness program is a comprehensive program of learning and weekly group coaching, designed to help participants prevent/reverse disease, improve their physical and mental health, and lose weight. Entering its second year, the class has been a great success.

A recent participant had this to say about her experience as a result of taking the class.

"I am feeling healthier all around," she said. "Not only have I lost 10-15 pounds, but I'm feeling better in my body and definitely have experienced an improvement in my mental and emotional health. I also finally feel like there's a way forward for me to build a healthy life. Everything I've done previously was short term and ultimately not sustainable. After learning what I've learned and being coached on how to implement that knowledge, I'm finally feeling like a healthy future is actually attainable for me."

This holistic program targets the root causes of common chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, arthritis, and more, while addressing all aspects of health, including nutrition, sleep, stress, mental health, and mindset. The program is designed to be inspiring and fun and to give participants the knowledge, tools, and support to lose weight permanently and reach their health goals. Our fall group is registering. **Email Well Aware** for more information.

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 240-740-8100 or [email Well Aware](#).