



January 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

## What's the BIG news?

### Medical costs – and what we're doing to help contain them:

#### *Upcoming medical plan dependent eligibility review*

One of our most important organizational goals is continuing to provide excellent and affordable health insurance coverage to our employees. The past few years have been particularly challenging in regard to our health care expenses and we expect these challenges to continue. Ever-increasing medical and prescription costs don't just result in higher monthly premiums for employees, they also limit the funds available to us as an employer – which impacts our flexibility when determining compensation increases.

As a part of our ongoing efforts to contain costs, next month we will begin a dependent eligibility review which will be conducted by HMS Employer Solutions, an independent cost containment firm. The purpose of this review is to ensure all dependents enrolled on our plan meet eligibility guidelines so that *only* eligible dependents are covered. **All employees, retirees, and COBRA participants who currently have a dependent (spouse and/or children) enrolled on our medical plan will be required to participate.** We are confident that this process will ensure we are covering eligible dependents in a fair and equitable manner. In the coming weeks, we'll tell you more about this dependent eligibility review; this will include a mailing to your home and email reminders. If you currently have dependents on our medical plan, please be sure to review these communications when they arrive so you can be prepared for this process.

#### *Health insurance program evaluation*

On our end, we recently kicked off a health insurance program evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation is to look at our benefits (in both costs and quality) in comparison with similar employers in our region, to assess whether we should continue our practice of maintaining a self-insurance pool (we are, in effect, our own insurance plan) vs. purchasing insurance coverage, and confirm that our current benefits support our organizational goals. We'll follow up with you with the results of this evaluation in a future *benefitsFOCUS*.

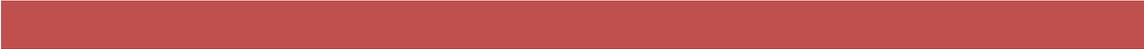
## It's Tax Time – time to get ready to file your return!

- **W-2:** As a reminder, your W-2 is available **NOW** online. Getting your W-2 online gets your form to you faster and doing so helps the County cut down on the cost of providing this important documentation. You can view your W-2 at <http://9582.greenemployee.com>
- **1095-C:** This is the first year employers must provide a 1095-C (Employer-Provided Health Insurance Offer and Coverage) form detailing health insurance coverage for yourself, and any dependents who may have been covered under your health plan. **While we are required to provide these no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>, we expect to make these available in the next few days. An announcement will go out once these have been uploaded.** If you file your tax returns prior to receiving Form 1095-C, you *will not* have to file an amended return once you receive your Form 1095-C; you should keep the form(s) with your tax records in case they're needed in the future.

## Anything else I need to be aware of?

### Changes to VRS service purchase rules

Currently an active full-time VRS (Virginia Retirement System) member? If so, changes are coming to purchase of prior service provisions and they may affect **you**. If you have eligible prior service from a previous job, certain types of leave, a refund or military service, you may wish to look into purchasing it **before January 1, 2017**. We'll tell you more about this in next month's *benefitsFOCUS!*



For more information about your employee benefits, our web pages are always available when you are at: <http://www.albemarle.org/departments.asp?department=hr&relpage=3553>