

August Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the August 2023 issue of *Well Aware eNews!* Read on to learn about—

- a webinar on building healthy habits;
- Monthly Connection from Well Aware and the Employee Assistance Program;
- how you can get InStep with Diabetes;
- a 5K training program for the fall;
- the Head, Heart, and Hand wellness program;
- a Virtual Wellness Day for staff; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

**This month's free webinar—
Building Healthy Habits that Last**

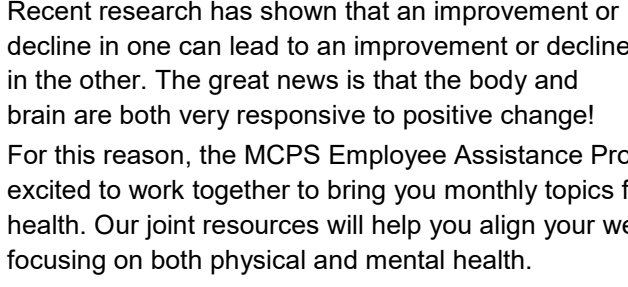
More than 40 percent of everything you do is habit. Join Well Aware and Cigna as we explore how habits are built and how to use them to your advantage when it comes to building a sustainable, healthier lifestyle. A good self-care routine can help you stay healthier and happier, perform better at work, care for others better at home, and accomplish more in a day.

Wednesday, August 30, 2023
4:30 p.m.–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.

Visit the [Wellness Webinar Library](#).
Presented by: Kaiser Permanente

Well Aware and the Employee Assistance Program Monthly Connection: Creating Healthy Routines



Did you know that mental and physical health are linked? Do you feel butterflies in your stomach when you are nervous, or headaches when you are feeling stressed or under pressure?

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 Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Well Aware are excited to work together to bring you monthly topics focusing on mental and physical health. Our joint resources will help you align your wellness journey to ensure that you are focusing on both physical and mental health.

Looking for these resources each month in the [Well Aware eNews](#) and [The Bulletin](#), on the [Well Aware Toolbox](#) and [EAP](#) web pages, and more!

Creating Healthy Routines

Preparing for the start of a new school year is a great time to revisit old routines and establish new ones to support your well-being. Without judgment, reflect on the routines you held last school year and your routines over the summer. What worked well for you that you can keep prioritizing? What routines are missing from your life that you want to add? Think about routines and habits that support your mental and physical health. Change takes time and it can be challenging to prioritize time for new routines in an already busy schedule. A manageable approach includes intentional planning and breaking up a new routine into small steps.

EAP Resources

[Check out this planning guide](#) (page 2) from Mental Health America for action steps to get started with creating a new routine this school year. And remember, your EAP is here to help!

Well Aware Resources

You know how important it is to eat right, exercise, and practice self-care. But making those healthy habits part of your daily routine can be a challenge. Creating a new habit takes time and persistence — but it's worth the effort. Check out these resources on creating healthy habits:

- [Kaiser Permanente: How to Build Healthy Habits that Stick](#)
- [National Institutes of Health: Creating Healthy Habits](#)

Get InStep with Diabetes This Fall

InStep with Diabetes is a series of three, one-hour classes that will help you better understand diabetes and the lifestyle changes needed to support healthy living. A Kaiser Permanente health educator will discuss not only why healthy eating, physical activity, and blood sugar control are important for diabetes management, but also ways to incorporate these changes into your life. The facilitator also will share resources and travel tips to further support you.

You do not have to be diabetic or pre-diabetic (or a Kaiser Permanente member) to attend this course. You can attend to support a friend or family member by learning helpful information.

Registration for the fall class is open. For more information [email Well Aware](#).

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 Friday, September 1, 2023, and run through Sunday, November 5, 2023. 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. Registration will begin in September. Questions? [Email Well Aware](#).

Wellness Initiatives

Save Money on Your Health Insurance in 2024

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Wellness Initiatives program provides you with incentives to reduce your 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 6, 2023—and yearly thereafter—to take advantage of the rate reductions in 2024 and beyond.

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 6, 2023. 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](#).

Staff Virtual Wellness Day to Be Held During Pre-Service Week

During Pre-Service Week on Thursday, August 24, Well Aware, Healthier Generation, Kaiser Permanente, and Cigna are coming together to present a virtual wellness day! Take a few minutes out of your professional day to give one of our wellness programs a try. This is a great opportunity to sample some of the classes that Well Aware hosts throughout the year, as well as prioritize your health and wellness. See the class schedule, links, and class descriptions. [Learn more about the Staff Virtual Wellness Day](#).

Head, Heart, and Hand 12-Week Wellness Program

The Head, Heart, and Hand 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. 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.

HFP Live Now Available to MCPS Employees

Well Aware is pleased to announce that MCPS and Cigna have partnered to provide access to *HFP Live*, a wellness livestream and video library built specifically for employees who are hard at work. *HFP Live* will broadcast webinars, workshops, demos, and fitness classes in real time and via 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? No worries. 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#1.

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, 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 Through Twitter!

The Well Aware Program is proud of all of the hard work that MCPS staff is doing to live healthy and well lives. It is time to share your stories and your spirit! Or do you need motivation to start a staff wellness program, or individual behavior change? Follow [@mcpsswellaware](#) for incredible stories, wellness ideas, encouragement from your MCPS coworkers, tips on living a healthy life, or for updates on MCPS staff wellness programs.

Have You Opened the Well Aware Toolbox?

Well Aware, the MCPS employee wellness program, brings you the Well Aware Wellness Toolbox, a web page with many resources to help staff live healthy and well lives. 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. Studies show that self-care is essential to well-being, especially during times of uncertainty and transition. [Check out the Well Aware Toolbox to see what self-care resources will work best for you!](#)

Free Access to Montgomery County 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.

Wellbeats Is for All!

MCPS staff has free access to Wellbeats! Wellbeats offers a 24/7 virtual fitness, nutrition, and mindfulness classes! These classes will be streamed on your personal devices at home, school, or on the go! You can schedule classes in advance and invite your coworkers to join you, and can also download classes to play when you are offline. Check out the attached [flyer](#) for login information. In the meantime, enjoy this [welcome video](#), and this [video showing you that Wellbeats is for All!](#)

Are you new to exercising or has it been a while since you last worked out? To help you get started or get back in a routine, we invite you to join the four-week *Find Your Fit* program with progressive, feel-good classes to safely ease into exercise. [Get started and learn more](#).

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Office (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 301-517-8100 or [email Well](#)