Dear AFSPA Member,

Welcome to November 2017! As the year comes to an end, this season calls for planning and preparation for the upcoming year. Open Season starts this month, which is a great time to take a look at all your benefits. Consider adding dental coverage, life insurance, or a disability plan from AFSPA.

Extended Health Plan Hours

To assist with your Open Season needs, the Foreign Service Benefit Plan (FSBP) will institute extended operating hours. Beginning Monday, November 6, our Health Benefits Officers will be available 7am to 5:30pm EST. These extended hours will be in effect throughout Open Season, for your convenience. Please call us during these earlier hours with your questions and concerns related to the health plan.

Open Season Briefings

Open Season officially begins Monday, November 13, 2017. As you may know, AFSPA staff travel to various regions of the globe in preparation for Open Season. Any direct hire Federal employee who is enrolled or is eligible to enroll in any plan under the FEHB Program can attend these briefings. This year’s topics include OPM Initiatives, Prescription Drugs, Access to Care, Wellness Programs, FSAFEDS, and FEDVIP. Please plan to attend and bring your questions. See the November schedule below:

- November 6 – Misawa, Sollars Elementary School Library, 3:15pm
- November 6 – Kadena AFB, Kadena High School
- November 7 – Kadena AFB – details being finalized
- November 8 – Yokosuka, Building A-20, Classroom – 10:30am and 12pm
- November 8 – Yokosuka, Sullivan School Complex, 3pm
- November 13 – Yongsan, Seoul American Elementary School Library, 3:30pm
- November 13 – Yokota, Yokota West Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room, 3pm
- November 14 – Osan AFB, Bldg. 936, Rm. 214, 1pm
- November 14 – Osan AFB, Osan American Elementary School, 4pm
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November 14 – Atsugi, Shirley Lanham Elementary School, 3:30pm
November 15 – Camp Humphreys, Humphreys Central Elementary School Library, 2:40pm
November 15 – Zama, Zama High School, 3pm
November 16 – Ikego, Ikego Elementary School, 2:45pm
November 16 – Daegu, Korea – details being finalized

We hope to see you at one of our Open Season Briefings. For those who are unable to attend, we have produced a video of my talk that will be available beginning Nov 13 – the first day of Open Season. Please go to our website, www.afspa.org/openseason.

Open Season is November 13 through December 11 this year. Please carefully review your options in FEHB, FEDVIP, and FSAFeds to make an informed decision that works best for you and your family.

Thanksgiving Trivia

Thanksgiving is approaching – a time to be with family, reflect on our good fortune and how lucky we are to celebrate this truly American holiday.

True or False? Chowing down for one day on Thanksgiving is no big deal.

False. Overeating on Thanksgiving has become a national pastime. But the traditional foods that we love so much are extremely high in fat and calories. Worse, Thanksgiving often is the kickoff to an entire six weeks of overeating that ends on New Year’s Day. So if you want to be heart-healthy this Thanksgiving – and beyond — consider preparing lighter versions of your favorite dishes. By doing that, watching your portion size, and burning a few calories with a long walk after dinner, you may start a healthy new Thanksgiving family tradition.

This year, thank your body by maintaining a healthy diet during the traditional gatherings. Reduce your salt intake, control your portions, and load your plate with vegetables. This might be a good time to take advantage of the “Not One Ounce” Holiday Program offered by the Mediterranean Wellness Program. On this 8-week plan, participants can lose rather than gain weight during the holiday season.

AFSPA Facebook

Many of our members have chosen to like us on Facebook. With over 700 followers, AFSPA can use social media to hear from you in a whole new way. We regularly share healthy living ideas, fitness tips, and member benefits. This Open Season, AFSPA will use social media to connect with you even more. A useful health tip will be posted each day. Please check our Facebook page every day between mid-November and mid-December. You will learn something new to use all year long.

As always, thank you for your trust and for giving us the opportunity to serve you.

To Your Health,

Paula S. Jakub, RHU
CEO, AFSPA