Greetings, retirees! As I write this, another cold front has enveloped our beloved district. It’s not quite “winter” yet, but we’ve already had one snow day and a two-hour delay. For the remainder of the winter, I’m hoping the prediction in the “Old Farmer’s Almanac” is correct with “warmer than normal temperatures” and “below normal snowfall.”

This issue of the Legacy, our third, is again packed with valuable information on health insurance and wellness tips. You’ll also find an informative story on your fellow retiree Susan Mittler who, with over 30 years of experience as an educator in the ICSD, now serves as a Regent on the New York State Board of Regents. Susan’s vast and valuable experience and expertise, honed right here in your ICSD, is now being shared throughout the state. Thank you, Regent Mittler for your continued service!

Finally, check out the “Upcoming Events” section. The Legacy was created to revitalize your connection with the ICSD, and what better way to do that than by attending events that showcase our wonderful and talented students? If you can, we encourage you to visit these events; we’re sure you’ll be impressed.

Be well!

Dr. Luvelle Brown
Superintendent, Ithaca City School District

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ICSD HEALTH INSURANCE WEBSITE
http://www.ithacacityschools.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=1027

Join us for our Community Conversations!
The ICSD is engaging the public over the next couple of months in community conversations focused on the 2019 capital project and the district’s Equity Report Card. These sessions are open to all.

On May 21, ICSD voters will have the opportunity to approve an approximately $120 million, ten-year capital project that will enhance safety and security, upgrade teaching and learning spaces, and improve infrastructure districtwide.

To learn more, visit http://bit.ly/ICSDCapProj and provide your input at our upcoming community conversation, scheduled for 5:30 to 7 p.m. January 17 at Boynton Middle School.

The Equity Report Card is a tool created by the ICSD to monitor its progress in achieving equity districtwide, helping the district and broader community think collectively about students’ experiences in ICSD schools; the impact of efforts to eliminate race, class, disability and gender as predictors of academic performance, co-curricular participation and discipline; and how everyone can contribute to the goal of increasing equity.

Retiree Health Insurance Information

REMINDER: Ask your provider if they take Medicare, rather than the Hartford.

Changes to Vitamin D coverage for Express Scripts members

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires non-grandfathered plans to cover certain preventive items and services at a zero-dollar cost share to their members. The Express Scripts standard list of required preventive medications is based on recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF).

On April 17, the USPSTF withdrew its Category B recommendation for vitamin D supplementation to prevent falls in community-dwelling adults (those 65 and older who do not reside in a nursing home or other institutional care setting). Consequently, beginning January 1, 2019, Express Scripts members will no longer receive ACA vitamin D products at a $0 copay. Instead, a standard copay will apply.

For more information, visit https://www.express-scriptsmedicare.com/part-d.shtml.

Coverage during international travel

The Medicare system itself offers no international travel insurance. The Hartford has international travel coverage as part of its plan, but it is not as robust as the district’s self-insured plan.

Therefore, the ICSD — either through reimbursement for eligible claims via our own self-insurance, or via a company that we contract with to provide international insurance — will extend the Hartford coverage to the level that was provided to retirees when traveling internationally.

This hybrid coverage model does not have any time limits to it, so an international trip could be for a week or for a couple of months.

Focus On Wellness: Cold and Flu

Content provided by Excellus.

Cold and flu viruses spread easily in the late fall and winter. It’s important to understand the symptoms of both illnesses, as well as ways to prevent and treat them.

Colds usually last one to two weeks and are most common in winter and early spring, although they can be caught year-round. Common symptoms of a cold include runny nose, sneezing, red eyes, sore throat, cough, headaches, and body aches. You will probably feel a cold come on over the course of a couple days.

To help prevent colds, wash your hands often, keep your hands away from your face, eat well, get plenty of sleep and exercise, and avoid smoking. Most people can treat cold symptoms at home by resting; drinking plenty of fluids; and taking medicine to relieve aches, stuffy noses, coughs, and fevers.

Influenza (flu) is a viral infection. Flu symptoms are usually worse than a cold and last longer. Most flu outbreaks happen in late fall and winter. Because symptoms may not start for a couple of days, you may pass the flu to someone before you know you have it.

Common symptoms of the flu include fever, body aches, headache, dry cough, and sore or dry throat. You will probably feel tired and less hungry than usual. The symptoms usually are the worst for the first three or four days but can last one to two weeks. The flu usually does not cause vomiting or diarrhea in adults.

Although most people get better without problems, the flu can sometimes lead to a bacterial infection, such as an ear infection, a sinus infection, or bronchitis. Less often, the flu may cause a more serious problem, such as pneumonia.

To help prevent the flu, get the flu vaccine every year, as soon as it’s available. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone six months and older should get a flu vaccine, especially those at a higher risk of problems from the flu, including adults ages 50 and older and adults with long-term health problems or impaired immune systems.

The vaccine usually prevents most cases of the flu but, even if you do get the flu after you’ve had the vaccine, your symptoms will be milder. You cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine.

In addition to home treatment, your doctor may be able to give you medicine that can make flu symptoms milder. It’s best to start taking it within two days of your first symptoms. Some people may need to go to the hospital if they have more severe symptoms or contract pneumonia, or if the flu infection makes an existing health problem worse.
UPCOMING EVENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Aud.</td>
<td>DeWitt Winter Choral Concert</td>
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<td>January 15</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>LACS Black Box</td>
<td>LACS Winter Concert</td>
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<td>January 16</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Aud.</td>
<td>DeWitt Winter Orchestra Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Boynton Middle</td>
<td>2019 Capital Project Community Conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Aud.</td>
<td>Boynton Middle School Winter Concert (grades 7-8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Aud.</td>
<td>Boyton Middle School Winter Concert (grade 6)</td>
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<td>January 28</td>
<td>5:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Caroline Elementary</td>
<td>Equity Report Card Community Conversation</td>
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<td>January 29</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Beverly J. Martin</td>
<td>BJM Winter Concert</td>
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ICSD Board of Education Authorizes Transition to the Hartford Plan

On November 27, the ICSD Board of Education authorized the District to transition all eligible retirees who are no longer represented by a collective bargaining unit in the District, and who are currently electing to remain on the District’s Active Plan, to the Medicare Supplemental Plan underwritten by The Hartford (the “Hartford Plan”), effective February 1, 2019.

The ICSD first offered Medicare-eligible retirees the option of switching to the Hartford Plan in July 2017 after establishing a self-insurance health insurance plan. The District determined that eligible retirees would receive the same or better coverage in all respects under the Hartford Plan, and that the coverage would cost the District and individual retirees considerably less than the Active Plan. In August 2017, 80 percent of Medicare-eligible retirees in the District elected to transition to the Hartford Plan.

The decision to transition the remaining retirees comes after 14 months of verification that the Hartford Plan provides coverage that is the same or superior in all respects to that of the Active Plan and that meets or exceeds the District’s contractual obligations to its retirees.

The District is confident that the transition of the remaining eligible retirees will result in considerable savings to both the retirees themselves and to ICSD taxpayers.

The Board of Education recognizes its contractual duty to ensure that the coverage each retiree receives under the Hartford Plan is the same as or superior to that provided to active employees. The District is committed to self-insuring any gaps between coverage provided under the Hartford Plan as a result of the transition and the coverage that would have been available pursuant to the Active Plan, in the unlikely event that any such gaps arise.
A longtime ICSD teacher and Ithaca Teachers Association (ITA) leader continues her work in education as a member of the New York State Board of Regents.

“You may retire from the system, but you never retire as an educator,” says Susan Mittler, who was appointed to a five-year term as a Regent in 2017. As a Regent, Mittler oversees public educational activities in a 10-county district, a natural progression after retiring from an over 30-year teaching career in the ICSD.

Mittler taught several elementary grade levels – including pre-K, kindergarten, second and third grades – and, for four years, taught in the Project Opportunity gifted and talented program for elementary students. She was also elected to nine consecutive two-year terms as president of the ITA and is particularly proud of having negotiated several contracts, advocated for increased professional development opportunities, and pursued equity and access to education for all students.

The Board of Regents oversees pre-K through 12th grade, charter schools, and the State University of New York (SUNY) system. Mittler represents the 6th Judicial District, which includes Tompkins County as well as a large swath of the eastern Southern Tier. She serves on the board’s Professional Practice and P-12 Education committees and attends the meetings of several others, and is a proponent of educational equity for all students.

Mittler says her experience in the classroom positions her to provide valuable input as a Regent. “I really think I can make a difference in our system,” she said.

When she’s not attending meetings in Albany, Mittler meets with local and state education leaders and associations and serves on the Regents Review Committee, which upholds professional standards by determining whether a practitioner’s license should be revoked, suspended, or retained following a disciplinary hearing. It’s a busy job, but one Mittler says energizes her, as she gets to bring the voices of area educators to the state level.

Mittler’s two children – both ICSD graduates – and her two grandchildren are her pride and joy. Her daughter is a professor of healthcare administration at Virginia Commonwealth University, and her son works in the financial field in New Jersey.

In her spare time, Mittler is part of the Ellis Hollow Quilters, attends Aqua Zumba classes, and goes to Cornell University basketball games with her husband. She also gathers with fellow Caroline Elementary School retirees every so often.

Above all, Mittler appreciates the chance to elevate the profession of teaching and encourage people to become educators. As a teacher, “you have the power to educate our future leaders and change the world,” she said. “I believe that.”