Purdue University takes our commitment to provide comprehensive and affordable employee benefits seriously. Each year, we review all of our options and look for ways to balance the quality of care and costs.

For the past five years, we have continued to enhance your healthcare coverage by offering more convenient and affordable access to care, lower prescription drug costs, a new wellness program with a financial incentive, and an extensive suite of voluntary benefits that provides safeguards for you and your family. We have added benefits such as preventive dental, applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy and bariatric surgery. These expanded benefits have come with cost increases to employees of less than 1% per year. In comparison, even with the cost increases announced for 2019, our annual premiums are on average $1,500 lower than other local employers, deductibles are $685 lower, and out-of-pocket maximums are $240 lower.

However, during this same five-year period, the cost to the University for health care has increased by $30 million. This increase makes it more difficult to improve other forms of compensation; every dollar spent on health care is one less we can use for faculty and staff salary increases.

One significant cost associated with our healthcare plan is providing coverage to working spouses who can obtain coverage from their employers. In fact, we estimate that Purdue spends more than $4 million per year on spouses that should be the responsibility of other employers. Extending benefits to spouses who can obtain coverage elsewhere is a luxury that many employers are choosing to no longer provide. We believe that providing this type of spousal coverage over the long term is not in the best interest of the larger Purdue community. Since our announcement, many have expressed concern that a change in the spousal coverage policy went too far, too fast. We take those concerns seriously.

Therefore, after further consideration, we have decided not to institute the change to our spousal coverage policy at this time. We intend to review this policy in detail over the next six months to review outright elimination of the coverage, or merely requiring a surcharge for continued coverage. This will give the employees and spouses who would be affected by the change significantly more time to consider their options moving forward.

Additionally, we will only require an annual physical and biometric screening to earn the second half of HSA contributions. Research indicates annual physicals and biometric screenings are the foundation of each individual’s long-term health and may detect health issues before they become more complex and costly. We still highly encourage everyone to complete the online lifestyle educational modules.

All other previously announced changes will remain in effect for 2019.
As always, we encourage you and your family to learn more about your healthcare options and consider ways to manage your costs better. You can do this by:

- Scheduling your free annual physical.
- Choosing generic prescriptions whenever possible.
- Avoiding more expensive care at an emergency room or urgent care facility if you can visit your doctor’s office or the Center for Healthy Living instead.
- Proactively managing chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma and hypertension by consulting with your doctor and utilizing services through Anthem, our health plan provider.
- Complete all online educational modules through the Healthy Boiler portal.

In 2019, the University will evaluate a series of strategies, including negotiating directly with providers to reduce costs, partnering with our College of Pharmacy to offer recommendations for our prescription drug plan, developing a best-in-class primary-care tiered network, reducing non-claims expenses, and analyzing whether an expansion of the Center for Healthy Living’s services and facilities is a prudent investment.

By working together to control our healthcare costs, we can continue to offer a comprehensive, competitive benefits package, invest in our world-class faculty and staff, and keep the cost of tuition affordable for our students and their families.

We have extended the enrollment deadline to November 5 at 6 p.m. ET to allow more time to make your 2019 benefit selections. If you have already submitted your selections, you may log back into BenefitFocus and make changes until the new deadline. Remember, you can continue to use the resources available at purdue.edu/benefitsenrollment throughout open enrollment, and our HR team is available to assist you, as needed.