

Message from Gov. Ralph Northam: Health Benefits Premium Holiday

Please see the following message issued by Gov. Ralph Northam's office on Sept. 10, 2019. For Virginia Tech employees, the health benefits premium holiday will be applied to the Oct. 16 and Nov. 1, 2019 paychecks.

Dear State Employees: I announced in May that all eligible state employees will pay no health benefits premium for the month of October! For most employees, these premium holidays will occur on October 16 and November 1, and there will be no employee premium contribution deducted from your pay on those dates. For some employees, the premium holiday will occur in the October time frame, depending on your agency's payroll system.

Participants at all membership levels in the COVA Care, COVA HDHP, COVA HealthAware, Kaiser Permanente HMO and Optima Vantage HMO plans are eligible. Because of the requirement in the Code of Virginia that TRICARE supplement participants pay the full cost of their coverage, the premium holiday will not apply to those members.

If you have any questions, please contact your agency Benefits Administrator. Happy Premium Holiday!

Sincerely,
Governor Ralph S. Northam

Retirement Planning Seminars available

It is never too early or too late to start planning for retirement! Virginia Tech is committed to making sure its employees are well prepared for retirement and Human Resources is here to help with retirement planning information sessions.

Sessions include information on the Virginia Retirement System and Optional Retirement Plan benefits. Topics include retirement options, calculating monthly benefits, increasing retirement income, life insurance, health insurance, and other retirement benefits and resources. All employees are welcome to attend; however, the information presented will be especially helpful to employees who plan on retiring within the next six years. The following sessions are available:

- Monday, Oct. 21, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 24, 10 a.m. – noon
- Thursday, Oct. 31, 10 a.m. – noon

All sessions are being held in the North End Center, Room 2420. Remote sessions are also available via Zoom during the same times. Links to Zoom will be sent out a few days prior to the sessions. Registration is required for these free sessions; please register at www.training.vt.edu. For more information about retirement planning, visit the retirement planning page online at www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/retirement-financial/planning.html.

For questions, contact the HR Service Center at hrrservicecenter@vt.edu or 540-231-9331.

Riding the Smart Way bus? Real-time departure and arrival information now available

Smart Way riders can now access real-time bus arrival and departure information through a new digital LED display at the Squires Alumni Mall Smart Way stop as well as a new app.

Valley Metro, the operator of the Smart Way and Smart Way Express bus services, recently launched its Real-time Transit Passenger Information (RTPI) service VMGO. VMGO provides real-time bus stop departure times via smartphone, personal computer, LED displays at high-volume bus stops, and by calling 540-982-2222.

The VMGO app for smartphone users can be downloaded at the Google Play store for Android users and App Store (iOS) for Apple users.

Smart Way provides transportation between Squires Student Center and the Roanoke Valley for \$4 each way.

The bus can be used to connect to the Roanoke Amtrak platform as well as the Roanoke Regional Airport Monday through Saturday. Smart Way offers a special transfer option to allow travelers returning to the airport on a Sunday to use the Roanoke/Blacksburg Airport Shuttle for \$4. Monthly passes are available to Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and students for 25 percent off the normal price.

Please visit valleymetro.com or vmgoapp.com or call 540-982-2222 for more details about the new VMGO service. For more information about Smart Way go online to their page at smartwaybus.com.

Please also feel free to reach out to the Virginia Tech Alternative Transportation Department with any questions at gettingaround@vt.edu.

Flu season is coming: Protect yourself and others; get the flu shot

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flu season in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May. Virginia Tech encourages all Hokies to protect yourself and others by getting your annual flu vaccine.

As a service to all employees, Hokie Wellness offers flu vaccination clinics each fall.

- Salaried employees who are covered by state health insurance plans only need to show their insurance card to receive a free vaccine.
- Wage employees may also receive a free flu vaccine by showing their Hokie Passport.
- Students are also welcome to attend; students may need to be prepared to pay \$25 by cash or check if pharmacists aren't able to verify that the student's insurance is accepted.

Annual flu vaccination clinics run through Nov. 12 at locations across campus. Additional vaccines will be offered at some of the clinics on a first come, first serve basis, including Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis), MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), Hepatitis A and B, both pneumonia vaccines, and the new shingles vaccine, Shingrix.

Below is the list of clinics, which are open from 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m., except where noted with a *:

- *Oct. 17: New Hall West, lower level training room, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., other vaccines will be available
- Oct. 18: Wiki Conference room, CRC, other vaccines will be available
- Oct. 22: VTTI, conference room
- Oct. 29: North End Center, room 2410
- Oct. 31: Sterrett facility, classroom, other vaccines will be available
- Nov. 5: The Inn at Virginia Tech, Draper's Meadow, other vaccines will be available
- Nov. 7: Wallace Hall atrium
- *Nov. 12: Squires, Old Dominion Ballroom, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Online registration for the flu vaccination is preferred at virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9RBhxN1OfsRJNg9, but walk-ins are welcome.

More information can be found online at vtnews.vt.edu/notices/schiffert_notice_flu_shot_clinic_for_students_faculty_staff_ommunity.html.

If you are unable to make it to a Hokie Wellness clinic, vaccinations are also available at most local pharmacies and through health care providers.

State health plan members may get a free flu vaccine at pharmacies participating in their health plan's network.

- COVA Care, COVA HDHP and COVA HealthAware members also may receive flu shots at no cost from network physicians' offices and other participating providers.

- Kaiser Permanente HMO members must go to a participating Kaiser medical center.

Visit dhrm.virginia.gov/healthcoverage/flushotinformation to find participating providers, and questions and answers on each plan, including information on receiving flu vaccines from non-network providers or pharmacies. If you plan to get your flu vaccine at a pharmacy, be sure to call ahead to confirm the pharmacy is participating in the program and that shots are available. An appointment may be required.

Vaccination is the best protection against contracting the flu. In addition, we encourage all Hokies to review this information from Virginia Tech's Emergency Management Office for guidance on what to do if a flu outbreak occurs online at emergency.vt.edu/ready/guides/flu.html

For questions about Hokie Wellness flu clinics, contact Hokie Wellness at hokiewellness@vt.edu or 540-231-8878. For flu vaccines and your medical plan, contact your plan provider.

Local food trucks rolling onto Virginia Tech campus

The Virginia Tech community will soon have the opportunity to try out a variety of local eats for lunch without ever leaving campus.

The Local Lunch Bites food truck pilot program will partner with local food trucks to bring more tasty and convenient lunch options, beyond those offered by the university's award-winning Dining program, to campus. The trucks will operate Mondays through Thursdays from 10:30 a.m. to approximately 2:30 p.m. through Nov. 21.

The food trucks will be situated at multiple locations across campus, including: Bishop-Favrao Hall, Cowgill Hall, Goodwin Hall, Lane Stadium/Southgate/Public Safety Building/Sterrett Facility Complex, Litton-Reaves Hall, and Solitude.

All students, faculty, and staff are invited to enjoy an array of local lunch options from such vendors as: Beast of the Streets, Big D's BBQ & Ribs, Brother Jake's Brick Oven Creations, Chick fil A (menu), Creole That, Mann's Sausage Company (menu), and Nomad Coffee Co.

For more information on Local Lunch Bites, visit www.vpas.vt.edu/programs/food-truck.html.