Tobacco Surcharge

Beginning in the FY13 Plan Year, the University of Alaska will implement a tobacco surcharge. Employees enrolled on the UA Choice health care plan will be required to pay $600 per year in addition to the employee health care charge if they or their dependents use tobacco products.

The tobacco surcharge will apply if the employee does not request a waiver. The surcharge will be waived for those employees who certify that tobacco products are not used or if the employee/dependent is actively enrolled in a tobacco cessation program. The details of the program and eligibility are outlined below.

- Tobacco is defined as cigarettes, pipes, cigars, chewing or smokeless tobacco.

- “Non-tobacco user” is defined as a person who has not used tobacco for at least six months before the date the enrollment certification is signed.

- To have the surcharge waived, employees enrolled on the health plan must certify that they and their dependents are non-tobacco users or that they are tobacco users enrolled in a tobacco cessation program.
  - If the employee/dependent has used tobacco products in the prior six months before the tobacco use certification is signed and if the tobacco user enrolls and is participating in a designated tobacco cessation program by the due date for submission of the certification, the surcharge will be waived.
  - If it is unreasonably difficult due to a medical condition, or if it is medically inadvisable for the employee/dependent to achieve the standards under this program, the employee is asked to contact Erika Van Flein, Benefits Coordinator, at (907)450-8227 to develop another method to qualify for a waiver.

- Employees can receive a waiver of the surcharge for the next plan year by completing a certification of non-use or tobacco cessation program enrollment/participation form (http://www.alaska.edu/files/benefits/TobaccoSurchargeWaiver_.pdf). The completed form needs to be submitted to the employee’s HR office during Open Enrollment. Another mid-year opportunity to complete and submit a certification will occur between November 1-30 each year. Employees who are eligible for a waiver following the midyear certification will have their tobacco surcharge halted during the first full payroll period of January.

- All employees enrolled in the UA healthcare plan must submit a completed certification during Open Enrollment or during the November opportunity, if they wish to apply for a waiver of the tobacco surcharge.

- An employee who submits inaccurate or false information on a certification regarding eligibility for a waiver of the tobacco surcharge may be subject to having the surcharge applied retroactively for the applicable plan year, and possible discipline for dishonesty and falsification of documents.