

Bulletin

A New Hampshire Local Government Center Newsletter for Benefits Administrators of Member Groups

LGC Academy Expands Offerings to Include More Online Courses

Since 2008, the New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC) has partnered with Municipal Resources, Inc.—a regional consulting firm dedicated to providing support services to municipalities and schools—to offer the LGC Academy. The Academy provides hybrid classes which combine live classroom instruction with e-learning tools as well as self-guided, online courses that offer 24/7 access.

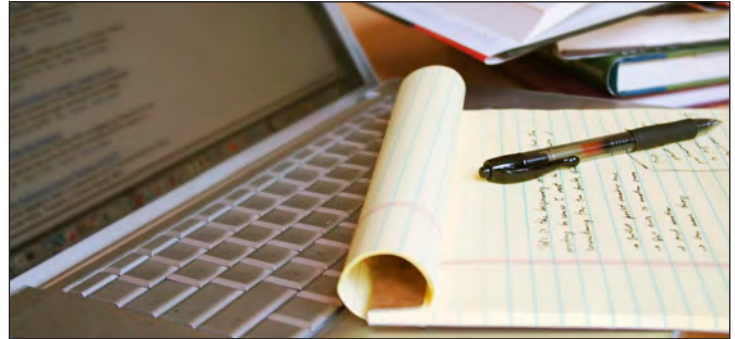
The LGC Academy

“Each course is designed to enhance your job performance so you can bring greater value to the workplace,” says LGC’s Risk and Health Manager Scott Weden, who coordinates the LGC Academy.

Variety of Subjects

LGC Academy courses are currently available in the following areas: Finance and Taxation; Governance; Health, Safety and Facilities; Human Resources; Land Use; and Schools.

Just in time for summer, a new online course titled *Best Practices for Beaches and Pools* is now open for enrollment. It’s designed to teach participants ways to identify and reduce risks at an aquatics facility. Specific strategies are also presented that can enable managers and supervisors to bring forward policies and procedures specific to both their facility and staff based on local, state and national codes and standards.



New Fall Offerings

In September, these additional online courses will be open for registration:

- *Asbestos Awareness*
- *Ethical Issues, Conflicts of Interest and Incompatibility of Office*
- *Giving Back, Looking Forward: Best Practices and Guidance for the Use of Public Sector Volunteers*
- *Indoor Environmental Quality - Everyone’s Responsibility*
- *Joint Loss Management Committees: Juggling Leadership, Management and Communications*
- *Lessons in Successful Grant Writing*
- *Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls*
- *Smart Hiring*
- *Special Events Risk Management*

Look for course syllabus postings later this summer at www.lgcacademy.org.

Positive Participant Response

Some 300 LGC members have enrolled in the LGC Academy’s online courses so far this year, and nearly 50 have taken its hybrid courses. Close to 200 participants have completed courses in the past two years.

“This is an excellent resource for administrators who otherwise do not have the time to attend classes,” says a recent participant in the LGC Academy’s *Emergency Vehicle Liability – Fire* online course.

To learn about the LGC Academy’s instructors, watch a video overview and sign up for current course offerings, visit www.lgcacademy.org. We also welcome suggestions for future class offerings. Please e-mail your ideas to sweden@nhlgc.org.

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Thousands Take the 2010 Personal Health Analysis Questionnaire

Congratulations to the nearly 26,000 LGC HealthTrust members who completed the 2010 *Get Healthy* Personal Health Analysis (PHA) Questionnaire and are now reaping healthy rewards through our *Slice of Life* health management program. Participation in the PHA reached 59 percent this year. "We surpassed the total number of PHAs completed last year by nearly 2,000," notes LGC's Risk and Health Manager Scott Weden.

Fifteen percent of this year's PHA participants have enrolled in the program's personalized health coaching to help improve their health. For more *Slice of Life* information, visit www.nhlgc.org and click on HealthTrust Online—My Benefits > Slice of Life.

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Spring Benefits Administrator Workshops Garner Positive Feedback

New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC) HealthTrust's 2010 Benefits Administrator (BA) Workshops, held April 14, 21 and May 14 at LGC in Concord, attracted nearly 200 participants. The day-long sessions provided BAs with important updates and new information regarding LGC HealthTrust products, programs and services. Included was an overview of prescription drug program changes and discussion of recent federal legislation such as Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) and healthcare reform.



The Town of Alton's Finance Officer Pauline Wentworth plays "Enrollment Jeopardy" at one of LGC HealthTrust's BA Workshops this spring.

The vast majority of attendees rated the workshops as "excellent" or "good." Participants also appreciated the workshop's new "Jeopardy" approach to presenting information in an interactive fashion. "It gets people thinking, learning and having fun all at the same time," said Christina McClay, a member of the Town of Groton's board of selectmen.

In our ongoing quest to keep member groups educated about industry changes,

LGC's HealthTrust also offers *The Learning Track* workshop series in the fall for new BAs. These workshops are also open to experienced BAs interested in learning more about certain topics. Watch for more details in future mailings.

Benefits Administrator Spotlight

Keeping Up with Benefits Changes Challenges Portsmouth's HR Coordinator



Linda Corriveau
Human Resources Coordinator
City of Portsmouth

Linda Corriveau calls herself "the paper person." As the City of Portsmouth's Human Resources (HR) coordinator, Linda assists some 300 employees daily in completing a variety of forms for dental, medical and life insurance as well as for long-term disability and flexible spending accounts. "You can't see me without having to sign something!" says Linda.

Like most HR representatives, Linda is a genuine people person who just can't seem to do enough for the city employees she assists. "I like doing stuff for them," she admits. Her Associate in Business Administration degree from McIntosh College, where she later worked in admissions, has served the City of Portsmouth well for some 13 years.

Besides helping the city's existing employees with benefits administration, Linda also assists its growing retirement population. "I love helping them understand what benefit changes are going to occur and completing the required paperwork," says Linda.

What's most challenging about her job these days is "keeping up with all the ever-changing rules, laws and regulations" related to healthcare—particularly those dealing with the recent healthcare reform at the federal level. "Just when you learn how to handle something you know it's going to change," Linda surmises.

Maintaining a balanced life is key to keeping a healthful perspective, which Linda manages to do by going camping with her daughter, son and husband. "That's where we spend our fun money," she admits. Linda also enjoys regularly

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Police Officers Test Firearms, Reaction Skills in LGC's Simunitions Training

Now in its fifth year of availability, the LGC's *Interactive Use of Force Simunitions Training* allows police officers across New Hampshire to experience true-to-life law enforcement incidents and self evaluate their performance. It lets officers test their firearms abilities using paint pellets while reacting to real-life scenarios that focus on the use and non-use of force which are enacted by an LGC volunteer trainer and role-playing Risk and Health Management Department representatives.

"The training makes officers choose a level of force appropriate to the situation



they are confronting," explains LGC Risk Management Representative Butch Burbank, Waterville Valley's former chief of police, who coordinates LGC's statewide simunitions trainings. More than 1,000 officers have participated in this specialized training since it began in November of 2005. Fourteen two-day sessions are scheduled for 340 police officers this year.

For more simunitions training information, visit www.nhlgc.org and click on Training & Events > Risk and Health Training Programs. You can also e-mail bburbank@nhlgc.org.

Healthcare Reform Legislation: How It's Unfolding

By Charlene Wallace

Provisions of the recently enacted federal healthcare reform legislation are still being interpreted with further guidance needed and expected. In the meantime, here are portions of the legislation soon to be implemented.

Flexible Spending Account (FSA)/Health Reimbursement Account (HRA)/Health Savings Account (HSA) changes. Beginning January 1, 2011, regardless of the plan year:

- Pre-tax reimbursements from FSA, HRA or HSA for non-prescribed, over-the-counter medications will not be considered an eligible expense.
- The excise tax for non-qualified HSA withdrawals will increase from 10 to 20 percent.

And, in 2013, employee FSA contributions will be capped at \$2,500 annually.

Employee notification. Employers will need to report the value of employer-sponsored coverage to employees on 2011 *W-2 Wage and Tax Statements*.

New programs. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is required to establish a temporary program to reimburse a portion of an employer's costs for providing health plan coverage to early retirees, their spouses and dependents. It

will reimburse the employer for 80 percent of the portion of costs attributable to claims that exceed \$15,000 but are less than \$90,000. The program currently has \$5 billion in funding.

The HHS is in the process of developing its application process, which is expected to begin early this summer and end when funds are depleted, or by January 1, 2014. The process includes distribution of funds on a first-come, first-serve basis. It is expected that the initial \$5 billion of funding will be depleted in the first 60 days of the program and remains to be seen if more funding will be allocated.

Dependent Coverage Eligibility. For plan years beginning six months following the date of enactment (or September 23, 2010), the legislation requires group health plans to extend coverage to dependent children through age 26. While New Hampshire legislation already requires coverage extension to a subset of this population, the federal legislation goes further by removing requirements of residency or student status and allows dependents to be married (there is no requirement to extend coverage to a dependent child's spouse or children).

The LGC will implement this legislation, as required, on January 1, 2011 for plans renewing in January and July 1, 2011 for plans renewing in July. Additional pieces of related legislation are effective for future dates. Further information will be shared with LGC's member groups as soon as it becomes available.

Charlene Wallace is New Hampshire Local Government Center's account manager. She can be reached by e-mailing cwallace@nhlgc.org or calling 800.852.3358, ext. 202.

Unemployment Claims Update

By Angie Richard and Phil Stewart

At the LGC, we are dedicated to keeping you educated about processes and procedures related to coverage and claims in order to make your job as effortless as possible. Here are some updates and reminders related to LGC's unemployment claims services.

Secure E-mails

In the conduct of unemployment claims administration and New Hampshire Department of Employment Security (NHES) Quarterly Tax and Wage reporting, LGC's Property-Liability Trust (PLT) members have received, or will be receiving, e-mail from PLT with the words "Secure" and/or "Confidential" in the subject line. The PLT employs software that *encrypts* outgoing e-mail sent by PLT containing personal information (PI). Examples of PI include a person's name coupled with other identifying information such as address, Social Security number, date of birth, driver's license number and the like. In order to communicate claim information, support for quarterly tax and wage filings or other PI in a secure manner, members must REPLY to the SECURE e-mail received from PLT. *By doing so, the reply e-mail thread remains secure.* Just sending a new e-mail to PLT and adding the word "secure" will not encrypt member e-mail transmitted to PLT.

If you do not have a secure e-mail from PLT from which to reply in a secure manner, please contact one of the following LGC Claims Department staff members toll free (800.852.3358) or by e-mail to receive one:

Name	Phone Extension	E-mail Address
Angie Richard	Ext. 309	arichard@nhlgc.org
Kim Brewster	Ext. 272	kbrewster@nhlgc.org
Sandra Colby	Ext. 214	scolby@nhlgc.org

The LGC is presently researching a secure portal for LGC's website and will let you know when that tool is available to you for secure communications. We appreciate your assistance to protect the records of those we serve.

Quarterly Tax and Wage Reports

It is important that PLT receive your *Unemployment Quarterly Tax and Wage Report* support by the date requested. This allows us the time needed to review, edit and prepare the reports in accordance with the way the report needs to be submitted to the NHES. Any report that is not filed by the deadline issued with NHES is subject to a late fee of \$25.

We also want to call your attention to RSA282-A:9 IV (o)(1) and (7), which address services performed by an individual as an elected official; and, an election worker or official who receives less than \$1,000 for all such services during the calendar year. The statute can be viewed at www.nh.gov/nhes/. Since elected officials are not considered employees for the purpose of calculating unemployment compensation, please do not include them or their wages on your Unemployment Quarterly Tax and Wage Reports.

New Unemployment Laws

With new claims filed for a benefit year beginning on or after January 3, 2010, there is a one-week waiting period for benefits; however, the unemployed are still eligible for 53 weeks of benefits.

RSA 282-A: 32 now allows benefits for the following:

- An individual who has become unemployed and unable to perform some/all of their respective job duties due to a non-work related injury/illness or pregnancy. A doctor must substantiate the unemployed's claim of disability. Please keep in mind that you are still required to provide reasonable accommodations as required by federal or state laws.
- An individual who has left his/her employment due to a spouse's job transfer that has made the employee's ability to commute unreasonable.
- An employee with an ill or disabled immediate family member, as outlined by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Convenient Reminders

Here is a bulleted summary of important things to keep in mind related to unemployment claims:

- Pursuant to the applicable PLT *Member Agreement*, members shall assist in providing PLT with information needed to defend any and all unemployment claims.
- The deadline to respond to NHES inquiries has been reduced to 7 days, which includes weekends and holidays, so your timely assistance is appreciated. Members are encouraged to designate a back-up point-of-contact person for our adjusting staff to contact should we need timely information to respond to a claim.
- When an employee resigns, it is strongly urged that you obtain as much information as possible for their reasons of resignation, based upon the new laws previously cited.
- Any documents received from the NHES regarding new unemployment claims should be forwarded to LGC as soon as possible. Since the NHES converted to its most recent computer system, many documents are mistakenly being sent directly to member groups. Please know that you do not need

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June

- 6/9 **Stepping Up to Supervisor***
9 a.m. – 4 p.m. • LGC, Concord, NH
 This Local Government Leadership Institute (Level 1) course is available to LGC Property-Liability Trust members. Through self-assessment and case study discussion, participants will have the opportunity to determine their preferred supervisory style and identify ways of modifying it to bring out the best in others.
- 6/23 **Protecting Outdoor Worker Health & Safety Workshop****
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. • LGC, Concord, NH
 This workshop is complimentary to LGC's HealthTrust, Property-Liability Trust and Workers' Compensation Program members. The full-day program addresses health and safety issues faced by local government employees who work outdoors. The registration deadline is June 16, 2010.

July

- 7/5 **Independence Day Observance**
 LGC closed

August

- 8/6 **Performance Evaluations***
9 a.m. – 4 p.m. • LGC, Concord, NH
 This Local Government Leadership Institute (Level 2) course is available to LGC Property-Liability Trust members. Using meaningful examples, complex case studies, role-playing and practice exercises, attendees will learn how to use appropriate performance evaluation tools. Level 1 completion is required.

*All Local Government Leadership Institute classes are full for 2010. For 2011 enrollment information, please contact LGC Risk Management Representative Wynette DeGroot by calling 800.852.3358, ext. 311, or e-mailing wdegroot@nhlgc.org.

**For workshop details and registration information, visit www.nhlgc.org and click on Training & Events > Calendar of Events to find the event date.

Portsmouth's HR Coordinator... *continued from page 2*

immersing herself into a good book. "I like to read historic novels," she shares.

With open enrollment season just around the corner, Linda is gearing up for her busiest time of year. "It's getting crazier right now," she observes. Still, Linda takes heart knowing she can always depend on the New Hampshire Local Government Center's dedicated service team to provide her with timely support whenever benefits questions arise. "Everyone is friendly and ready to help—I love that!"

Unemployment Claims Update... *continued from page 4*

to respond to them. Instead, forward them by e-mail or fax (603.226.2322) to LGC's Claims Department for handling. Likewise, you do not need to speak with anyone from the NHES by phone. Just advise the caller that PLT handles your unemployment claims, and ask them to contact our office.

Additional information is available by calling the NHES at 603.224.3311 or visiting its website at www.nhes.state.nh.us.

Angie Richard and Phil Stewart respectively serve the LGC as a claims representative and director of claims and coverage.

BENEFITS

Bulletin

Published quarterly to keep member groups of New Hampshire Local Government Center informed of benefit news, service improvements and upcoming events.

Editor: Lynn Sperl



LGC CONTACT INFORMATION

- Toll Free:** 800.852.3358
- Local:** 603.224.7447
- Fax:** 603.226.2988
- Website:** www.nhlgc.org
- LifeResources— Member Assistance Program:** 800.759.8122

LGC MISSION: To provide programs and services that strengthen the quality of member governments and the ability of their officials and employees to serve the public by being a catalyst for dialogue and action, an advocate on issues, an advisor on problems, a provider of benefits and risk-management services, an educator/trainer in skills and a resource for information.