

Benefits Team Overview

Your Benefits Team

Patricia Coray

HRIS & Benefits Director

- Health Benefits
- Life Insurance
- Tax Shelters
- Retirement
- Leaves of Absence
- Occupational Health
- Workers' Compensation
- VSDP
- FMLA

Courtney Ashmore

Interim Benefits
Supervisor

Kendra Altmann

Benefits Specialist

Quynh Anh Ton Nu

Benefits Assistant

Bobbie Merritt

Senior Benefits
Administrator

Niki Imamura

Benefits Administrator

Emily Lane

Benefits Administrator

Benefits Team - Services Provided

- ▶ Answer questions about **health insurance**:
 - ▶ New hire
 - ▶ Had a baby
 - ▶ Marriage/Divorce
 - ▶ Spouse lost/gained coverage
- ▶ Answer **retirement plans** and contributions
 - ▶ Start contributing
 - ▶ Stop contributing
 - ▶ Forms
 - ▶ Who do I call to talk about my plans
- ▶ Work with employees to file **workers' compensation** claims as well as during the claim

HR & Payroll has Spanish translators available - we have quite a few Spanish speaking individuals on campus and can assist in translating information.

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ Anytime you have a life event, you need to communicate with Benefits.
 - ▶ There is a time limit to take advantage of certain benefits and you need to get with us as soon as possible.
 - ▶ 703.993.2600
 - ▶ benefits@gmu.edu

Benefits Team Services Provided

- ▶ Answer questions about **VSDP** (Virginia Sickness and Disability Program) - Short Term Disability (STD) Short Term Disability is the state's income replacement program
 - ▶ Provide information on process and paperwork
 - ▶ Guidance for contacting ReedGroup (program's 3rd party administrator)
- ▶ Answer questions about **FMLA** (Family & Medical Leave Act)
 - ▶ FMLA is a federal law that provides job protection for up to 12 weeks
 - ▶ Unpaid unless using leave
 - ▶ Provide information on FMLA for self/family member
 - ▶ Guidance on FMLA process and paperwork
- ▶ Answer questions about **retiring** and **retirement** process
 - ▶ Guidance & counseling on the overall retirement process
 - ▶ Assist with paperwork and navigating the various steps

HR & Payroll has Spanish translators available

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ If you have to go out for a prolonged illness of a week or more, get in touch with Benefits to review the option of using Short-Term Disability (income replacement). You will only have to use your leave for the first few days which is referred to as the waiting period, and then Short-Term Disability will begin.
- ▶ FMLA is job protection. While out on FMLA, your position cannot be filled by someone else.

Benefits is available to talk about your path to retirement anytime. This takes about a half an hour, and all you need to do is call to setup an appointment.

I have a medical condition that is preventing me from working

For an absence of more than 5 work days:

1. Call HR and ask to speak to a Benefits Administrator
2. Call ReedGroup to initiate the Short Term Disability claim - They also have *Spanish translators available*
3. Any/all doctor notes send directly to Benefits
4. Complete HR paperwork
5. Have doctor complete Reedgroup paperwork
6. May not return to work until doctor completes a Return to Work Certification

Don't wait - Call us 😊

I'm injured at work, what should I do?

1. Inform your supervisor/team lead immediately
2. Complete a "First Report of Accident" form
3. Complete the "Panel of Physicians Selection" form
4. Contact Benefits (703.993.2600); benefits@gmu.edu; or stop by Merten Hall Suite 4100
5. See the panel doctor
6. Bring any work or medical notes to Benefits
7. Follow your doctor's orders - provide doctor's return to work authorization to Benefits
8. Talk to MCI (workers' compensation company) when they call you (they have translators)

A member of your team has been injured, what do you do?

- ▶ Arrange for any needed medical care
- ▶ Give employee a “First Report of Accident” form
- ▶ Give employee a “Panel of Physicians” form
- ▶ Fill out the supervisor portion of the “First Report of Accident” form
- ▶ Turn forms in to Benefits (fax 3-2601; scan and email benefits@gmu.edu or drop off at Merten Hall 4th floor)
- ▶ Answer any questions that Benefits and/or MCI (Workers’ Compensation company) have

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ Question: For a workers compensation situation, do Classified Staff have to go to Benefit assigned doctors or can we go to our own?
- ▶ Answer: Benefits works with a Panel of Physician designated for Workers Comp cases who are located through out the DMV. Employees can reach out to us if it presents a hardship (i.e. too far; unable to make a timely appt, etc.) and we will work with them.

- ▶ Question: Are there a different panel of physicians for each campus?
- ▶ Answer: See below within Workers' Compensation Protocol
- ▶ **Workers' Compensation Protocol**
- ▶ First Report of Accident Form
- ▶ Panel Physician Selection Form (Virginia)-initial visit
- ▶ Panel Physician Selection Form (Maryland) -initial visit
- ▶ Panel Physician Selection Form- Biomedical Research Lab Only
- ▶ Panel Physician Selection Form- Front Royal
- ▶ Panel Physician Selection Form- Orthopedic

- ▶ Question: In terms of workers compensation forms, these are located on the hr.gmu.edu website?
- ▶ Answer: Correct

I need to take time off to care for an immediate family member with a serious medical condition

1. Contact Benefits to discuss circumstances and request an FMLA packet
2. Complete required FMLA paperwork
3. Provide HR with Medical Certification to be completed by doctor
4. FMLA allows Leave to be taken intermittently as needed
5. Send any/all doctor notes directly to Benefits

Staff Senate Notes:

3. Up to one third of your sick leave can be used to take care of an immediate family member. The definition of an immediate family member is listed on the Benefits website. hr.gmu.edu/benefits/

4. Question: Does Short Term Disability apply to this, or is this only for yourself?

5. Answer: Short Term Disability only applies to yourself, but what does apply here is FMLA.

Question: Can I use FMLA to take care of a Family Member? Because when I go to fill out my timesheet, no one will know why I am taking time for sick leave if I am not sick.

7. Answer: Yes, but you need to work with Benefits so that we can assist you in coordinating this benefit.

I just adopted a child and want to take time off to care for him/her.

- ▶ Executive Order/DHRM Parental Leave Policy 4.21 effective June 26, 2018
- ▶ Who is eligible: Classified employees who become parents via birth, adoption, or foster or custodial care;
- ▶ Eligible full-time employees receive up to eight (8) weeks (320 hours) of paid parental leave to be used within six (6) months of the birth/placement of a child. Those working part-time will be allocated a prorated amount as appropriate.
- ▶ Runs concurrently with FMLA and may be used in conjunction with other paid and unpaid leave for the full FMLA period;
- ▶ Employees should contact a Benefits Administrator at least 30 days in advance of the leave period to begin the parental leave process. Proof of birth or legal custody documentation will be required.

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ Benefits cannot veer from the new Parental Leave procedure because it is an Executive Order. Benefits would have liked to have extended the use period from 6 to 12 m to align with the 9m and 12m parental leave policies.
- ▶ Parental Leave runs concurrently with FMLA which means you have job protection. FMLA affords you 12-weeks of job protection every year.

Parental Leave for the birthing mother can work sequentially or concurrently with Short Term Disability. Income replacement during the 6 weeks of STD depends on years of service. This can range anywhere from 100% to 60% of your salary. 8-weeks of Parental Leave can be taken directly after to prolong their time off to bond with the child.

- ▶ Question: Can Parental Leave be used intermittently?
- ▶ Answer: Yes, Parental Leave can be taken in two blocks of time - for example: 3 weeks and 5 weeks.

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ Question: Can you use your own leave to supplement the 6-weeks of Short Term Disability when taking it? And, if you take the 8-weeks of Parental Leave, can you supplement the remaining 4-weeks of FMLA protection with available leave afterwards, if you have it?
- ▶ Answer: Yes, you can supplement with your own leave as income replacement if you have it and want to use it during the 6 weeks of Short Term Disability. Yes, you can use your leave for the additional 4-weeks of FMLA protected time off, if you have it, correct.

Question: Do we talk to our supervisor first, or to Benefits first about using this benefit?

- ▶ Answer: It really is up to you, and depends on your situation. Some people have confidential conversations they want to discuss with Benefits first, and some people feel comfortable having conversations with their supervisors. The goal is in the end all parties are on the same page and working together.
- ▶ Question: Is Benefits going to be extending this to Faculty.
- ▶ Answer: Yes, more information will become available soon.

I'm thinking about retiring from Mason what do I need to do?

- ▶ I'm planning on retiring in the future (a year from now)
 - ▶ Go to VARetire.org and use the benefits estimate calculator
 - ▶ Feel free to call Benefits with questions
 - ▶ Attend a Pre-retirement Seminar offered twice a year by Benefits
- ▶ I'm planning on retiring soon (6 months or less)
 - ▶ Call Benefits to discuss retirement timing, i.e. last day you want to work, when you want to start receiving your benefit, how to write your letter of resignation/retirement
 - ▶ Go to VARetire.org and use the benefits estimate calculator
 - ▶ 3-4 months prior to retirement make an appointment with Benefits to go over retirement benefits and paperwork

Patriot web

A Self Service Web Site for Students, Faculty, and Staff

- ▶ Review and/or update personal information
- ▶ Review/print paystubs
- ▶ Review/update direct deposit
- ▶ Review benefits and deductions
- ▶ Update federal tax forms and print W2
- ▶ Review current and past jobs and salary for each position
- ▶ Review leave balances

- ▶ Self-service computers are available for use in the front lobby of our offices to access Patriot Web!

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ Comment: Review your paycheck from time-to-time. Deduction amounts can change and mistakes can happen. Also check your direct deposit information. With the holidays coming up, it is a peak time for identity theft.

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ Benefits also works closely with our retirement vendors: TIAA; Fidelity; ICMRC and VRS. A representative is on campus to meet with employees and review their individual retirement portfolio's. To make an appointment or review their schedules, please visit our website:
<http://hr.gmu.edu/benefits/index.php?t=7&f=retire/tiaa.php>
- ▶ Also, here is a link to the [Virginia Sickness and Disability Program \(VSDP\) policy 4.57](#) which details much of what I was referring to as far as income replacement and its application depending on years of service and date of hire.

Human Resources & Payroll

4th floor of Alan and Sally Merten Hall

Office hours are Monday- Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Benefits Team

If you have questions, please contact us at 703.993.2600 or via email at benefits@gmu.edu.

Payroll Team

If you have questions, please contact us at 703.993.2600 or via email at payroll@gmu.edu.

Staff Senate Notes:

- ▶ Question: Benefits was working on updating a bicycle benefits and educational leave. Is there an update on this?
- ▶ Answer: Benefits hasn't heard about the bicycle benefits, and consequently doesn't have the details on this. This is not being handled within the Benefits group and not sure who is.
- ▶ Answer: There is a draft policy on educational leave and Benefits can find out where this is at, as it may be with the legal team now.
- ▶ Comment: more phone calls are needed rather than emails to coordinate leave information while out on Parental Leave.
- ▶ Comment: Check out the welcome new-hire section on Benefits site to look at the different benefits available to classified staff.
<http://hr.gmu.edu/onboarding/staff/benefits.php?staffTopic=4>