Human Resources Bulletin
September 2016
Anne Arundel County Public Schools | Division of Human Resources

Welcome Back!

Benefits Deduction Frequency
Benefits deduction frequency is aligned with the employee’s number of pays:
1. All employees paid over 12 months have benefits deductions from all 26 pays (including, for example, 10-month employees paid over the summer).
2. All employees paid over 10 months have benefits deductions from 22 pays. The first benefits deduction date for the 2016–2017 school year was August 31, 2016, and the last deduction date will be June 21, 2017.

These benefits deductions include the following:
• Healthcare
• Union dues
• Supplemental retirement 403(b)/457(b)
• Credit union
• Flexible spending account(s)
• Long-term care (deducted over 26 pays only – 22 pay employees are direct billed)
• Savings account
• Supplemental life insurance
• Other voluntary deductions

Exception: Retirement deductions continue at the same frequency of 20 or 26 deductions per the Maryland State Retirement Agency. The first deduction date for employees with 20 pay deductions will be September 14, 2016.

First pay for 10-month employees
The first pay for the 2016–2017 school year for all 10-month employees was Wednesday, August 31, 2016.

Employee Self-Service
Employee Self-Service (ESS) is available for employees to view your paystub, pay details, deductions, leave, benefits, dependents, and other personal information.

You can also update your address and contact information for ConnectED calls, provide HR with your emergency contact, and change your direct deposit information.

To access the ESS system, go to https://ess.aacps.org and enter your network user name (in lower case letters) and password. You must logout of the ESS system when you are done. You should keep your password secure and not share it with anyone.

Employees can access User Guides, a Quick Reference Guide, Frequently Asked Questions, and other resources at the HR Intranet page on the new Employee Self Service button at https://intranet.aacps.org/Dept/HR/Pages/DefaultHome.aspx.

Information on ESS is secure and the data is encrypted. Regardless of how you access it, our server controls the security of the data. If you have trouble accessing the ESS system, or need your network login and password, contact the Help Desk at 410-222-5135 or Help-Desk@aacps.org. If you have a question about the information displayed in ESS, contact HR at 410-222-5061.

Review Paychecks
Please review your paycheck carefully, including tax filing status (i.e., married/single, state of residence, number of exemptions), leave balance data, and voluntary deductions. Ensure that you have been credited with the correct number of sick and personal business hours. If you believe your tax, pay, or leave balance is incorrect, please contact the timekeeper at your work location. If you believe your voluntary deductions are incorrect, call HR/Benefits at 410-222-5221.

Open Enrollment for 2017 Benefits
October 31–November 13, 2016
Open Enrollment will occur on-line where you can:
• change your medical, dental, or vision benefit elections, or update or change dependent coverage.
• enroll in a 2017 Flexible Spending Account (MUST BE RE-ELECTED EVERY YEAR).

Adding any dependent during Open Enrollment will require proof of relationship to the employee before approval (send to HR/Benefits). While enrolling on-line, you can upload your documentation to your personal File Cabinet.

Most Open Enrollment materials will be on the AACPS website. You will receive an Open Enrollment Guide in October with more information.

Reminders

Open Enrollment for Employees –
October 31–November 13, 2016
Fall Retirement Seminar
(for employees retiring in 3–5 years)
October 22, 2016 @ Severna Park High School
Retirement Workshops –
(for employees retiring this year – see next page)
Look for further information about these upcoming events

Upcoming Events

School Year 2016–17

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Adding any dependent during Open Enrollment will require proof of relationship to the employee before approval (send to HR/Benefits). While enrolling on-line, you can upload your documentation to your personal File Cabinet.

Most Open Enrollment materials will be on the AACPS website. You will receive an Open Enrollment Guide in October with more information.

In addition to your health and wellness benefits, AACPS offers employees a Supplemental Retirement Plan (SRP) which provides 403(b) and 457(b) savings options. This program allows you to save for retirement on a tax-deferred basis. AACPS' program includes three investment providers: Lincoln, VALIC, and Voya. There is more information about planning for retirement, evaluating the investment providers, and how to contact an investment program representative on the internet and Intranet at Human Resources > Benefits > Supplemental Retirement.

Retirement Contributions and Eligibility

The Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA) pension program requires a 7% employee contribution. The first retirement deduction for 12-month employees of the Teachers' Pension System and 10-month employees will be September 14, 2016.

Employees hired on or after July 1, 2011, are enrolled in the Employees' and Teachers' Reformed Contributory Pension Benefit, a new tier of the pension system. Key pension differences are as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alternate</th>
<th>Reformed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled before July 1, 2011</td>
<td>Enrolled on or after July 1, 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully Vested</td>
<td>5 years of service</td>
<td>10 years of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Retirement</td>
<td>Age 55 w/15 years of service</td>
<td>Age 60 w/15 years of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Retirement</td>
<td>Age 62 w/5 years</td>
<td>Age 65 w/10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age 63 w/4 years</td>
<td>OR age and service equals 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age 64 w/3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age 65 or older w/2years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any age w/30 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beneficiary Information—

Group Term Life Insurance and Maryland State Retirement

All permanent employees are provided with Group Term Life Insurance through Cigna Life Insurance at no cost, and should have completed and signed a "Self-Administered Beneficiary Designation Form" in their benefits file maintained in Human Resources. If you are not sure if you completed this form, or wish to update it, complete a new form at any time and send it to Human Resources/Benefits. This form is available on the AACPS website (www.aacps.org > Human Resources > Employee Forms > Employee Benefits – Beneficiary Designation Form).

If you wish to also update your Maryland State Retirement beneficiaries, call the Human Resources Retirement Office at 410-222-5224, or go to www.aacps.org > Human Resources > Employee Forms > Employee Benefits – State Retirement Agency of Maryland Designation of Beneficiary Form.

Any time you have a lifestyle change, you should consider updating your beneficiaries accordingly.

Retirement Workshops

For those planning to retire on or before February 1, 2017, look for the flyer on Retirement Information and Forms Workshops, beginning September 6!

How can you get a better idea of how much you will receive when you retire?

Once you become eligible for retirement it is a good idea to make an annual request for an estimate of your retirement benefit. This is a more detailed estimate than you receive each fall. Receiving the estimate does not require you to retire.

If you plan to retire within 12 months you should submit a request well in advance of your anticipated retirement date. If you anticipate retiring during or at the end of this school year, you should submit your request for an estimate now, and no later than February 2017 for those planning a July 1 retirement. Spring sessions will be announced in December.

The retirement estimate provides personalized payment estimates considering your age, including monthly survivor benefit payment option amounts. You will need the estimate to make your decision about which payment option you want to receive from the state retirement agency.

The form to submit is MSRA Form 9—Application for Service Retirement Estimate and it can be found on the MSRA web site, www.sra.state.md.us. From there, look for the section for Members and select Print or Order Forms. Then, select Printable Forms. On the next page, find the section Application for Service Retirement Estimate and select form 9. Instructions are provided and the form can be faxed or mailed to the Agency.

Remember: don't put off submitting your request as it takes approximately 6–8 weeks to receive the estimate and will take longer in the spring.
**CERTIFICATION**

**Certificate Renewal Timeline**

**REMINDER:** Maryland teaching certificates are issued effective January 1 or July 1 and expire on December 31 or June 30 of the year shown on the certificate. All AACPS educators holding Maryland Professional Educator Certificates MUST complete all renewal credit requirements and submit all required documentation to the Human Resources Certification Office no later than the date of the expiration of their certificate. There are no exceptions or extensions. Failure to comply with certificate renewal requirements may result in the issuance of a Conditional Certificate, loss of tenure, a financial penalty, and/or a termination of employment as a contracted teacher with AACPS. Send materials to the HR Certification Office. A completed Professional Development Plan (PDP) is required for every renewal. The PDP is available on the Intranet: **Human Resources > Certification > Forms & Information**. It is always recommended to follow up via email to ensure the materials were received on time.

Current certificates can be accessed at any time on the MSDE website. Directions on how to do so are located at **www.aacps.org > Human Resources/Employment > Employee Forms > MD Teaching Certification > Directions for Accessing your Maryland Certificate on-line with MSDE**.

**Application for Salary Increase**

**Unit I Employee**

In accordance with the negotiated agreement with TAAAC, educators who have completed certification, coursework, or a degree that qualifies him/her for a salary increase may request it using the applicable form found on the **Intranet > Forms > Human Resources > Compensation or Certification > Application for Salary Increase Unit I**.

**Unit IV Employee**

In accordance with Article 15.5 of the negotiated agreement with SAAASC, Unit IV employees may be eligible for a salary increase after completion of 30 college credits.

See the request form on the **Intranet > Forms > Human Resources > Compensation > Application for Salary Increase Unit IV**.

All Unit IV employees who earn an additional 30 hours of college credit after July 1, 2013, for a total of 60 hours, will receive one step or 2.5% increase if they are at the maximum step on the salary schedule.

**Educator Tenure**

For certificated/licensed employees who began employment with AACPS on or after July 1, 2010, tenure is established when an educator completes three consecutive years of successful experience, has been issued a regular contract and a professional certificate, and is reemployed for a fourth year.

If after achieving tenure, an educator fails to maintain his or her professional certificate, tenure is automatically lost. The individual no longer holds a professional certificate or a Regular Contract, and his or her employment may be terminated. If AACPS elects to retain the educator, then the educator will be issued a 1-year Provisional Contract and must begin earning tenure all over again. Once professional certification is reinstated and a Regular Contract is issued, then satisfactory experience on the Provisional Contract(s) may be applied toward the three years of satisfactory experience required to be granted tenure.

If an educator resigns his or her position and returns at a later date, the educator returns to a non-tenured status.

**Have you taken a Praxis test lately?**

Important Reminder to Certificated Staff: AACPS does not automatically receive test scores from ETS or MSDE. Tests are periodically discontinued and replaced with new tests. Always submit a copy of your qualifying test results to the attention of your AACPS Certification Specialist. Failure to provide your score report to the Certification Specialist on a timely basis may result in disqualification of your test score. Send the score report as an attachment to an email (preferred) or via fax to 443-458-0141 and include a note referencing your certification. It is strongly recommended that you follow up with your certification specialist to make sure your score was received.

Current Praxis test requirements can be found at **www.mdcert.org**; click “Basic Skills” or “Praxis II” under Testing Information.

Employees with last names—

**A–G** contact Penny Post at 410-222-5077 (ppost@aacps.org)

**H–O** contact Joyce Matney at 410-224-6268 (jmatney@aacps.org);

**P–Z** contact Nicki Carpenter at 410-222-5079 (ncarpenter@aacps.org).
New Hire Paperwork  
(All Employees including Temps/Subs)

All required documents for new hires must be submitted to HR within 30 days of the first day of work. Transcripts and verifications of previous employment have a direct impact on your salary. If you have questions about your new employee file, or wish to submit official paperwork, please contact the following technician based on your last name:

A–C............ Darlene Sigwart, 410-224-6240, dsigwart@aacps.org
D–G... Angie Robertson, 410-224-6211, arobertson1@aacps.org
H–L......................... Cathy Lee, 410-224-6242, crlee@aacps.org
M–R............. Jane Mendez, 410-266-3645, jmendez@aacps.org
S–Z............. David Sutton, 410-224-6215, wdsutton@aacps.org

Tuition Reimbursement

Before you sign up for your course, visit the tuition reimbursement page of the website at www.aacps.org > Human Resources/Employment > Tuition Reimbursement.

All reimbursement documentation must be received by Human Resources no later than the close of business on September 15, 2016, to receive reimbursement on October 12, 2016. All requests must be submitted as a complete packet which includes the request form; the original official transcript; and the account summary for the course (check the website for more specific instructions). Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted.

For questions, please contact Tracy Williams at tlwilliams1@aacps.org or 410-222-5078.

Name & Address Changes

Be sure to take a moment to verify your name and address as they appear on the August 31, 2016, pay stub on ESS.

- for address and phone changes make the changes directly on ESS or send the Address Change Form to HR/Benefits
- for name changes, send Legal Name Change Form to Employee Records File Room, Human Resources (also include required documentation)

The above forms are available at: www.aacps.org > Human Resources > Employee Forms, and on the Intranet.

Note: AACPS is required to comply with reporting requirements of the Social Security Administration (SSA). Information on file with AACPS regarding name, address, date of birth, and gender must agree with your record at SSA.

Dependent Documentation

New teachers, remember that dependent documentation (such as a copy of your child’s birth certificate, or your marriage license and one secondary document supporting the marriage) is required within 31 days of your date of hire. Documents can be uploaded into your “file cabinet” in the employee benefits portal or sent to HR/ Benefits (via basketmail or fax to 443-458-0669).

Eligible dependents can also be added during Open Enrollment each year (for January 1 of the following year) or within 31 days of a lifestyle change (e.g., marriage, birth). Appropriate documentation is always required to add a dependent.

Flexible Spending Accounts

Often, your healthcare flexible spending account claims are for co-pays recognized by our administrator, TASC. However, this is not always the case. Remember to respond to substantiation requests from TASC or your debit card could be shut off.

Discrimination & Harassment

All complaints of discrimination or harassment on the basis of an employee’s protected status (race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and/or disability) should be directed to Asha Smith, EEO Compliance Specialist, at 410-222-5286.

Substitute Office

The upgraded SmartFind Express system (Substitute and Employee Management System—SEMS) has a new URL and phone number:

https://aacps.eschoolsolutions.com
410-846-0399

Please be sure to update any bookmarks and use the new contact information.

If you have any issues accessing the URL stated above, please call the Help Desk at 410-222-5135.

To access SEMS, current Teachers, School Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists/Occupational Therapists/Physical Therapists and Teacher Assistants will need:

Access ID — Employee ID • PIN — PIN from SEMS
**Sick Leave/Return to Work Procedures**

According to Board Policy and the Negotiated Agreements, “any sick leave in excess of three consecutive days shall be attested to by a physician.” Medical certification will provide pertinent information regarding the seriousness of the illness as well as its duration to help administration plan for short-term vs. long-term coverage. The medical certification must be made available as soon as possible to determine whether the leave usage should be authorized or denied. For this reason, the physician’s statement should not be held by the employee until the time of return. The medical certification must relate only to the serious health condition for which the current need for leave exists. It should identify the health care provider and type of medical practice (including pertinent specialization, if any), the approximate date the serious health condition commenced, and its probable duration. This note must be faxed directly to the Office of Integrated Disability and Leave Management (IDLM’s) secure, confidential fax machine at 443-458-0140.

When employees have been absent from their workplace due to their own personal illness for a period of two weeks or if they are returning to work with restrictions/limitations, they are required to present a medical release from their treating practitioner/provider prior to their intended date of return. **This form must be submitted to IDLM at 443-458-0140 prior to the employee reporting for duty at their work location. If such certification is not received and approved by Human Resources, they may not return to work.**

**Important**: assistive devices such as orthopedic boots, casts, crutches, canes, walkers, wheelchairs, etc. are limitations and should be reported to IDLM immediately.

The Division of Human Resources will review all employees’ medical releases to return to work along with any specific, medically necessary accommodations/limitations associated with their return. On occasion, additional information may be requested from the treating practitioner. The purpose of such a review is to ensure that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of their position and to determine whether their return would present a risk to the health, safety, and welfare of themselves, co-workers, or students. Employees’ return to work may be delayed until appropriate medical certification is provided regarding their fitness for duty. Principals/Supervisors will be notified by Human Resources when an employee is cleared to return to work. No employee should be permitted to return to work until that communication has been received.

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**The Family and Medical Leave Act: Basic Leave Entitlement**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible employees up to 12 work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year. It also requires that group health benefits be maintained during the leave. FMLA may be granted for any of the following reasons:

- to care for the employee’s child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care.
- to care for the employee’s spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition.
- for a serious health condition that prohibits the employee from performing their job.

If an employee takes leave identified as FMLA which has not been approved by IDLM, it will default to lost time. Contact IDLM at 410-222-5090 for more information and forms.

**Military Family Leave Entitlements**

- for any qualifying exigencies arising from the fact that the spouse, son or daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty or has been called to active duty in the armed forces in support of a contingency operation (12 weeks).
- to care for a covered service member (26 weeks).

**Employee Guide**

The United States Department of Labor developed an Employee Guide to the FMLA which is a short booklet written in plain language designed to answer common FMLA questions and clarify who can take FMLA leave and what protections the FMLA provides.

You may access this booklet on the Intranet > Human Resources > Family Medical Leave Act > FMLA Employee Guide (under “General Guidance”).

**Reasonable Accommodations**

Any employee who needs a reasonable accommodation for a disability should contact Asha Smith, EEO Compliance Specialist, at 410-222-5286, or the Office of Integrated Disability and Leave Management at 410-222-5090, for more information. Employees who are able to access the internet can find Reasonable Accommodation forms at www.aacps.org/leave. Instructions for submission are printed on the forms.
The Employee Discount Program

The Employee Discount Program connects AACPS employees with special discounts and offers from local businesses. Available to all AACPS employees, these discounts are usually greater than those offered to the general public. The Employee Discount Program includes partnerships with a wide range of services including retail, finance, fitness, travel, technology, and more.

For information about this program, check out our new AACPS Employee Discount website at: www.aacps.org > Human Resources > Benefits > Employee Discount Program. This site will be updated regularly as new opportunities become available. If you have any questions regarding a specific discount or offer, contact the vendor directly.

What Every Employee Must Know

The Employee Handbook is on-line and can be accessed at www.aacps.org > Human Resources > Employment Policy. In addition, the brochure entitled “What Every Employee Must Know” is available by clicking on the Human Resources tab, then in the light green box in the center under HR News. This brochure outlines the complete list of charges, arrests, or convictions that must be reported by any employee, regardless of status, within 24 hours in accordance with the Self-Reporting Charge/Arrest/Conviction Administrative Regulation (GANN-RA) available at www.aacps.org > Board of Education > Board Policies and Administrative Regulations > Section G > GANN-RA.

Staff can call within 24 hours of a charge, arrest, or conviction to 410-222-5286 (day) or 410-222-5998 (after hours) or email: employeeeselfreporting@aacps.org.

All staff must acquaint themselves with Policies and Regulations associated with their position and job requirements. In particular, employees should familiarize themselves with the following Board Policies and Regulations, which have recently been updated. More detailed information can be obtained by viewing these policies and regulations on-line at: www.aacps.org > Board of Education > Board Policies and Administrative Regulations.

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<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>REGULATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect</td>
<td>JEF</td>
<td>JEF-RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Complaints and Grievances</td>
<td>GAHH</td>
<td>GAHH-RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating Between Employees and Students</td>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>GBV-RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment – Personnel</td>
<td>GAGG</td>
<td>GAGG-RA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Reporting Charge/Arrest/Conviction</td>
<td>GANN</td>
<td>GANN-RA</td>
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<td>Drug- Alcohol-, and Tobacco-Free Work Environments</td>
<td>GAC</td>
<td>GAC-RA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Use and Security</td>
<td>DI</td>
<td>DI-RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Use of Social Media</td>
<td>GAOO</td>
<td>GAOO-RA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor Relations</td>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>DEC-RA</td>
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**Annual Leave — Use Or Lose**

All employees with annual leave are responsible to use and manage leave balances for the 2016–2017 school year, in accordance with the applicable negotiated agreement or terms of employment.

The deadline for using or losing annual leave is August 31, for all employees. Those employees in danger of losing annual leave because of the restriction on carry-over should make every effort to use their leave before August 31 each year.

The following is a list of carry-over amounts allowed for 12-month employees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Leave Limits Per Fiscal Year for 12-Month Employees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>39 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>50 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Number of days earned/year plus 12 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1–4 years with AACPS – 36 days</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5–13 years with AACPS – 42 days</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14+ years with AACPS – 50 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>50 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>50 days</td>
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</table>

Don’t forget to check your leave balances and usage in the Employee Self-Service System.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Remember to take advantage of your free, confidential Employee Assistance Program through bhs. They can help you and your household members with short-term counseling for personal or work-related issues. The EAP can also provide support for financial and legal concerns. Assistance finding child care or elder care is also available.

Call 800-327-2251 any time. Look for the “Wellness Exchange” Newsletter in your email inbox once a month, courtesy of bhs. “Wellness Bytes” are also available on the Intranet > Human Resources > Employee Benefits > Employee Assistance Program.

**Check out the HR Biweekly News, updated every payday, at www.aacps.org/hrnews**
Discounted Exercise Classes Through Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC)

AAMC, a wellness partner with AACPS, is extending a very special offer to our staff to participate in any of their 20+ fitness classes per week, hosted conveniently on the AAMC campus. As a key component to their employee wellness program called Energize (www.aaohs.org/energize), they offer a wide variety of classes from Total Body Fitness to Yoga to Zumba and the ever popular Barre, so there is truly something for everyone. These classes are specifically designed to support all fitness levels from beginner to advanced, leveraging the area’s top instructors.

Our employees are extended the same deeply discounted rates that the AAMC employees enjoy.

Additionally, the plans are designed for ultimate flexibility to focus on you and your fitness goals:

- **EZ Pass** $44/month, no sign up fee, no long term contract—go to any class any time, no limit
- **10-Class card** $80 for use with any 10 classes, valid for up to 1 year from the date of purchase
- **Drop-in** $10 per class

To view the current class schedule, class locations, and register on-line, visit www.AAMCevents.org and click on “Ongoing Fitness Classes.” Classes are held Monday through Saturday. AACPS employees plus one family member, and retirees are eligible for the discounts. Acceptable forms of payment are check, credit card, and debit card. Free parking provided.

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**CAREFIRST VIDEO VISIT**

CareFirst is now offering the ability to connect with a board-certified doctor 24/7 from your desktop, tablet or smartphone without an appointment. A CareFirst Video Visit costs the same as your copay for a sick office visit with your primary care provider. It’s convenient, easy to use, private, and secure.

CareFirst Video Visit is intended for the treatment of uncomplicated, non-emergency health concerns including, but not limited to: bronchitis, cough/sore throat, sinus infection, diarrhea, fever, pinkeye, cold/flu, and respiratory infection. Video Visit doctors are U.S. board-certified, licensed, and credentialed, and have profiles so you can see their education and experience. They provide consultation, diagnosis, and prescriptions.

Use Video Visit when: your doctor’s office is closed, you are on vacation, you have children at home and cannot bring them to the doctor’s office, or you feel too sick to drive.

It is recommended that you register now so you will be ready when you need to visit. There are two easy ways:

1. Go to www.carefirst.com/needcare and click on any of the Video Visit links, or
2. Download the CareFirst Video Visit app.

**Sign up soon!**