

UHS HEALTH PLAN

Students question insurance

By Laurie Stern
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

While many Americans find health care reform to be a confusing issue, some Penn Staters are already having issues of their own.

With more than 3,000 students turning to a University Health Services (UHS) administered basic plan, some said they didn't understand what they were signing up for.

Kelsey Jones (senior-marketing) signed up for UHS insurance after her father's insurance company would no longer provide her with coverage when she turned 22. She paid the \$1,200 flat fee required, but was surprised when she wasn't reimbursed as much as she expected for her prescription.

In her first purchase of her medication under the UHS health insurance, she received \$179.99 for the \$229.99 prescription. But in her second purchase three months later, she was only reimbursed \$20.01 after submitting her claim.

Jones thought there must have been a mistake because a company representative previously told her she would receive up to \$200 for the prescription, but upon further inquiry, she was informed that the Penn State Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan would only reimburse up to \$200 per drug.

"You're not getting your money's

worth," Jones said. "I wouldn't say they're insuring me. You pay all this money up front and then you're barely covered for anything."

Though Jones said she was not made aware of the specifics of the plan until she had already paid the \$1,200 fee, Manager of Student Health Insurance at UHS Karen Kline said students must take the initiative to read the brochure or get information regarding the plan's benefits and exclusions on the Web site, www.uhcsr.com/PennState. She's seen more than few students come with concerns they could have researched beforehand.

But, Kline said UHS Student Health Insurance officials are reviewing the \$200 limit for the future.

All Penn State students are required to have health insurance, but Kline said it is a matter of finding a plan that works best for them. The basic blanket UHS plan is not meant to be a "comprehensive policy," she said, noting that services like dental and optical are not offered under the plan.

"The intent is for students to have health insurance to finish school and not end up in debt until you get that job — not to be a liability," she said.

The UHS medical coverage is not Penn State insurance. UHS bids on different insurance carriers to pro-

vide students with the best plan that will meet their needs, Kline said.

Jones said she didn't take enough time to review the policy she signed up for, but she recommends that other students put forth more effort.

"I just want other students to be careful," she said. "Maybe research other options."

But many students don't seem to know about their own health insurance plans, let alone other options. Senior Associate Director of UHS Doris Guanowsky said.

Speaking on behalf of the UHS pharmacy, Guanowsky said though they accept roughly 15 to 20 of the top third-party payers, pharmacists are instructed to tell students to contact their insurer directly if they are confused about their policy.

She said when students can't afford to pay for a prescription, it's usually a simple matter of talking to their doctor to get a less expensive medication.

There is a student advisory board to the UHS insurance committee and UHS always encourages student involvement, Guanowsky said.

"We ask them what we can do to enhance benefits," she said. "If it's going to increase premiums, we don't want to increase benefits. Sometimes you have to bite the bullet and do that."

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Mike Smith (senior-information science technology) lines up a shot during the World Beer Pong Tour on Tuesday at the Gingerbread Man. Fifty-one teams competed in the event.

Teams duke it out for beer pong title

By Chris Bickel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

With balls in hand, teams entered the beer pong gauntlet last night — battling head-to-head for a chance to participate in the World Beer Pong Championship.

Neil Kapoor, tour director for the World Beer Pong Tour (WBPT), said 51 teams were signed up to participate in the event at Gingerbread Man, 130 Hiester St. The teams were competing for the first place prize: a free three-night hotel stay and an entry into the \$50,000 championship round in Atlantic City.

But Jimmy Poper was competing for a different prize. He said first place in this competition would win him the unofficial title of Penn State beer pong champion.

"I'd be more happy with that coveted title than going to Atlantic City," Poper (senior-forensic science) said.

Popper and his teammate were one of the all-male couples competing in the tournament — as were the vast majority of competitors. Amanda Ulmer (senior-public relations) was one of the exceptions. Ulmer's team was one of the two all-girl teams to participate. She said no gender has the advantage and she could hold her own against her male opponents.

"It's sad a lot of girl teams didn't come out," she said. "Beer pong is for everyone."

Kendra Florczak (senior-supply chain management) wasn't impressed by Ulmer's performance — or any girls' for that matter. She did not participate this time and was only there to cheer on her friends' team.

"I think I could have played better than a lot of girls I saw," she said. "Those girls are giving us a bad name."

Garrett Cooper (senior-economics and finance) was disappointed when he lost in double overtime, but he had a quick fix.

"Losing left a bad taste in our mouth, but it's nothing a cold beer can't cure," he said.

Teams had to follow certain rules in order to compete in the tournament. Tables consisted of a 10-water-filled-cup set up for each team. No bouncing, blowing or fingering was allowed and there were no rules regarding elbow positioning and leaning. No alcoholic beverages were allowed to be on the pong tables as well in accordance to Pennsylvania state law.

"This is not a drinking game," Kapoor said. "It's more about the competition."

The winner of the competition was not available by press time Tuesday.

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VP hopefuls credit experience

By Paige Minemyer
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

For both student government vice presidential candidates, the desire to lead their peers started before their careers at Penn State.

Colleen Smith — running with University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) presidential candidate Christian Ragland — said she has been involved with student government since elementary school.

"Student government is something I began with in the third grade," Smith (sophomore-biology) said.

Devin Weakland, UPUA newcomer and David Adewumi's running mate, said she started taking leadership roles in high school as her senior class treasurer and

UPUA elections

as a member of student council.

"It really helped me learn how to identify student concerns and work with funds," Weakland (freshman-public relations and international politics) said.

Smith is currently a member of UPUA, serving as its governmental affairs chairwoman. She was also a freshman representative last year and said her experience with UPUA has opened a lot of doors for her.

Weakland may not be a UPUA veteran, but she is a member of the Schreyer Honors College Student Council Executive Board, a leadership position she said will help her as vice president.

Adewumi (junior-Spanish) echoed the sentiment, and said her experience with Schreyer's helped bring her to his attention.

"Even in her first year, she's translated a four-year student government ride into a leadership posi-

tion here at Penn State," he said.

Ragland (junior-political science) said he is just as positive about Smith's skills. He said the sophomore's resume is impressive.

"As a sophomore, she's exhibited tremendous leadership," he said. "What doesn't she bring [to the table]?"

Both presidential candidates said their running mate's age factored into the decision, because as younger students, they will have the ability to relate well to the freshman and sophomore classes.

Adewumi also said Weakland's youth will allow her to leave behind a bigger legacy.

"Devin is both the now of Penn State and the future," he said.

Smith said her goal is to bring a positive change to campus if she becomes UPUA's vice president. Weakland echoed the sentiment, and said she is very excited about Adewumi's plans and working with her potential constituents.

"I became very passionate about David's policies," she said. "I'm really looking forward to the chance to lead my peers."

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Pa. EMS workers to face consequences

By Dan Nephin
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PITTSBURGH — The city intends to fire one emergency worker and suspend three others over their involvement in the death of a man who waited 30 hours for an ambulance during a powerful snowstorm last month, its public safety director said Tuesday.

The four are accused of violating a city emergency services policy to take necessary action. One of them also faces a neglect of duty violation; another faces an unbecoming conduct violation. Radio transmissions between emergency workers in which a paramedic said they were not operating a "cab service" showed a lack of compassion, said Michael Huss, the city's public safety director. Curtis Mitchell, 50, and his girlfriend, Sharon Edge, began calling 911 early Feb. 6 because Mitchell was having severe abdominal pain. He had a history of pancreatitis, an inflammation of the pancreas, and had hospitalized nine days in late January.

Their calls came as heavy snow was falling — so heavy it would all but bring the city to a standstill. Nearly 30 hours later — and 10 calls from the couple to 911, four 911 calls to them and at least a dozen calls between 911 and paramedics — Mitchell died at his home. Autopsy results in Mitchell's death are pending, awaiting toxicology test results.

Recordings show Mitchell or Edge canceled several calls when told the ambulance couldn't make it to his home because of the snow. Paramedics could have called for other resources, such as a four-wheel drive or help from the fire department, Huss said.

"People will argue, 'Well, the call was canceled every time.' And the way I see it is very simple: We created that cancel. Our lack of effort created the cancel," Huss said. "We failed. We failed as a service and a department."

Paramedics' union President Anthony Weinmann said the union will fight the punishment of its two members, Josie Dimon and Kim Long. Dimon faces a five-day sus-

pension and firing; Long faces a three-day suspension. He said the city did not have a plan to handle the snow emergency and paramedics weren't given all the information they needed.

On a recording played Tuesday at a news conference, Dimon can be heard saying: "He ain't (expletive) comin' down and I ain't waiting all day for him," and "I mean, what the (expletive). This ain't no cab service."

Huss said her comments were disturbing.

"It just lacks such compassion. It's disturbing to me and I know when the mayor heard it, it was very disturbing to him. It's not what we're striving for here," Huss said.

Weinmann said he has not been allowed to listen to the tapes so he couldn't comment on them, but he disputed Huss' characterization that workers showed a lack of compassion.

"The only reason we're in this field is because we're compassionate people. We're here to help people," he said.

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