Health and Wellness Center FAQs

1. What specific services will be covered by Marathon Health at the Medford Health and Wellness Center (The Center) and by Health coaching services across all campuses?

A variety of services will be available at the Center:

- **Primary Care/Acute Care Services** – treating common illnesses and minor injuries such as headaches, strains and sprains, infections, rashes and stomach problems as well as routine exams, writing prescriptions (no fulfillment), injections, blood draws and referral management (offered in Medford only).

- **Health Coaching** – helping you to address health risks such as inactivity, poor nutrition, tobacco use or stress (offered in Boston, Grafton, and Medford). Beginning spring 2013 by appointment:
  - **Boston Coaching** – Thursdays, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Posner Hall – Family Medicine Conference Room #304.
  - **Grafton Coaching** – Tuesdays, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Central Services Building, room #207.
  - **Medford Coaching** – Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- **Condition/Disease Management** – helping you manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma and heart disease. The program will help you live life fully with a particular condition and help prevent the condition from becoming more serious in the future (offered in Boston, Grafton, and Medford).

- **Technology** – Marathon has the Marathon eHealth Portal, an interactive website which will hold employee and participating spouse and qualified same-sex domestic partner medical records if enrolled in one of the university-sponsored health plans.

2. What hours will the Center be open?

The Center is expected to be open Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

3. Who will be eligible for services?

The above services will be available to all employees, their spouses and qualified same-sex domestic partners regardless of what campus you work on. Pediatric and young adult services will not be offered.

For the remainder of these FAQs, “employee” and “employees” is meant to also include spouses and qualified same-sex domestic partners.

4. My health plan requires a Primary Care Physician to coordinate care. How will the services be coordinated?

The providers within the Center will collaborate with the employee’s Primary Care Physician and other providers within the community to help maintain continuity of care. If the employee does not have a Primary Care Physician in the community, the providers at the Center will help the employee establish this important relationship. If you are enrolled in HMO/EPO health coverage, referral requirements for specialist care, hospitalization, testing, etc., will still be required according to established health plan guidelines.

5. How do these services mesh with services provided through employees’ current insurance plans, particularly HMOs?

Services provided within the Center will not be charged against your healthcare deductible. Services that are referred out of the Center, such as lab work, diagnostic testing, specialist visits, will be billed back to your insurance provider. Referral requirements will still apply for employees enrolled in HMO/EPO plans. For employees not enrolled in the Tufts University health plans, the lab requisition will include the employee’s non-university insurance information, which the lab will then bill directly. This Center is a place to receive care in addition to using your current insurance plan.

6. How will employees get coverage for services that aren’t covered? How is continuity of care assured?

For services referred out of the Center, such as lab work, diagnostic testing and specialist visits, the employee’s insurance will be billed by that provider or group. Additionally, the Marathon eHealth Portal is secure and accessible from any device with access to the internet. The Portal will house your medical records so you can share the results with other providers.

7. It appears as though the Center will be staffed by nurse practitioners and/or nurses, not doctors. I currently see a doctor who is board-certified in internal medicine. Why would I want to see a NP or RN?

The Center will be staffed by two Nurse Practitioners (NP), two Registered Nurses (RN), and two medical assistants. The clinicians
at the Center specialize in family care. Depending upon the nature of the visit, the employee will be seen by the clinician who is best suited for the appointment type. If the employee is seeking sick care, they will be seen by the licensed NP who operates under the guidance and supervision of a collaborating physician. In addition to clinical oversight, the collaborating physician provides consultation services to the clinical team, as well as chart audits and referral services. The physician will have extensive local community expertise and experience. If the employee is going to the Center for health coaching, they will most likely have a visit with a registered nurse who is specifically trained in prevention and health coaching. The medical assistants support the clinical team and are available to help schedule appointments, access the eHealth Portal and answer any questions that the employee may have about the Center or services you receive.

A nurse practitioner (NP), sometimes known as an advance practice nurse is a registered nurse (RN) who has additional training and education in a specialty area. Nurse practitioners have a master’s degree in nursing (MS or MSN) and board certification in their specialty. Licensed as nurse practitioners and registered nurses, NPs follow all the rules and regulations of the Nurse Practice Act in Massachusetts. Some nurse practitioners seek accreditation through a national board exam process to earn additional credentials, such as Certified Family Nurse Practitioners (CFNPs). The duties of an NP typically include, but are in no way limited to, the following:

- Diagnose and treat acute illnesses, infections, and injuries
- Diagnose, treat and monitor chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure
- Obtain medical histories and conduct physical examinations
- Prescribe medications
- Prescribe physical therapy and other rehabilitation treatments
- eHealth maintenance care for adults
- Collaborate with physicians and other providers as needed, including providing referrals
- Counsel and educate patients on health behaviors, self-care skills, and treatment options

8. How would an employee see a specialist? What kind of permission would be required?

If a patient comes to the Center and needs to see a specialist, the providers at the Center will refer the employee to their health plan provider network. Our clinical team will be recruited from the local communities in Medford, Boston and Grafton and will be familiar with the university health plans, networks, specialists and Centers of Excellence.

9. What hospitals would employees be able to go to?

If an employee seen by a Marathon provider needs to be referred to a hospital, the employee should contact their health plan in order to select the appropriate in-network hospital.

10. What other colleges and universities are using this service?

Higher education has embraced wellness and health improvement as a leading strategy for addressing and improving employees’ health and quality of life as well as for slowing down the rising cost of health care for both employees and employer. There is a strong body of evidence that demonstrates that when employers provide meaningful wellness programming to their faculty and staff, individuals and families can take steps to improve their health and avoid costly medical services. There are various types of health programming; we believe that onsite services will be the most effective with our population. Other colleges and universities that have also started on this path include Notre Dame and Dartmouth College.

11. How long will it be before Tufts University starts increasing insurance premiums for these services?

Tufts University is a self-insured employer; this means that every claim submitted by its workforce is paid by the university. The total costs of care are split between the university and its employees in the form of payroll contributions. Our combined costs will decrease if employees take care of themselves and use the plans wisely; the costs will increase if we neglect our health and overuse the health plans for potentially avoidable or unnecessary care. Offering an onsite Center in Medford and health coaching across all three campuses is an important step in controlling current and future health care costs.

12. How can the university afford to provide this service at no cost?

The university is making a strong investment in its community and believes that this program will be of value to faculty and staff. To the extent that the Center is used to help employees improve their health, it will reduce the cost of our health care. For example, if you have a sore throat and need immediate care during the time the Center is open, you can use the Center instead of incurring an $800 Emergency Room visit. The Center and coaching programs are intended to save money while providing a benefit enhancement to our community.

13. How does this benefit employees who routinely see a doctor now and like the care they are getting?

It’s all about convenience. Marathon Health providers will be located onsite at the Tufts Medford Campus, as well as coaching centers located on the Boston and Grafton campuses. You can expect to spend less time waiting and more time with the Marathon Health provider. Our providers are able to spend more time helping employees better understand their overall health through the biometric screening (i.e. health screening that includes blood pressure, body mass index, total cholesterol, HDL, glucose, etc.), health risks identified through the health history and risk assessment, and overall medical history. Marathon will help employees and their spouses or qualified same-sex domestic partners develop goals and action plans to achieve a better health status overall for a healthier, more productive, and happier life. In addition, Marathon will work in collaboration with the employee’s current provider on chronic conditions like diabetes and asthma to help augment the care received. Marathon providers will also be available for health coaching at all three campuses to assist with lifestyle risk reduction and disease management services.