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Your Voice: The Bus Pass and Health Plan

As student leaders, we often find ourselves explaining to students what the MSU does for undergraduates here at McMaster. We launch into thorough explanations of the McMaster Students Union, explaining our services, our businesses and the impacts of our lobbying efforts. This is especially important during Welcome Week as students are introduced to the University and the MSU for the first time.

I quickly realized that no service provided by the MSU prompts as many questions as our Health and Dental plans or HSR Transit agreement. Students are often surprised to learn that the MSU provides these services at such a low cost to students. Many students are no longer covered by their parent’s health insurance once they turn 18. Our Health and Dental plans provide an essential safety blanket, helping to ensure that a student’s studies are not derailed by an unexpected medical emergency.

These two important services are being put to referendum during this year’s Presidential election, and it is vital that you learn about the options and make an informed vote next week.

Every three years, the MSU sends the HSR agreement to referendum. This year, the HSR referendum will feature additional options to those seen in the past. We worked hard to negotiate on behalf of students with the HSR in order to present students with potential improvements to their bus pass. Specifically, it will feature the options of adding new features to the student package regarding summer service (as a 12 month pass), as well as rush hour service and late-night service. I personally believe we have delivered great value for students as our bus pass continues to be one of the least expensive in the province, and I am excited to see what students think about the potential options.

Last year’s Student Representative Assembly voted to send our Health plan to referendum to ask students about potential increases to health insurance. This year, the Health plan referendum will offer a series of YES/NO questions to several new coverage options available, including vision care, oral contraceptives coverage and extended health care services under the MSU plan. Regardless of selection, the MSU plan will continue to operate on the OPT-OUT basis.

While the Presidential election will directly impact the organization for a year, the outcome of the referendum will have a multi-year impact on McMaster students. The HSR pass will not be renewed for another three years, and the health plan will not go back to referendum until it is initiated again. I encourage you all to get informed about the referendum by visiting msumc.ca/yourvoice to read all of the details.

Visit msumc.ca/yourvoice to learn more about the options available for this year’s Referendum 2014.

www.msumc.ca