SEATTLE INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL AND CLINICAL RESEARCH

HR Newsletter

OCTOBER 2026	HR@SIBCR.ORG	WWW.SIBCR.ORG

Feature Spotlight

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Each October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month serves as an important reminder to focus on breast health, encourage early detection, and support those affected by breast cancer. It is an opportunity to increase awareness, learn about risk factors, and take proactive steps toward maintaining overall health and well-being.



Why Awareness Matters
Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers and can affect both women and men. Early detection through routine screenings and awareness of changes in your body can improve treatment outcomes. Knowing your personal and family health history and following recommended screening guidelines are important preventive measures.

Know the Signs
Be aware of potential warning signs, including new lumps, changes in breast size or shape, skin irritation or dimpling, nipple changes, or unusual discharge. If you notice any concerning symptoms, contact your healthcare provider. Regular preventive screenings, including mammograms when recommended, remain one of the most effective tools for early detection.

Supporting One Another
This month also serves as a reminder to support colleagues, friends, and loved ones who have been affected by breast cancer. Review your health benefits, schedule recommended preventive care, and encourage others to prioritize their health.

Ways to Take Action

- Schedule a Screening: Talk to a healthcare provider or book a mammogram, which remains one of the most effective tools for early detection. Learn more or get involved via the Susan G. Komen Foundation.
- Participate in Local Events: Join community walks, fundraisers, or educational seminars hosted by organizations like the National Breast Cancer Foundation.
- Support Patients: Explore educational toolkits, donate, or get resources tailored to survivors and individuals currently navigating a diagnosis through communities like Breastcancer.org

Early detection saves lives, and every step toward awareness and prevention can make a difference. 💗

Make the most of your Retirement Savings in 2026

What are you contributing to your retirement portfolio?

For eligible employees, SIBCR makes it easier to build your retirement savings with:

- 5% automatic, institute funded, contributions towards your retirement funds.
- 2.5% company match for your contributions.
- 100% vesting upon enrollment – your retirement funds are yours from day one.
- Flexible contribution changes – you can adjust your contribution amount during any pay period throughout the year.

IRS limits for 2026 are:

- Employee Elective Deferral: $24,500
- Age 50+ Standard Catch-Up $8,000
- Age 60-63 Special Super Catch-Up $11,250

Take advantage of this valuable benefit and make your retirement goals a priority.

Viewing your retirement investments

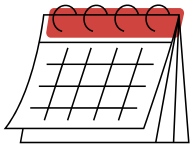
Access your retirement portfolio by logging onto the secure website at usicg.com/kp401K or download the USICG Account Access mobile app in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

If you are registering for the first time, use the following Plan Information:

- Plan ID: SI6 (letter S, letter I, number 6)
- Plan ID: SI6#*#2026 (Plan ID, pound sign, star, pound sign, 4-digit calendar year)

If you have questions about your retirement account or issues with login/registration, contact USI directly via email get401K@usi.com or phone call 866-468-7272, option 2.





Upcoming Holidays:

Columbus Day: Monday, October 12
Veterans Day: Wednesday, November 11
Thanksgiving Day: Thursday, November 26
Day After Thanksgiving: Friday, November 27
Christmas Day: Friday, December 25
New Year's Day: Friday, January 1 (2027)

Upcoming Observances and Celebrations:

October
October: Black History Month
October: Breast Cancer Awareness Month
October 10: World Mental Health Day
October 11: National Coming Out Day
October 16: Boss's Day

November
November: Men's Health Awareness Month
November: Native American Heritage Month
November: Military Family Month
November 1: Daylight Savings Time ends
November 7: Hug A Bear Day
November 13: World Kindness Day
November 19: International Men's Day
November 20: Transgender Day of Remembrance

December
December: Seasonal Depression Awareness Month
December 1: World AIDS Day
December 2: Special Education Day
December 4: National Cookie Day
December 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
December 10: Human Rights Day
December 15: Bill of Rights Day
December 29: Crossword Puzzle Day

Employee Spotlight

We're excited to introduce Employee Spotlight, a new recurring feature in our HR Newsletter! Each edition, we'll highlight a randomly selected employee and share a few fun facts, interests, and experiences that help us get to know one another better. Our hope is that this feature will strengthen connections across teams, celebrate the great people who make SIBCR successful, and put a face to the name behind the work. Stay tuned to see who will be featured in our next newsletter!

Employee Name: Molly Chinn

Job Title: Research Program Manager

Department/Research Group: NW MIRECC (Mental Illness Research, Education, & Clinical Center)

What is a typical day like for you at work?
A typical day is having a plan that goes increasingly sideways as the day progresses. A good day is being able to respond to the crises de jour and still make progress on the day-to-day, which includes managing budgets across three institutions – SIBCR, UW, and the VA, and wrangling IPAs, JPAs, and other inter-institutional agreements.



What do you enjoy most about working with your colleagues at SIBCR and the VA?
The people, absolutely the people. It is an interesting, intelligent, and dedicated lot who want to work in research at a medical center. I am continuously surprised and appreciative of the genuine pleasantness I encounter on a daily basis. It is a wonder to be surrounded by positivity, especially in times of whatever this is right now. I enjoy interacting with you brainy weirdos. There are many difficult aspects to operating in a VA environment, but my work community is not one of them. I feel incredibly fortunate to work with and for this group of individuals.

What accomplishment are you most proud of, either professionally or personally?
Honestly, I'm mostly just happy to have maintained a sense of humor. That's not true of every day, but I do value and strive to maintain the ability to appreciate that my glass is way more than half full.

What is something you're passionate about outside of work?
My current extracurricular passion is making wheel-thrown and hand built ceramic pieces. Even though I've been "practicing" for decades, I still feel like I'm just scratching the surface. I also very much like to cook and eat, and sometimes just eat - all the wonderful foods of Seattle and the world.

If you could have coffee with any person, past or present, who would it be?
Coffee, tea, croissants, quiche, bubble tea, high tea, pretty much anywhere, anytime, with family and friends, new and old. I love a backyard BBQ, sunset cocktails, or a cozy rainy Canasta Sunday. Pina Coladas? Yeah, that too.

Timecard Support



Having trouble completing your timecard or need a refresher? Go to the SIBCR portal for helpful training videos, screenshots and text guides. You can find this at: https://sibcr.org/paylocity-resources/

You can also find a timecard schedule and holiday list, including pay periods, timesheet due dates and pay days on the SIBCR payroll page: https://sibcr.org/time-card-holidays/

Reminders:

- If you will be on vacation or otherwise away when timesheets are due, please complete and submit your timesheet in advance.
- Be sure to add allocations and projects totaling 100%
- *For hourly employees:* Add hours to each day you are scheduled to work and take note of holidays.
- *For salaried employees*: Be sure to use sick/vacation leave in ½ day or full day incriments as necessary.
- *Hint*: If any changes are made to your timecard, the line may need to be deleted and saved before changes will reflect on your timecard.

Upcoming Pay Periods & Timesheet Due Dates

Oct A	10/1 - 10/15	Thursday, 10/15/26	88	Tuesday, 10/20/26
Oct B	10/16 - 10/31	Friday, 10/30/26	88	Thursday, 11/5/26
Nov A	11/1 - 11/15	Monday, 11/16/26	80	Friday, 11/20/26
Nov B	11/16 - 11/30	Monday, 11/30/26	88	Friday, 12/4/26
Dec A	12/1 - 12/15	Tuesday, 12/15/26	88	Monday, 12/21/26
Dec B	12/16 - 12/31	Thursday, 12/31/26	96	Tuesday, 1/5/2027*

Help us celebrate SIBCR! Submit your favorite team photos



We're gathering photos for our Employee Appreciation Event next spring, and we'd love your help!

Do you have pictures from work events, team celebrations, holiday parties, staff gatherings, or even fun and silly workplace moments? Share them with HR so we can showcase the memories and achievements that make SIBCR and our work so special.

Before submitting photos, please ensure that everyone pictured has given their consent to have their photo shared and displayed at the event.

Photos can be submitted to HR by emailing **hr@sibcr.org**. We can't wait to see your photos!



Men's Mental Health Awareness: Prioritizing Health Inside and Out



While June is officially recognized as Men's Mental Health Month in the United States, November has become widely associated with men's health and mental health awareness globally largely due to the Movember movement and International Men's Day on November 19. Movember is the annual movement held each November that encourages men to grow mustaches and raise awareness for men's health issues, including mental health, suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer. Movember has become a global initiative focused on starting meaningful conversations and encouraging men to take charge of their health.

Men's Mental Health Month is an important opportunity to encourage men to take a proactive approach to both their mental and physical health by scheduling regular checkups, staying current on recommended screenings, and seeking support when needed. ***Unfortunately, many men delay preventive care, with only 60% receiving an annual routine checkup and 40% waiting until a health concern becomes serious before seeking medical care.*** Taking preventive steps today can help identify potential health risks early and lead to better long-term outcomes.

The need for awareness is significant. Men face higher rates of many serious health conditions, including heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death among men, while more than 700,000 men are diagnosed with cancer each year, including approximately 230,000 cases of prostate cancer.

Mental health deserves the same attention as physical health. Nearly one-third of men will experience depression during their lifetime, yet many struggle in silence due to stigma and societal expectations of self-reliance. Depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout can affect relationships, work performance, and overall quality of life. Men are also significantly more likely to die by suicide than women, making it critical to recognize warning signs, talk openly about mental health, and seek support when needed. Reaching out for help is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of strength and self-awareness.

Steps to Take Charge of Your Health

- **Schedule Regular Checkups**: Go for a yearly routine physical exam and know your numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar).
- **Keep Up with Screenings**: Talk to a healthcare provider about recommended cancer, cardiovascular, and metabolic screenings based on age and family history.
- **Adopt Healthy Habits**: Eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly, get quality sleep, avoid tobacco, and limit alcohol use to no more than two drinks a day.
- **Prioritize Mental Well-Being**: Recognize signs of stress or burnout, talk openly with providers, and build safe spaces to ask for support.

Whether it's scheduling a preventive care appointment, having an open conversation about mental well-being, or participating in Movember activities, every step makes a difference. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of available resources, including our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Mutual of Omaha and preventive care benefits, and to prioritize both their physical and mental health throughout the year.

Switch Your Trips WA - Join the October 2026 Challenge!

Switch Your Trips WA challenges people who live, study, or work in Washington State to replace drive alone trips with sustainable travel options such as walking, biking, rideshare, and transit.

Switch Your Trips WA is for commutes, errands, and social outings. That means carpooling to work, taking the bus to the grocery store, bicycling to a friend's house, etc. all will help you qualify for the prize drawing and have a chance to win $1,500, an electric bike, or one of many other great prizes.

How to participate: Use eligible transportation alternatives during October and log at least 10 trips through a participating commute-trip tracking website listed below. Everyone who meets the challenge requirements is automatically entered into prize drawings for exciting rewards, including cash prizes, an e-bike, and other great giveaways.

- Switch Your Trips WA (Statewide)
- Choose Your Way Bellevue (Bellevue)
- Commute Smart NW (Spokane)
- Go Redmond (City of Redmond)
- Kirkland Green Trip (City of Kirkland)
- Ride Together Pierce (Pierce County)
- Get There SW Washington (Clark County)



The challenge isn't just for commuting to work. Trips to the grocery store, social outings, appointments, and other everyday destinations all count. Every sustainable trip helps make our communities healthier while reducing traffic and emissions across Washington.

Ready to get started? Visit Switch Your Trips WA and take the challenge. A small change in how you travel could have a big impact on your health, your community, and even your chances of winning a prize!



Open Enrollment season is just around the corner!

In late November/early December, you'll have the opportunity to review your benefit elections and make changes for the upcoming plan year. Whether you're considering updates to your medical, dental, vision, retirement, or flexible spending account elections, Open Enrollment is the time to ensure your benefits continue to meet your needs.

What You Can Do Now:

- Watch for Open Enrollment materials and announcements in November.
- Start thinking about any life changes that may affect your benefit needs.
- Review your current benefit elections and consider any adjustments you may want to make for the new plan year.

DON'T FORGET



Use Your Annual Leave Before You Lose It!

As the end of the year approaches, now is a great time to review your annual leave balance and plan any remaining time off. Employees may carry over a maximum of 160 hours of annual leave on December 31st into the next leave year. Any annual leave balance exceeding 160 hours may be forfeited.

To avoid losing valuable leave, please review your balances and work with your supervisor to schedule time off as needed. Taking time to rest and recharge is important for your health, well-being, and work-life balance.

Don't wait until the last minute. Check your leave balance today and start planning your time off!

Don't Forget About Your Flexible Spending Account (FSA)!

The end of the year is quickly approaching. Be sure to use your FSA funds by the end of the year and or submit any claims that you have been sitting on. 2026 spending will need to be claimed by the March 30, 2027 grace period.

Login to your Navia account to check your balance, https://app.naviabenefits.com/#/login.

A new enrollment form will be provided during Open Enrollment to re-enroll for the 2027 plan year.

SIBCR HR Team

Annette Coder
Director of HR & Operations
annette.coder@sibcr.org
206.204.6192

Rebecca Jauregui
Assistant Director of HR
rebecca.jauregui@sibcr.org
206.204.6183

Susan Lim
HR Manager
susan.lim@sibcr.org
206.204.6187

Ivy Morgan-Taggart
Administrative Manager
ivy.morgan-taggart@sibcr.org
206.277.1052