

Perspectives

FOR RETIRED
MEMBERS
OF THE
NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT
SYSTEM

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This newsletter is published by the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System
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Members Elected:

Mike Sandal, Joan Ehrhardt,

Ron Leingang, Levi Erdmann

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Executive Director

Kathy M. Allen

Editor

CIGNA Dental Plan Renewed

At its June meeting, the NDPERS Board approved renewal of the group dental contract with CIGNA. This plan is available to state agency and University System employees. The proposal is for a 9% across the board increase over the current premium rates. The rate increase will be effective January 1, 2009.

Information about the new rates will be sent out later this year.



Deferred Compensation Provider Suspension

Due to non-compliance with our training requirements, the following deferred compensation plan provider companies have been put on a "Loss of Active Provider Status" suspension:

- Chase Insurance
- Symetra Life

Under this type of suspension, the companies and their respective agents may not enroll any new participants. However, they may continue to serve existing contracts.

Elected to the Board

Levi Erdmann was elected to a five-year term on the NDPERS Retirement Board. His term is effective July 1, 2008 and ends June 30, 2013.

Levi is employed with the State Land Department.

The following is a recap of the election results:

VOTES

Levi Erdmann	863
Ardy Pfaff	850
Deon Villhauer	222
Invalid Ballots	15
Write-In Ballots	1
Received after Deadline	46
Total	1,997



Levi Erdmann

The NDPERS Board and staff welcome Levi as its newest member.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Your Prescription Drug Coverage and Medicare

You've heard the saying before "look before you leap." It could be translated to mean, "Don't make a decision until you have examined all the facts." This could not be more true than when it comes to examining the many options that may confront you when it comes to Medicare and your prescription drug coverage. You have likely been the recipient of various mass mailings and phone calls from agents with private insurance companies who are marketing these plans. Before you make a decision, please be aware that enrolling in another plan may jeopardize your continued eligibility for coverage through the NDPERS Dakota Retiree plan.

The NDPERS Dakota Retiree plan is available to eligible members entitled to Medicare. It provides medical coverage and a Medicare D prescription drug plan called MedicareBlue Rx. However, as stated above, Medicare prescription drug coverage is also available through numerous private companies. If you are contacted about enrolling in another prescription drug plan, a Medicare Advantage plan (which is a company such as an HMO that contracts with the federal government to provide your Medicare benefits,) or a Medigap policy, please be advised of the following:

- Because it has been determined that the prescription drug plan provided by NDPERS is on average at least as good as the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage, you can keep this coverage and not pay extra if you later decide to enroll in Medicare coverage.
- The NDPERS plan also provides medical coverage and a prescription drug plan. If you choose to enroll in another Medicare prescription drug plan, a Medicare Advantage plan or a Medigap policy, you will not be eligible to enroll in or retain your medical and prescription drug coverage in the Dakota Retiree Plan. Your coverage with NDPERS will be cancelled. Be aware that you may not have an opportunity to get the NDPERS coverage back. Also, if you are eligible for the retiree health credit, this benefit will be lost.

- You are required to be enrolled in Medicare Parts A & B in order to be eligible to enroll in the Dakota Retiree plan. If you drop your Medicare A & B coverage to enroll in a Medicare Part C plan, you will no longer meet the NDPERS requirements and your retiree medical and prescription drug coverage through the Dakota Retiree plan will be cancelled.

Before making a decision, please examine all your options to be sure you understand the plan coverages and the effect enrolling in another prescription plan may have on your NDPERS eligibility.

Also, if you drop your NDPERS coverage, you will only be able to re-enroll if you apply for coverage **within 31 days** from any one of the following "qualifying events":

1. Date of retirement, defined as either:
 - The last day of active employment if member does not defer his/her retirement benefit or take a lump-sum refund of his/her retirement account, or
 - Date of first retirement check if member deferred his/her retirement benefit.
2. Member's 65th birthday or eligibility for Medicare;
3. Member's spouse or eligible dependent's 65th birthday or eligibility for Medicare;

4. The loss of coverage in a health plan sponsored or provided by member's employer or member's spouse's employer, if covered through spouse's employer group plan. This includes loss of coverage due to the death of, or divorce from a spouse as well as completion of COBRA continuation coverage.

5. Marriage

6. Birth, adoption, or appointment of children for legal guardianship.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage:

- Visit www.medicare.gov for personalized help,
- Call Senior Health Insurance Counseling (SHIC), a program of the North Dakota Insurance Department, at 1-800-247-0560, or
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

If you have limited income and resources, extra help paying for Medicare prescription drug coverage is available. For information about this extra help, visit Social Security on the web at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Be Prepared In Case of A Disaster!

You can rest assured that NDPERS will do everything it can to make sure your benefits are not interrupted. In the case of a disaster or emergency, you can look for information on the NDPERS web site at: www.nd.gov/NDPERS

One thing you can do to make sure your benefit payments are not interrupted is to sign up for direct deposit. Not only is direct deposit faster than getting your benefit check in the mail, it is also safe and reliable. After hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast in 2005, over 2,000 paper checks were returned to the Louisiana State Employees Retirement System as 'undeliverable.' Even more checks were lost in the New Orleans postal facilities. However, almost all retirees with direct deposit received their monthly payments.

Direct deposit is safe, secure and used nationwide. Benefit payments are deposited electronically into your bank account. You do not have to change your current bank relationship to take advantage of this service. It is available through all banks, credit unions, savings and loans facilities and most other financial institutions.

Advantages to Direct Deposit:

- Your money will be deposited timely – the first business day of each month, which allows you immediate access to your money.
- Your worries about mail delays, stolen checks, or interruption due to disaster are over.
- You'll avoid waiting in long bank lines to cash or deposit checks.
- It's free! PERS does not charge any fees for this service.

To begin direct deposit, simply complete an "Authorization for Direct Deposit for Annuity Payments SFN 18379" which is available on our web site at www.nd.gov/ndpers. Complete and sign the "Annuitant/Payee" section of the form and have your bank complete the "Financial Institution" section. If you do not have internet access, simply call the PERS office

at 701-328-3918 or 800-803-7377 and one will be sent to you.

Return the form to the PERS office by the 14th of any month. The direct deposit of your PERS benefit payments will begin the first of the following month, unless an alternate effective date is requested. To change financial institutions or change any account information, just complete a new Authorization for Direct Deposit form.

Quarterly, NDPERS will send you a "statement of deductions." This statement gives you a record of the monthly, as well as year-to-date totals of all deductions made from your benefit payment prior to deposit.

DIRECT DEPOSIT For your peace of mind!

What's on the Web? (www.nd.gov/ndpers)

There are many information and educational items that are at your fingertips! Forms, Announcements, Handbooks, Newsletters, and more!

Following is an outline of the retirement tools available to you on the NDPERS website. If you are drawing a NDPERS retirement benefit, you have access to your plan handbook, forms, tax tables, and mailing schedules. You may access these items through the menu option labeled "Retiree" located under Member Services on the left side of our home page site.

When you enter the above menu option, the first menu item is titled "Defined Benefit Hybrid Retirement Plan." Through this option you have access to the following items:

Retired Membership Handbook Topics include:

- Confidentiality Law
- Contacting NDPERS
- On-Line Services
- Monthly Benefit Option
- Disability Retirement Benefits
- Post-Retirement Benefit Increases
- Payment of Monthly Benefit
- Monthly Benefit Deductions
- Income Taxes



- Change of Address
- Notification of Death
- Designation of Beneficiary
- Benefit and Return to Work
- Overpayment of Benefits
- Retiree Health Insurance Credits
- Durable Power of Attorney
- Record of Important Documents

Other Plan Information

- Federal Tax Tables (Pages 52-55)
- Qualified Domestic Relations Order/Divorce
- 2008 Benefit Payments Mailing Schedule
- How to Read Your 1099 Forms
- Authorization for Direct Deposit for Annuity Payment (SFN 18379)
- Designation of Beneficiary Form (SFN 2560)
- Form W-4P (Substitute) Tax Withholding Certificate (SFN 51506)
- Authorization for Withholding Federal Income Tax (SFN 17628)
- Authorization for Withholding North Dakota State Income Tax (SFN 17629)
- Notice of Change (SFN 10766)

Designation of Beneficiary

At the time you retired, NDPERS staff requested that you update your designation of beneficiary. Please be sure to keep your designation up-to-date. It is very important that you keep your beneficiary information current; upon your death

NDPERS relies on the information to contact your beneficiaries. If the information on your designation of beneficiary is not current or missing, NDPERS is unable to locate and issue payment, if any, to your beneficiary (ies).

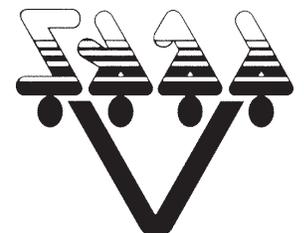
To update or change your retirement designation of beneficiary, you must complete a "Designation of Beneficiary for the Group Retirement Plan SFN 2560." To update or change your life insurance designation of beneficiary, you must complete a "Life Insurance Designation of Beneficiary Change SFN 53855." To request a form, call the NDPERS office at (701) 328-3900 or 1-800-803-7377 if calling outside the Bismarck/Mandan calling area. You may also obtain forms on our website at www.nd.gov/ndpers.

If you plan to visit the NDPERS Office...

Please make an appointment for counseling services if you want to meet with a PERS staff member to discuss your retirement options and or any of the benefit programs administered by this office. Although staff will accommodate walk-ins when possible, an appointment will ensure that someone is available to assist you at the time you arrive. Also, if staff schedules are booked and you are a walk-in, staff is required to first assist those members who have an appointment. Therefore, you may have to wait an extended period of time or not get the opportunity to meet with a staff member that day. An appointment also allows staff to prepare the appropriate information to respond to your individual needs and to ensure that the time spent is productive.

The articles and opinions in this publication are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual. We suggest that you consult your attorney, accountant, financial or tax advisor with regard to your individual situation. This newsletter is available in alternate formats upon request. Printed on recycled paper.

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