

Welcome to The Retirement Connection!

Message from CEO Roberto L. Peña



Once again, Retiree Open Enrollment is upon us. While we have no changes in health benefit providers, the big and discouraging news this year comes in the form of significant rate hikes for some plans, especially those selected by early retirees not yet eligible for Medicare, and especially Anthem's PPOs. Some

plans will experience very slight increases, and generally, the increases for Anthem plans will be greater than for Kaiser's plans. See more information in related articles in this issue, and a complete informational guide in your Retiree Open Enrollment packets being mailed to retirees this month.

This was troubling news for us here at ORS, and we know it is more troubling for our members. Staff went to extraordinary lengths trying to minimize these increases and negotiate for better terms from both Kaiser and Anthem. They were successful in bringing down those increases substantially,

but obviously, the hikes are still significant. Both providers report that labor issues, the cost of medications, and increased demands for services since Covid are the primary drivers of the rate increases.

Staff here at ORS has stepped up its efforts to provide members with information, counseling and other resources, both in person and online, to help retirees and active members make well-informed choices.

On another timely topic, I want to encourage members to consider friends, relatives and neighbors to consider employment with us here at the City of San Jose. Like almost all organizations and companies, we are finding it difficult in a job market with less than 4 percent unemployment to recruit talented people for jobs we have open. If you know someone who may be looking for a career in public service within a team oriented, supportive environment, please direct them to the City of San Jose's website and the Human Resources page. They will find listings for job opportunities and can browse by department.

Important Dates for Retiree Open Enrollment

Retiree Open Enrollment for 2024 health plans and Medicare is Nov. 1-Nov. 30. All retirees eligible for health care insurance may make changes to their insurance coverage and can re-enroll in the **in-lieu** program, if they choose. Remember that **you must re-enroll in your health and/or dental in-lieu annually** – that selection does not roll over.

For members and dependents under 24 years old, Retiree Open Enrollment is the time you can add dependent children to your medical, dental and/or vision coverage. Some coverage is available until age 26.

Upcoming dates to remember:

- Oct. 12:** Presentations to SJ Retired Employees Association.
- Oct. 16:** ORS Retiree Open Enrollment website goes live: <https://openenrollment.sjretirement.com/>
- Oct. 23:** USPS Delivery of Retiree open enrollment packets begins
- Nov. 1:** Retiree Open Enrollment begins
- Nov. 1:** Personal appointments & online webinars with vendors begins
- Nov. 8:** Retiree Health Fair at Leininger Center, 1300 Senter Rd., San Jose, CA 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Nov. 9:** Presentation to Assoc. of Retired Police Officers and Firefighters.
- Nov. 30:** Last day to submit forms and end of Retiree Open Enrollment

Please follow us on X, formerly known as twitter, where we will post reminders for webinars, workshops, and other events related to Retiree Open Enrollment.



Retiree Open Enrollment is upon us, along with rate hikes

Where has the year gone? November is upon us, and with it, comes Retiree Open Enrollment. Retired members have the option throughout the month of November to change health coverage plans or details of their coverage within their existing plan.

The unfortunate headliner this year is significant rate increases by both Kaiser and Anthem. Staff has worked hard behind the scenes and negotiated even harder to try to minimize those increases on behalf of members, but carriers report that increased costs for labor and medications, plus higher demand for services since Covid, leave them no choice but to raise premiums significantly.

The rate structure has many different plan quotes, all of which will be in your Retiree Open Enrollment packet. But to illustrate the challenge this year, Anthem began negotiations months ago seeking as much as 34.8 percent increase for some Anthem plans for early retirees (non-Medicare). We were able to negotiate that increase down to 23.5 percent. Kaiser began seeking 11.16 percent increase for early retirees (non-Medicare)

and settled for 10.04 percent. Kaiser Medicare rates are experiencing an increase of approximately 16 percent in California, although the rate may vary in other service areas.

Some plans will experience a minimal increase. For example, retirees located in the Pacific Northwest who are Kaiser members will experience an increase of just .03 percent. Those early retirees not yet eligible for Medicare and enrolled in Anthem plans – especially the PPOs – will face the biggest rate hikes.

These rate increases clearly mean members should carefully consider their options during this enrollment period. Members should use the resources we will be offering to help them make the best choice for themselves and their families, including webinars, counseling, group presentations, and more. We at ORS understand that these rate increases are jarring, and we are stepping up our efforts to provide you information and other resources to help make the most informed choice for you and your family.



*Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Therapist **Don Taylor** was thrilled to be asked to throw out the first pitch at a June San Jose Giants game against Rancho Cucomonga. Don represented the Department's Grace Art & Wellness Program staff, being honored by the Giants for their services to residents with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities to improve their quality of life. Program participants attended the game and had a blast, and staff was excited for weeks leading up to the game and thrilled with the recognition, reported Recreation Supervisor Joshue Covarrubias.*

IRS Extension Down to the Wire

If you are one of the thousands of Californians who took advantage of the IRS' extended deadline to file your tax returns and pay any balance due for the tax year 2022, you are down to the last few days to meet the extended deadline. October 16 will be the last day you can file and pay a balance due without being subject to penalty late fees.

The six-month extension was granted to 55 of the state's 58 counties' residents to help offset the impacts of last winter's terrible storms. Most of California was declared as a federal disaster area, and the relief package passed by Congress included the filing extension to help residents of those counties in aftermath of the storms.

Medicare Enrollment

Turning 65 and eligible for Medicare health care insurance? Don't forget to submit your Medicare enrollment forms at least three months before you turn 65! As a courtesy, ORS will mail you a packet of information three months prior to the big birthday. Remember, you must enroll in Medicare and submit enrollment paperwork to ORS no later than 90 days after your 65th birthday, or you will be dropped from your health plan.

If you are already enrolled in Medicare, you must maintain your Parts A&B with the Social Security Administration to remain enrolled in a plan administered by ORS. Your Parts A&B payments go directly to Social Security, not ORS.

We are here at ORS to help make the transition to Medicare as easy as possible, and to answer any questions you may have.

Profile: ORS Admin Group

Sherrell Aledo Staff Specialist

Q: Can you share a bit about your background and path to work with us here at ORS?

A: I'm a California native who grew up in Seaside, near Monterey, and moved to San Jose in 2017. I attended Monterey Peninsula College and the Schiller International University in Largo, Florida, where I earned my degree in International Hospitality and Tourism Management. In 2021, I joined ORS's staff as a temporary worker, when a full time position became available, I applied on the City's job site and was successful in becoming a permanent employee last May.

Q: What are your duties at ORS?

A: I have worked in the Benefits and Administrative groups, both of which taught me a great deal about retirement plans and the process of retiring.

Q: What has been most satisfying about the work?

A: The work has offered me the chance to work with several departments within the City, and I appreciate learning about the broad range of experience and services found within the City of San Jose. My previous career path in hospitality grounded me in customer service, and aligned well with service to the retirement boards, committees, and our members.

For me, great satisfaction comes from how much we value teamwork here at ORS. We are an awesome team that work well together when challenges arise.

Q: What do you do with your spare time? Family Hobbies?

A: I enjoy spending time with my family, and I like to continually learn about new subjects.

Renovation near completion

The renovation of the The Retirement Board meeting rooms known as the Wing Committee Rooms (Rooms 118 and 120) was near completion as of this writing. Both Boards have resumed meeting in these rooms as the final touches are completed. We are delighted with the end result and happy to be back in our regular meeting site, and look forward to seeing members attend the monthly meetings of the Police & Fire Board and the Federated Employees Board.

Please note that there will be an exception for the Federated Board meeting on November 16 due to a booking conflict for the Committee Wing rooms. For the November 16 Federated Board meeting, they will meet in the conference room of our main offices at 1737 N. First St, Suite 580, San Jose.



Edith Aldama Staff Specialist

Q: Tell us about your background and journey to work at ORS. Where do you come from? What was your professional background prior to ORS? How long have you worked here?

A: I graduated from San Jose State University in May 2020 with a bachelor's degree in business administration. While obtaining my degree, I was working part-time with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services as a Recreation Leader. Before coming to the Office of Retirement Services, I was working for the Alum Rock Union School District as an Administrative Assistant

Q: What are your duties?

A: I am responsible for the administration for the Police and Fire Board including creating the agendas, minutes, posting all necessary information on the ORS website for the Board meetings, and assisting with contracts and trustee travel.

Q: What is most satisfying about the job? Most challenging, if you think of something challenging.

A: The most satisfying thing about the job is seeing the Admin team's hard work at the Board meetings and seeing them run smoothly.

Q: What do you do with your time off?

A: During my time off, I love to travel and spend time with family and friends.

Welcome to ORS:

- **Trang Vo**, Accountant
- **Tram Huynh**, Benefit Analyst
- **Yani Hernandez**, Senior Office Specialist

Staffing Updates:

- **Michelle San Miguel**, Staff Specialist pursued another opportunity outside the City

Quarterly Question

Q: Open Enrollment is coming. I am an in-lieu program participant. Do I have to enroll again to take part?

A: Yes, you do. Those who participate in our in-lieu program and its benefits must re-enroll each and every year to reaffirm their status and qualification for the program. Those interested in the program can see details on the website. Go to www.sjretirement.com

The Retirement Connection

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GO GREEN!

Send ORS an email to retirement.dept@sanjoseca.gov if you would like to receive your copy of the newsletter electronically, via email or if you prefer to access the newsletter online at our website www.sjretirement.com

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Upcoming Board Meetings

Meetings are being held hybrid in person at City Hall Wing 118-120 or by teleconference. Please check our website for the latest information.

Police and Fire Board meetings are held on the 1st Thursdays of each month except in July. Upcoming meetings will be held on the following dates:
November 2 • December 7 • January 4

Federated Board meetings are held on the 3rd Thursdays of each month except in July and September. Upcoming meetings will be held on the following dates:
October 21 • November 16 • December 21

BOARD UPDATES

The Board vacancies for recruitment are posted on the City Clerk's website at: <https://sanjose.granicus.com/boards/w/923860ac785826ef>

All meetings unless otherwise posted on the Agenda, are at City Hall, 200 E. Santa Clara Street, Wing Rooms 118-120. Meetings are also live-streamed on our website at www.sjretirement.com

Upcoming City Closures

Oct. 9—Indigenous Day
Nov. 12—Veterans Day
Nov. 23-24—Thanksgiving
Dec. 24-Jan.2—Holiday

CONTACT US!

408-794-1000 or 1-800-732-6477
Our staff directory can be found on our website at: www.sjretirement.com
Click on "About us"/"Office Staff" or email us at retirement.dept@sanjoseca.gov