

SRBR Update

In October, the City Labor Alliance and the San Jose Retired Employees Association reached an agreement on a methodology to distribute the earnings of the Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve (SRBR). It was presented to the Board of Administration for the Federated City Employees' Retirement System at its November meeting. The Board approved the methodology and forwarded a recommendation to City Council. City Council heard the proposal at its December 16th meeting and approved the program unanimously.

The objective of this new methodology is to create a program that will provide an annual, additional payment for retirees, and to fix a minimum level of the SRBR to insure that the program can go on in perpetuity.

The recommendation sent to City Council is that a distribution of \$1,000,000 be made to all members receiving a benefit as of June 30, 2003. Our staff is working feverishly with the software developer to make the payment as soon as possible; however, as of the date of this article, it is looking like the payment will be made at the end of January. In the future, all distributions will be made at the end of November.

1099 Changes

FEDERATED:

The 2003 1099s for Federated retirees (and survivors) who retired between 7/1/1986 - 12/31/1998 will reflect the tax free dollars from retirement contributions paid by employees prior to April 1987. In addition, for service-connected disability retirees who retired after 7/1/1975, the 1099s will reflect the portion of their benefit which is tax-excluded due to their service-connected disability status.

These changes were made for Police and Fire on the 2002 1099s.

2003 1099s will be issued at the end of January.

Member Statements

Member statements for active employees will be mailed at the end of February.

December Pension Checks

Our office will be closed from December 24, 2003 through January 2, 2004. We will resume normal business hours on Monday, January 5, 2004. Checks will be mailed on December 30, 2003. For those of you who have direct deposit, funds will be available on December 31, 2003.

Open Enrollment Changes: What to Expect

Retirees who made Open Enrollment changes this year will be able to access their new health plan coverage effective January 1, 2004. The plans will send out membership cards no later than mid-January. If you have a need for medical services prior to receiving your membership card, please confirm your eligibility by contacting the health plan directly prior to accessing services.

Please Note: The City's dental and vision plan providers do not provide membership cards. Services for these plans can be accessed by providing your name, social security number, and birth date to your participating dentist or optometrist.

Attention Blue Shield Enrollees: New Membership ID Numbers

Blue Shield has been reissuing membership ID cards to all enrollees. These new cards show a randomly assigned alpha-numeric ID that replaces your old Social Security number-based ID. Blue Shield is implementing this change in an effort to further protect its members' privacy. Physicians, hospitals, and pharmacies will immediately begin the transition towards using the new alpha-numeric ID for eligibility verification and billing purposes.



As Blue Shield and your health care providers make this transition, you will notice the decreasing use of Social Security numbers as a means of identification. Although Blue Shield will continue to allow the use of Social Security numbers while they phase-in the change, at some point in the future, participants will be required to use their newly assigned number when accessing services and addressing issues with the plan or its providers.

Below is an example of what the change will look like on your card. Remember, each alpha-numeric ID will be participant-specific.

Old SSN-Based ID Numbers:

222334444

New Alpha-Numeric ID:

J12345678

If you have not already received your new Blue Shield ID card, you will shortly. When you do receive the new card, please carry that with you at all times. It is important that you take it with you the next time you visit your physician or pharmacist. They will need to know your new ID number to process claims in the future.

Interesting Trivia

Butterflies taste with their feet.

A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.

In 10 minutes, a hurricane releases more energy than all of the world's nuclear weapons.

On average, 100 people choke to death on ball-point pens every year.

Refinancing or Purchasing a Home?

We have had numerous calls from employees inquiring about borrowing from the retirement system and/or their retirement account to re-finance or purchase a home. Unlike PERS, the City of San Jose does not have a home mortgage program for its members. Although members cannot borrow against their retirement account or from the system, the Retirement Office can and will furnish to the lending institution a statement of your account balance. Some banks and mortgage companies accept this statement to satisfy their reserve requirements of the borrower when refinancing or purchasing a home. Members must check with their lending institutions to ascertain whether or not this is acceptable. You do not have to be vested in order to avail yourself of this service.

Change of Address or Phone Number?

RETIREES ONLY:

For change of address and phone numbers please notify our office as soon as possible so paychecks, 1099 tax forms, class information, health insurance and other important information can reach you. We can send you a Change of Address form or you can mail a note with your full name, last four digits of your social security number and your new address.

If you are a member of the following associations, please contact them directly.

Federated Retirees Association:
Madie Torres at 238-3282

Association of Retired San Jose Police Officers and Firefighters:
Jerry Ellis at (408) 730-9974

Health, Dental, and Vision Plan Contact Information.

| Health Plan | Group Number | Member Services | Internet Address |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Non-Medicare Plans (Under Age 65) | | | |
| Blue Shield HMO | H11186 | 1-800-837-4481 | www.mylifepath.com |
| Blue Shield PPO | 975567 | 1-800-837-4481 | www.mylifepath.com |
| Blue Shield POS | MH0161 | 1-800-837-4481 | www.mylifepath.com |
| Kaiser Permanente | 887 | 1-800-390-3510 | www.kaiserpermanente.org/locations/ |
| Medicare Plans | | | |
| Kaiser Senior Advantage (HMO) | 887 | 1-800-443-0815 | www.kaiserpermanente.org |
| Secure Horizons Medicare+Choice (HMO) | 140309 (Fed) / 140298 (P&F) | 1-800-228-2144 | www.securehorizons.com |
| Blue Shield Medicare-HMO | H11336 | 1-800-837-4481 | www.mylifepath.com |
| Blue Shield Medicare-PPO | 975568 | 1-800-837-4481 | www.mylifepath.com |
| PacifiCare Senior Supplement Plan F | 00010564 | 1-800-698-0822 | |
| Dental Plans | | | |
| Delta Dental | 2584 | 1-888-335-8227 | www.deltadental.com |
| Dental Benefit Providers (DBP) | 1194 | 1-800-445-9090 | www.dbp.com |
| Vision Plans | | | |
| Vision Service Plan | 12112926-01 | 1-800-877-7195 | www.vsp.com |
| Cole Managed Vision | 30218 | 1-888-334-7591 | www.colemanagedvision.com |

Best Source for Social Security Answers

Here's a website that can help with Social Security questions: www.ncpssm.org/ask/index.html)

The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, a Washington advocacy group, has a spot on its website called "Ask Mary Jane". You can e-mail a question to Mary Jane Yarrington, a longtime congressional caseworker who joined the group in 1986 as a senior policy analyst and has written her question-and-answer column for 14 years. Before you write, check out the list of questions and answers to see whether she has already addressed your problem.

A recent example: If your husband dies before you turn 62, what percentage of his Social Security income can you draw? Answer: At age 60, a widow gets 71.5% of her husband's full benefit.



Retirement Services staff wishes you a
Happy Holiday Season and a New Year of
health, happiness and prosperity.

Nutrition Guide for Seniors

Most people have seen the traditional food pyramid, the well-known graphic presentation of a healthy diet drawn up by the Department of Agriculture. But there's another pyramid out there – specifically for older adults – assembled by nutrition researchers at Tufts University in Boston. It looks much like the traditional triangle, but stresses more water and fiber and fewer calories. At the same time, their nutrient needs stay the same or increase, so this pyramid emphasizes darker-colored vegetables and fruits, such as spinach, sweet potatoes, squash, strawberries and mangos. You can get a copy at nutrition.tufts.edu/pdf/pyramid.pdf.

The researchers designed the guide for people 70 and older, but they say it can be used by people in their 50s and 60s as well – with one exception: People in their 50s and 60s need vitamin D equivalent to what's found in one quart of milk each day. Those in their 70s and up need the amount found in 1 ½ quarts.