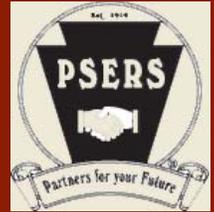


## Summer 2010 Inside...

- Health Options Program Open Enrollment
- PSERS HOP & Health Care Reform
- Adult Care & Long-Term Care Information
- What's in a Name or in an Acronym

& More...



### Keep Your Address Up-to-Date to Keep Your Payments Coming!

As a retiree, it is important to keep your mailing address up to date, not only to ensure that you receive informational publications and your yearly *Form 1099-R*, but also to ensure that you continue to receive your monthly benefit payment. **This is true whether the payment is mailed to your home address or sent directly to your financial institution.**

If your monthly benefit payment is sent electronically to your financial institution and we receive notification from the post office that your mailing address is not valid, **your electronically transferred payment will stop after we receive the notice of your invalid address.** PSERS must have your new mailing address for your payments to continue.



If your monthly benefit payment is mailed directly to your home address and we receive notification of an invalid mailing address, your monthly benefit payment will immediately stop until you inform PSERS of your new address.

**Please submit any name or address changes to PSERS in writing and at least 8 weeks in advance of the effective date of the change.** You can do this either by letter or by completing the *Change of Address for PSERS Retirees* (PSRS-1301) form. You can print the form from the PSERS website at [www.psers.state.pa.us/forms/f1301.pdf](http://www.psers.state.pa.us/forms/f1301.pdf). **Whether you choose to submit the form or a letter, either must contain your signature.** For more detailed information on how to update your address, see the article on page 4.

The *PSERS Retired Member Newsletter* is intended for general informational purposes and to alert members about important deadlines, changes, and developments in the law or retirement policy. It should not, however, be relied on as providing legal advice or as the basis for individual retirement planning and decisions. The Public School Employees' Retirement System provides personalized retirement information and counseling services that can be accessed by calling toll-free, 1-888-773-7748. The contents of this newsletter may not be used for any commercial purpose without PSERS' prior written permission.

## Health Options Program Open Enrollment

The PSERS Board has approved an open enrollment for the PSERS Health Options Program (HOP). The open enrollment will be conducted this fall for benefit coverage effective January 1, 2011.

All PSERS retirees, their spouse and dependents may enroll; no "Qualifying Event" is required. There are no exclusions for pre-existing conditions with the PSERS HOP plans and HOP participants have an annual opportunity to change coverage.

Participants of HOP have the monthly premium payment deducted directly from their retirement benefit.

Premium Assistance reimbursements towards the cost of the HOP premium payment may be available to retirees who:

- Retired with at least 24.5 years of service, or...
- Retired with at least 15 years of service and who terminated their school employment after reaching age 62, or...
- Receive a PSERS disability pension

The Premium Assistance payment covers up to \$100 per month towards the cost of a retirees' HOP coverage payment.

PSERS has received numerous requests from Medicare eligible retirees covered under their school district plan to enroll in HOP to reduce their premium expense. They were not permitted to enroll in HOP because they did not have a Qualifying Event. This upcoming open enrollment will be their opportunity to enroll in HOP.

The open enrollment period will take place from October 1 to November 15, 2010 for coverage effective January 1, 2011. All PSERS retirees (including survivor annuitants), their spouses and dependents may enroll in HOP.

PSERS will be conducting open enrollment meetings this fall across the Commonwealth. Please look for further information via HOP publications and individual mailings.



### Health Options Program (HOP) Contact Information

*Health Options Program related calls, general, enrollment, premium payments and refunds:*

Toll-Free  
1-800-773-7725  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST  
Monday—Friday

*Health Options Program related correspondence:*

HOP Administration Unit  
PO Box 1764  
Lancaster, PA 17608-1764

*Claims or other questions for coverage under the HOP Managed Care Plan/Highmark FreedomBlue:*

Toll-Free  
1-800-215-9931  
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST  
7 days a week

*Claims or other questions for coverage under the HOP Pre-65 Managed Care Plan/Highmark PPOBlue:*

Toll-Free  
1-800-241-5704  
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST  
7 days a week

*Prescription drug benefit (Enhanced and Basic Medicare Rx Options only):*

Toll-Free  
1-888-239-1301  
24 hours a day  
7 days a week

## HOP and Health Care Reform

**PSERS**  
5 North 5th Street  
PO Box 125  
Harrisburg PA  
17108-0125

**Toll-Free**  
1-888-773-7748  
**Local Calls**  
717-787-8540  
**TTY (Text)**  
717-772-5379

**Phone Hours**  
**Weekdays**  
(except holidays):  
7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Website Address:**  
[www.psers.state.pa.us](http://www.psers.state.pa.us)  
**Email Address:**  
[ra-ps-contact@state.pa.us](mailto:ra-ps-contact@state.pa.us)

**PSERS is happy to provide visually impaired readers with our publications in large print or audiocassette. Please contact PSERS to request either of these free services.**

**PSERS is proud to be an equal opportunity employer supporting workforce diversity.**

With the passage of the federal Health Care Reform, PSERS has been receiving many questions about how the passage of the Reform act might affect their PSERS HOP coverage.

While PSERS has reviewed the law in detail, we will not know how the changes will be implemented until regulations are issued by the various federal agencies granted authority under Health Care Reform. We do know that Health Care Reform has caused a tremendous amount of confusion and anxiety for retirees trying to understand how they are affected.

This is what we know at this point:

- HOP will continue to provide value, support and affordable options to participants.
- The benefits and cost of the Enhanced Medicare Rx Option will change effective January 1, 2011.
- Medicare Advantage plans (Highmark, Keystone Plans, Aetna and others) will have their federal funding cut. The reduction in funding may cause a reduction in benefits and/or increases in premiums. Some carriers may stop offering their plans in selected counties or terminate their participation

in the Medicare Advantage program altogether. As always, HOP participants have an opportunity each year to change their coverage.

As PSERS determines how these new regulations affect the plans



offered through HOP, we will provide our members clear definition of the changes, how you are affected, and any actions you might need to take. We will continue to update HOP plans to get the best possible subsidies from the government and to be competitive with other retiree benefit plan options.

Additional information pertaining to the health care reform act is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services online at -

**[www.healthreform.gov](http://www.healthreform.gov)**.

The site also includes specific information pertaining to the affects on residents in each state.

## Retiree Name & Address Changes

Please submit any name or address changes to PSERS in writing. You can do this either by letter or by completing the *Change of Address for PSERS Retirees (PSRS-1301)* form. You can print the form from the PSERS website at [www.psers.state.pa.us/forms/f1301.pdf](http://www.psers.state.pa.us/forms/f1301.pdf).

Be sure to include your signature, social security number, and the effective date of the change.

PSERS will not accept address changes from an email, by phone, or from anyone but the PSERS retiree. If you have named a Power-of-Attorney (POA) and the POA was approved by PSERS, the POA may make the address change request on your behalf.

If your monthly payment is mailed to your home address, please be sure to notify PSERS of your address change at least 8 weeks prior to moving and be sure to file a forwarding order with the postal system, as well.

## Adult Care Information

As our life expectancy continues to rise, so does the potential for the possibility of needing special assistance. Adult care centers may be advantageous if one is -

- No longer able to independently manage daily activities.
- Alone and wishes the company of others.
- Unable to remain safe when left alone at home.
- Cared for by someone who works outside the home.
- Cared for by someone who frequently travels or is away from home for long periods of time.

Adult day care programs for aging adults, which generally consist of programs to promote well being for the participant and peace of mind for their primary care giver, are available in many locations throughout Pennsylvania. These adult care centers generally provide care during the work week and during regular work hours.



The Pennsylvania Department of Aging offers through its website ([www.aging.state.pa.us](http://www.aging.state.pa.us)), a listing of approximately 250 adult day care centers throughout Pennsylvania. The directory provides a listing of existing centers by county and is located on their website at [www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=616449&mode=2](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=616449&mode=2).

The Department of Aging website also provides copies of the listed facilities inspection reports. They do recommend that before you consider one of the listed sites for yourself or for a family member, you visit the center. Different centers offer different services, so make sure that the center offers the service or services that would be most beneficial to you or your family member.

Any questions about an adult day care center in Pennsylvania should be directed to that specific center or to the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. PSERS cannot answer questions specific to adult care centers.

## Long-Term Care Planning Tips Available

In ten years, one in four Pennsylvania residents will be over the age of 60. According to statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 60 percent of people over age 65 at some point in their life will require some type of long-term care. It's never too soon to start planning for the possible long-term care that you or a loved one may need in the future.

Long-term care can consist of a variety of health or personal services, as well as assisting one with daily living activities over a period of time. Long-term care does not mean a loss of independence or control over your life. The more you know about the facts of long-term care, the potential benefits of early planning, and who can help you to sort out the details about long-term care, the more prepared you'll be to live your life as you have planned.

It's extremely important to note that long-term care can be expensive. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that average nursing home costs currently range from \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year. Those who receive home-based care currently can spend an average of a little over \$19,000 a year. Programs such as Medicare and Medigap policies do not cover long-term care. Some long-term services are covered by state Medicaid programs, however, only those with a low income and few other resources may qualify.

**...average nursing home costs currently range from \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year...**

By planning early, if you choose to purchase supplemental insurance for long-term care, you may avoid those things that can cause the cost to rise, such as age, family history, and your current health status. If you wait until you need the coverage due to a serious condition, you may be denied coverage by the company whose plan you wish to purchase.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a free information kit available entitled, *The Own Your Future Planning Kit*. This kit provides you with information about practical steps you can take to plan ahead for your long-term care needs. The kit covers steps to take before you need long-term care,

(Continued on page 6)

## PSERS Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

August 12, 2010  
October 8, 2010  
December 10, 2010

These meetings are held in the fourth floor Boardroom of PSERS' headquarters at 5 North 5th Street in Harrisburg. In addition to these Board meetings, Committee meetings are held at various times throughout the year.

All PSERS Board meetings are open to the public. For exact meeting times or if you would like to attend and require an accommodation to participate, please call Barbara Flurie, PSERS Executive Office at 1-888-773-7748, extension 4617.

such as researching supplemental plans to cover the cost of long-term care, as well as guidelines to compare various plans you may be considering. There are also tips for establishing legal direction for your care, tips on locating community support, and tips for making changes to your home now to assist you later in life. In each category, the kit supplies you with contact information for governmental programs and organizations that can provide you with additional assistance.

The kit contains not only the information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, but information from your state addressing programs, and information sources available within the state where you live.

The Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Partnership is a combination of both public and private resources. Information if you reside within Pennsylvania is available online at [www.longtermcare.state.pa.us](http://www.longtermcare.state.pa.us) or by calling their toll-free number, 1-866-286-3636. Additional information and information for those residing outside of Pennsylvania is available online at [www.longtermcare.gov](http://www.longtermcare.gov) or by calling the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at their toll-free phone number, 1-877-696-6775.

Any questions about long-term care should be directed to the state and federal agencies referenced. PSERS cannot answer questions specific to long-term care.



## Looking for Quick Answers?

The PSERS website is a valuable tool for finding quick answers to your questions.

If you have not yet signed up to use our on-line Web applications, you may do so anytime. Click on the Member Web Application button. Once you establish your online account, the user name and password information is **mailed** to your home address. Once you have an account established, you can re-print form 1099-Rs and print a summary of your monthly benefits.

Look under "Hot News" for the latest on current legislation and other pertinent retirement information.

Also, look under the Publications section, the "Let's Talk" series of pamphlets details specific information regarding PSERS' retirement benefits and related issues.

The PSERS website address is:  
**[www.psers.state.pa.us](http://www.psers.state.pa.us)**

## What's in a Name or an Acronym?

Every day we see abbreviations and acronyms used to identify various education/retirement related organizations. Retirees often tell PSERS how confusing all of these abbreviations can be to them, especially when it comes to distinguishing similar acronyms.

For your information, listed below are some of the more common acronyms you may deal with on a regular basis and the full name of the organization or association:

Acronym	Official Name
AARP	American Association of Retired Persons
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
NEA	National Education Association
NEA-R	National Education Association - Retired
NRTA	National Retired Teachers' Association
PASA	Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators
PASBO	Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials
PASR	Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees
PFT	Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
PFT	Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers
PSBA	Pennsylvania School Boards Association
PSEA	Pennsylvania State Education Association
PSEA-R	Pennsylvania State Education Association - Retired

It's little wonder that PSERS (Public School Employees' Retirement System) is often mistaken for and confused with other organizations or associations with similar names relating to education. PSERS is a state affiliated agency and works with these groups. PSERS, however, it is not a part of any one of these organizations or associations.

PSERS never charges a membership fee nor are there dues to pay. As we are an agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, PSERS also does not endorse memberships in other organizations, endorse commercial products, services, or special discount offers in conjunction with a business for our retirees. If you receive a "special offer" stating that the service or product is sponsored by or endorsed by PSERS, please contact us so that we may address the source of the information.

## Direct Deposit or Electronic Transfer of Monthly Annuity

You must complete the **Authorization for Direct Deposit - Electronic Transfer of Monthly Benefit** (PSRS-116) form if you wish to have your monthly benefit payment sent directly to your financial institution or if you wish to change accounts and/or financial institutions.

The form can be printed directly from the PSERS website at [www.psers.state.pa.us/forms/f116.pdf](http://www.psers.state.pa.us/forms/f116.pdf), or you may contact PSERS to receive a copy of the form.

**It may take up to 8 weeks or longer to make this change.** If you are changing accounts and/or financial institutions, **PSERS strongly recommends that you do not close the old account until your monthly benefit payment is deposited into your new account.**

**PSERS  
5 N 5th Street  
PO Box 125  
Harrisburg PA 17108-0125**

**PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Harrisburg PA  
Permit No. 254**

**Public School Employees' Retirement System**  
Important Information from the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania